

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Cisco Meraki cameras and sensors inspire Rakuten's anti-COVID-19 initiatives for offices and vaccination centers



Approx. **13,000** workstations at the head office

Offered in **30** countries and regions

Offers over **70** services

Over **1.5** billion users worldwide

Industry

- Telecommunications and Media

Location

- **Address** Rakuten Crimson House
1-14-1 Tamagawa, Setagaya-ku,
Tokyo, Japan
- **Established** February 7, 1997
- **Employees** Non-consolidated: 7,390
Consolidated: 23,841
(Current as of Dec. 31, 2020; personnel employed, excluding temporary staff, part-time employees, and persons serving concurrently as employees and directors)
- **Website** <https://global.rakuten.com/corp/>

Products

- Cloud managed smart cameras
Cisco Meraki MV
- Cloud managed environmental sensors
Cisco Meraki MT

Solutions

- Cloud managed: Easy to deploy
- Remote monitoring: Effective for accurately understanding office conditions
- Temperature control sensors: Used at vaccination centers in addition to security cameras

Overview

Guided by its mission of “Empowering people and society through innovation and entrepreneurship,” Rakuten Group continues to pursue exciting initiatives. Through major steps to prevent COVID infection at its offices worldwide, Rakuten established a safe environment for in-person work at its head office via using Cisco Meraki MV cameras to identify the location of crowded conditions. After obtaining an accurate understanding of the situation in this way, Rakuten developed and implemented various effective solutions. In addition, at vaccination centers at some branch offices in Japan, the company now uses MT sensors for temperature control and MV cameras for security.

Issues and Background

The Rakuten Group offers services in a wide array of fields in Japan and abroad, including internet services centered on e-commerce, credit cards, other FinTech (financial) services, and communication services such as its mobile carrier business. Services even extend into the world of professional sports.

The Group has implemented extensive measures at its offices worldwide to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. But in addition to infection-control measures for its offices to protect employees, the Group was faced by a pressing need for business decisions permitting it to adapt rapidly and flexibly to the ever-changing situation as the infection spread.

Yusuke Hosoya, Vice Manager of the Facility Management Group (Facility Management Section, General Affairs and Facilities Management Department) at Rakuten Group explains: “To make sure our customers can access our services at any time, it was urgent that we prepare a safe work environment where our employees feel secure. Inside our offices, we implemented various measures, like limiting the number of workers coming in and increasing the distance between seats in work areas. But we still had to do something about main building entrances, elevators, cafeteria, and other locations that would become crowded at certain times of the day.”

Rakuten's head office, Crimson House, in the upscale Futako Tamagawa district of Tokyo, is a large office tower with approximately 13,000 workstations. The main building entrance, the elevators, and the cafeteria were often crowded, and even just understanding workplace traffic fluctuations was a tall order.

Ken Naruo, Manager of the IT Facility Group (Infrastructure Section, Corporate IT Department) at Rakuten Group relates what was considered and why Meraki was chosen: "We were already using many Cisco products, such as for networks. At that time, we were assessing Cisco Meraki MV cameras for IT equipment security in a warehouse. MV cameras are easy to deploy, and we recognized the value of their advanced analytics. Additionally, unlike other closed-circuit security camera systems, Cisco Meraki is highly extensible. For example, it can be linked to other systems through its API. These features convinced us that Meraki was the best solution for the issues we were facing. So we began using it as one tool to fight COVID-19."

Solutions

Cisco Meraki MV cameras provide an innovative, all-in-one solution that breaks the mold of conventional security cameras. They are cloud managed smart cameras. Deployment and operation are easy, and just connecting them to the internet allows remote monitoring and analysis of the locations they cover, all from a single dashboard.

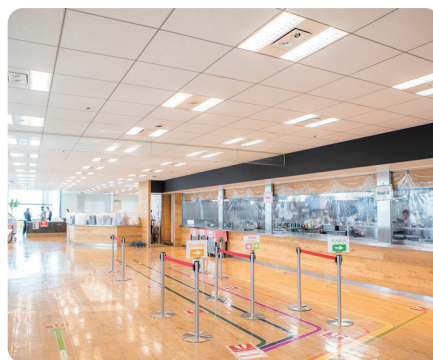
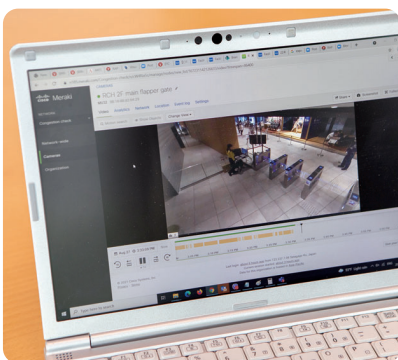
Cloud managed and Easy to deploy

Cisco Meraki MV cameras use a simple architecture typical of cloud managed solutions. "First, we installed cameras in the main entrance area and the elevators, which were of most concern due to crowding. Later, we installed more in the cafeteria. We didn't need any data center equipment. All we needed to start using the cameras was a Wi-Fi connection and a power source. Adding and moving cameras to adjust to our needs was easy, and the UI was intuitive, making the setup simple," says Naruo.

Remote monitoring: Effective for accurately understanding how office space is used

Video from Cisco Meraki MV cameras can be accessed remotely through a dashboard in the cloud. "We can now monitor conditions accurately and remotely, instead of having to be on site. We can even go back in time and see where and when crowding generally occurs, and what times are comparatively light in traffic. We can even count the number of people in a given area within the field of view via MV's object detection feature," says Hosoya.

