

Interface Uncovers Business Insights and Transforms Network, Security, and Voice for Salata

Interface Services For Salata Salad Kitchen

Business intelligence with video analytics, managed network, business voice

Salata Salad Kitchen has chosen Interface to implement an advanced video analytics solution, transform network connectivity, and implement a VoIP phone system for its popular salad kitchens in more than 80 locations.

Salata, a fast-casual built-to-order salad kitchen, has chosen Interface, a leading managed service provider, to implement video analytics, restaurant-technology-in-a-box, and VoIP communications.

To uncover business insights, identify training opportunities, and enhance loss prevention, Interface implemented a cloud-based video analytics solution that streamed valuable business insights from security cameras. As a part of the network upgrade, Interface implemented a Payment Card Industry (PCI)-compliant network cabinet with wireless access points, software defined wide area network (SD-WAN) router, firewall, and Voice over Internet (VoIP) phones. The upgrade included complete design, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of the network and voice infrastructure.

By consolidating network and implementing business intelligence solutions, Salata has simplified IT operations, minimized network downtime, optimized staffing and operations, and gained actionable intelligence to increase revenue. The technology transformation implemented by Interface has enabled Salata to create a foundation for rapid growth.

Salata at a glance

Salata is a fast-growing fast-casual built-to-order salad kitchen that offers completely customizable salads and wraps as well as soups and signature organic teas and lemonades. With over 80 locations and counting, Salata has established itself as a brand of choice among health-conscious consumers who enjoy the wide variety of fresh ingredients and toppings that give them the freedom to create meals tailored to their lifestyle.

Website: www.salata.com

Headquarters: Houston, TX

Key Challenges

Pete Kaufmann, Sr. Director of IT at Salata, had his task cut out. When he joined Salata in 2020, the restaurant industry was tackling unprecedented changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Salata decided to accelerate its digital transformation journey even before the pandemic. We wanted to get the basics right and started evaluating the key challenges with our existing network, voice, and business intelligence capabilities,” says Kaufmann.

“The rapidly increasing network traffic driven due to customer preference for online ordering meant that we needed to scale our network capacity and simplify our underlying network infrastructure. In addition, we wanted to gain actionable insights needed to smoothly run our restaurant operations,” says Kaufmann.

The IT team at Salata narrowed their focus on four major capability gaps that needed to be addressed.

- 1. Network reliability:** Non-standard network infrastructure at Salata made it extremely difficult to manage network uptime and security. Every time the network went down, it meant lost revenue. Keeping tabs on potential security vulnerabilities, patch management, troubleshooting connectivity issues, replacing faulty network devices, and other routine network maintenance tasks was a major drain on the IT team.
- 2. Legacy phones:** Salata restaurant managers realized that they needed a phone system that would give them the ability to field customer calls at scale. It was challenging for restaurant staff to take phone orders and most calls ended up being kept on hold or went unanswered.
- 3. Business insights:** Customer preference for “Buy Online, Pickup In-Store” (BOPIS), catering, and third-party delivery services, and reduced dine-in traffic were some of the changes that had cascading impact on restaurant operations. While the IT team had access to a treasure trove of data spanning network, voice, and camera systems, data was available in silos and there was no easy way to connect the dots.
- 4. Vendor solutions:** Salata had expanded rapidly since 2005. In the absence of a standardized network solution, the IT team had the unenviable task of managing multiple vendor relationships to support a single location. It was difficult to assign responsibility for network issues. Vendor service costs were



“We needed next-generation technology to deliver on our promise to offer personalized service to our customers.”

Pete Kaufmann
Sr Director of IT
Salata

different at every location and it became challenging to forecast operational costs for planning or expansion.

Starting fresh with Interface

Salata chose to work with Interface to roll out a comprehensive suite of network, voice, and business intelligence solutions that not only plugged the gaps in the IT infrastructure but also laid the platform for seamless data integration and business intelligence.

With Interface taking full responsibility for the turnkey solution implementation, Salata was able to execute the IT transformation without the need to manage multiple vendors resulting in a significant reduction in IT operations complexity.

“We decided to consolidate all our critical IT requirements with Interface. Because they control the network, bandwidth provisioning, phones, and cameras we are now able to easily plug in our POS and combine the data streams across all of these systems to help make better decisions,” says Kaufmann.



Interface implemented its sophisticated, cloud-based video analytics solution that uncovers business insights by using security cameras already operational at Salata restaurants.

Using video analytics, Salata is able to understand customer movements within the restaurant, speed of service, usage of dine-in tables or patio seating, the effectiveness of in-store design changes, and the impact of online marketing campaigns.

Interface also integrated Salata's restaurant POS platform with the video camera feed by replacing some of the legacy analog cameras with IP cameras capable of sharing video feeds with 3rd-party systems. This integration helped Salata unlock a wealth of data from the POS system by mapping key transactions to their associated video recordings.

