

Lyric

LYRIC OPERA OF CHICAGO



“Bringing advanced IT solutions to an institution with such historical significance as Lyric Opera is no easy feat, but having worked with Burwood Group for several years, we were confident we could turn to them for our high-profile Wine Auction. Not only was the event flawless from a technology perspective, but Burwood’s consultants provided Lyric Opera with a holistic solution that modernized our wireless network, making it more stable, scalable and easier to manage.”

– Will Raj, Director of IT
Lyric Opera of Chicago

Client Success Story

Lyric Opera of Chicago revamps wireless solution to usher in new era of opera experience

Lyric Opera of Chicago is one of the world’s foremost opera companies, renowned internationally for its artistic excellence. Each season, audiences gather to enjoy highly-acclaimed performers in visually spectacular productions. When Lyric Opera began planning its highly-anticipated triennial Wine Auction, organizers requested live and silent bidding via smartphone application. IT leadership knew they needed an upgraded wireless infrastructure to enable uninterrupted bidding activity. Seeking a holistic solution that would ensure a flawless Wine Auction and meet broader technology needs, Lyric Opera turned to Burwood Group to update its wireless network and expand coverage across its seven-floor facility.

The Challenge: Expand wireless coverage without disrupting the aesthetics of a historic building

The consumer mobile device market has flourished in recent years. In its wake, Lyric Opera has experienced increasing demands on its limited wireless network from production staff, building operations, visitors, and a new generation of opera enthusiasts. Keeping pace with technology expectations was critical to continued success, even for an organization rooted in history.

The Lyric Opera building was constructed in 1929 with parts of its structure included on the National Register of Historic Places. The Burwood project team was challenged to respect the facility’s age and integrity during the design process. Considerations included the types of devices being used, the presence of previously existing devices, and the number of people gathering in various areas of the building.

Thick, historic walls and architecture affected radio frequency (RF) coverage and required creative solutions. For instance, Lyric Opera’s first floor lobbies are particularly elegant with distinctive marble walls and ornate ceilings. Burwood Group faced the daunting task of proposing wireless access point locations that would not interfere with the aesthetics and architecture.

The Solution: Project leadership, solution architecture, and wireless networking expertise

Burwood Group proposed a network design using Cisco Meraki technology, a cloud wireless solution designed specifically for high density deployments. Burwood consultants recommended access points to provide WLAN coverage in all critical areas: the grand foyer, auditorium, ticketing area, bars, backstage and next-to-stage locations, and the administrative wing. The Burwood team worked alongside Lyric Opera's IT department and facilities management team to determine where access points and cables were and were not permitted, and to ensure seamless integration within the historic facility. Access point exteriors were painted by the Lyric Opera art department to blend in with the walls and ceilings. Other access points were hidden from view and some were placed in painted enclosures for protection.

Once the network was installed, Burwood consultants worked with Lyric Opera's IT department to set up all SSIDs and configure the network. Lastly, the Burwood Group team provided system administrator training and knowledge transfer to ensure confidence in managing the upgraded environment.

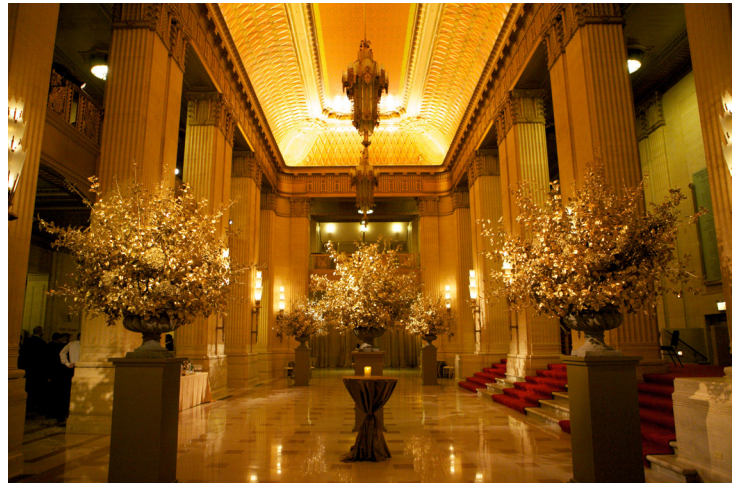
The Outcome: Reliable wireless coverage supports technology-enabled events, performances and visitor experience

Lyric Opera's 2015 Wine Auction was an undisputed success. Guests enjoyed a reception and silent bidding in the Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Grand Foyer without a single report of connectivity issues. IT staff has been vocal in expressing their approval of the Cisco Meraki technology, applauding the "user-friendly management interface" and "ability to make quick changes when needed, such as providing secure, temporary Wi-Fi access to a building contractor."

Beyond the auction, the improved wireless environment has transformed the Lyric Opera audience experience. The lobby is now able to accommodate additional ticketing areas to more efficiently usher opera-goers into the building. Lyric Opera's multi-floor concession counters, which had previously been cash-only, now accept all forms of payment using wireless point-of-sale applications on iPad devices. This has helped reduce the customer bottlenecks that once formed during intermissions and pre/post show. Onsite restaurant and bar wait staff are now equipped with iPads to take orders, resulting in the ability to record transactions and tabulate data such as popular menu items and inventory gaps.

- **Over 183,000 square feet surveyed**
- **70+ Cisco Meraki access points deployed**

A reliable wireless network has also proved helpful for the Lyric Opera marketing and public relations teams. Lyric Opera now encourages visitors to use social media to share photos and



memories of their Lyric Opera experience. Promotional lobby signage for events, shows, and exhibits includes social media reminders and hashtags. Technology-enabled initiatives such as bloggers' nights, backstage videos, and after-hours social events create new opportunities to connect with high-tech visitors. These new endeavors provide Lyric Opera with the ability to develop potential revenue streams for the company in the future.

About Burwood Group

Burwood Group is a systems integrator, helping forward-thinking IT leaders deliver knowledge to the end-user within the organization's unique business context to increase profitability, reduce risk and enhance customer loyalty. We partner with leading technology and service organizations to provide tailored product and industry solutions. We work to ensure an optimal fit for each individual client. Founded in 1997 and headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Burwood Group serves local, national, and international clients. We pride ourselves in being trusted business advisors to clients by providing smarter solutions that deliver better outcomes. Visit <http://www.burwood.com>.