Cisco Meraki



Cisco Meraki MV cameras installed in the main entrance and the cafeteria, and monitoring from the dashboard



“**Cisco Meraki is easy to deploy and operate, and is highly extensible. Therefore, we decided it’s the best solution for getting a handle on crowding in our offices.**”

Yusuke Hosoya

Vice Manager of the Facility Management Group, Facility Management Section,
General Affairs and Facilities Management Department,
Rakuten Group, Inc.



Ken Naruo

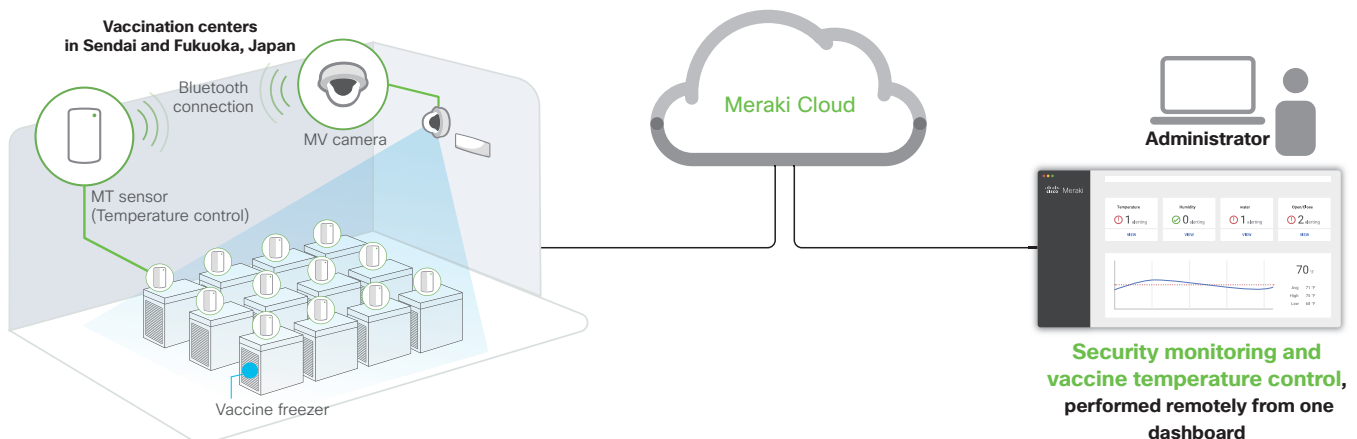
Manager of the IT Facility Group,
Infrastructure Section,
Corporate IT Department,
Rakuten Group, Inc.

Temperature control sensors: Used at vaccination centers together with security cameras

In line with the Japanese government’s workplace vaccination policy, Rakuten Group now offers opportunities for workplace vaccinations, not only for its own employees and their families, but even for workers at nearby companies and local residents. Rakuten Group installed Cisco Meraki MT sensors and Cisco Meraki cameras to vaccination centers in Sendai and Fukuoka.

The Meraki MT sensors monitor temperature and humidity, detect water leaks, and react to unauthorized entry (even when a door or cabinet is open or closed), all in real time. They are useful for monitoring valuable infrastructure and assets that are sensitive to environmental changes.

“We needed to monitor vaccine storage conditions at our vaccination centers, and we had little time to set everything up. Because of what Cisco Meraki MV cameras had already accomplished at our offices, and since they can be deployed quickly, we chose them for our anti-COVID plans. We also installed Cisco Meraki MT sensors to monitor vaccine freezers, which require strict temperature control. We connected the cameras and sensors with Bluetooth to monitor video and temperature from a single dashboard. We use local storage for storing data, meeting our high standards for security,” Naruo adds.



Benefits and Future Developments

Naruo says, “Using Meraki solutions allowed us to obtain visual information on office conditions and understand data accurately, even from home and other remote environments. We are using insights from such data to develop and implement measures to prevent crowding in offices, and as evidence when assessing those measures. Regarding the cameras, we plan to take advantage of the extensibility of API connections to soon assess more intelligent detection functions, such as more precise counting of people passing through access and egress points, using facial recognition, and applying AI image analysis. We are also considering expanding camera installation to include some of our local branches. In fact, we hope to use them in a variety of ways, including to remotely monitor IT assets and assess conditions in the event of a disaster. ”

Hosoya concludes with thoughts on future developments at Rakuten and expectations for Cisco Meraki: “We have implemented the best possible measures against infection and are continuing a ‘return to office’ policy that keeps productivity high while allowing all employees to work safely. As our business continues to expand, our policy for the ‘new normal’ requires that we don’t disrupt our operations, that we spread out employees coming into work, the spaces they work in, and that we provide a new type of office environment that uses space safely and efficiently. I’m sure the data we’ve obtained so far will serve as a reliable basis for considering how to accomplish these goals. We linked the cameras and sensors in use at the vaccination centers. We hope to apply this type of linking at our offices as well, creating an office environment that is efficient and safe. One example: monitoring CO₂ levels. We anticipate that Cisco Meraki will continue to provide us with solutions that are simple to deploy and easy for anyone to use. ”

More information on Rakuten Group, Inc. can be found at <https://global.rakuten.com/corp/> →

Rakuten Group, Inc.

Rakuten Group offers over 70 services in a wide array of fields in Japan and abroad. Those services include not only e-commerce but also; internet services for travel, digital content, and more; FinTech (financial) services, led by credit cards, including banking, securities, electronic money, and a smartphone payment app; and communication services such as its mobile carrier business. Services even extend into the world of professional sports. These services, which cover many aspects of everyday life, are all comprehensively tied together onto one membership (primarily a Rakuten membership), so that members can easily start using other services provided within the group. This unrivaled “Rakuten ecosystem” is continuing to expand