Improved customer experience

With video analytics, Salata is able to visualize customer flow at every restaurant in real-time giving restaurant managers and franchise partners valuable insights on customer experience at every touchpoint.

Salata can now track customer dwell time at the salad line, online order pickup counters, and dine-in tables. This data is useful in determining the effectiveness of the restaurant layout, throughput, speed of service, and opportunities for minimizing customer wait times.

Optimized operations

Video analytics is helping Salata identify benchmarks and operational bottlenecks across restaurants or among locations with similar restaurant formats. The solution offers answers for critical questions such as:

- ✔ Does the restaurant have enough capacity to handle the rush at a specific time of day and comply with cleanliness guidelines?
- ✔ How are dine-in customers using the standard tables vs high-tops?
- ✔ What is the average table turn or order value for these table types?
- ✔ What is the correlation between restaurant layout or design with sales and staffing levels by location or geography?
- ✔ What is the throughput and effectiveness of the online and third-party delivery pickup stations?
- ✔ What should be the square footage and restaurant floor design requirements for restaurants inside a mall, downtown location, or strip mall based on performance benchmarks?

“Interface opened the doors to the immense potential for leveraging video analytics insights at Salata.”

Pete Kaufmann
Sr Director of IT
Salata

Efficient staffing

Video analytics offers Salata insights to accurately forecast staffing needs by the time of the day and day of the week. Salata has the capability to plan shift hours and proactively hire more people to tackle demand spikes.

In addition, by monitoring dwell times at various customer touchpoints, Salata can make real-time staff reassignment to handle any temporary demand spikes. Insights on the optimal staffing size and shift planning best practices are being used by Salata to streamline hiring and budgeting HR costs for new restaurants.

“Interface’s approach to building an integrated business intelligence solution that spans security cameras and POS integration has opened up a whole new world of possibilities for Salata,” says Kaufmann.

Restaurant-technology-in-a-box

Interface upgraded the network at Salata restaurants with its all-in-one restaurant-technology-in-a-box. The solution included a tamper-proof, PCI-compliant network box with in-built router, firewall, Wi-Fi access points, wireless WAN failover, SD-WAN, and VoIP phones.



With this technology, Salata now has a secure, reliable indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi coverage, a cellular-based backup connection to ensure there is no downtime, and a secure SD-WAN edge to manage traffic performance for all critical applications.

Interface's Network Operations Center (NOC) monitors and manages all devices and network connectivity for Salata with the capability to remotely troubleshoot any installation or dispatch on-site technicians for any eventuality.

- 1. Secure and fast network:** With a single point of contact and stringent uptime SLAs, Salata enjoys the benefit of a modern, secure network that's built for supporting a high volume of online transactions and seamless connectivity for employees and customers. Guests enjoy a branded Wi-Fi experience and spend less time waiting in queues or on the phone.
- 2. Upgraded voice communications:** To tackle increased call volumes at Salata restaurants, Interface implemented a cloud-based VoIP solution that can handle large call volumes at every location. The voice solution is packed with features to handle customer orders for delivery or pickup and eliminate unnecessary wait time on the phone. Employees no longer have to worry about missed calls and they can focus on serving customers at the restaurant.

"Our IT team now has complete visibility on the health of the network. We are able to track and fix performance issues before they become a bottleneck for our Interface upgraded the network at Salata employees and guests. Interface has a proactive approach to network management and that's great for business," says Kaufmann.

One Vendor, Many Possibilities

Before Interface, Salata was dealing with an assortment of network and security vendors offering point solutions. According to Kaufmann, "We spent a lot of time troubleshooting problems with the network and cameras. Our previous vendors could never connect the dots, and it directly impacted our sales and employee experience."

"With Interface, in the rare event we have an issue, we know who to call. And when we do make the call, they are probably already working on a resolution as they have a real-time view of what's happening at all our locations. Interface also has the local presence to take care of on-site maintenance at all our restaurants."

"Interface takes complete ownership for designing, implementing, and maintaining innovative solutions."

Pete Kaufmann
Sr Director of IT
Salata

“We made the right choice when we picked Interface as we are preparing for growth. We now know that every time we open a new restaurant, Interface will be there to set up the network, negotiate with local ISPs, connect the cameras with our POS system, and keep all of this going with just a single, predictable, monthly invoice. This is a game-changer for Salata.”

“Because the restaurant business is dynamic, we know for sure that our business models will rapidly evolve to keep pace with changing consumer preferences. Interface is great at not only taking care of everything we need to right now but has the capability to work with technology providers to tackle emerging challenges”.



Talk to Interface to understand how restaurant and retail chains can innovate faster with managed business security, business intelligence and purpose-built network solutions.

[→ Schedule a Free Consultation](#)

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