

# The Freshest Connection for your Micro Market

## The Importance of Secure, Flexible and Affordable Wireless Internet

### What is a Micro Market?

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A Micro Market is a cross between a convenience store, traditional vending and a company break room. It offers a wide range of better, healthier products – particularly fresh fruits and foods – and focuses on a select,

specific group of consumers. It provides more variety and convenience in an unattended environment and can take a wider variety of payment types than other options.

### Connection Requirements

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One of the basic needs of any Micro Market is a live and reliable Internet connection. Without a live connection credit and debit cards cannot be authorized and transactions cannot be processed. That means a loss of sales and revenue and unhappy customers.

The Internet connection is also used for operational needs such as reporting on sales and inventory, updating pricing or monitoring and adjusting equipment. It can also be used to

transmit security video.

Fortunately, technology now exists that makes providing a reliable, fast Internet connection much easier and less expensive than running expensive cabling and paying for a landline connection like DSL.



# Convenience, Cost & Connectivity

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A Micro Market will have one or more payment kiosks. They rely on the Internet connection, but also need to be placed in a convenient and

accessible location for the customers. There are several options for the connection, however, not all connection options are created equal.



- Landline/DSL – While an onsite landline or DSL may seem like the obvious solution, this plan has a number of drawbacks. It severely limits the locations available for the kiosk placement, potentially requiring the machine to be set up in a less desirable or less secure area than the merchant prefers. Landlines also have a tendency to run on a general shared network through unsecured servers, or through the building's computer system, leaving the banking and cash data more vulnerable to hacking. Landlines can also cost thousands of dollars to set up and merchants risk being placed on a waiting list for installation. In addition, using a landline or DSL can slow down or, in some cases, kill the sales process because the building's IT department will need to be involved; taking control of the installation out of the Micro Market providers hands.



- WiFi/LAN Connectivity – Utilizing a local area wireless network is also an option. WiFi

frees up kiosk placement options, however, like landlines or DSL, there are potential problems with this option. Limited range of service, interference as well as complex propagation effects that are beyond the control of the network administrator are drawbacks. In addition, WiFi has security

weaknesses that could put the merchant's financial information at risk. And, a visible WiFi network may actually attract the attention of hackers.

- Cellular Communications (Wireless 3G or 4G Communications) – Wireless 3G or 4G connections are far less likely to be hacked than WiFi due to the security and encryption inherent in the cellular technologies. Like WiFi, using cellular communications allows the kiosks to be placed in an optimal location. “Cellular” wireless is easy to install and maintain, has a more reliable signal and wider range than WiFi, and is often faster and less expensive than other communications options. Cellular is also the banking industry's preferred communications method.



## Security Concerns

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There are multiple security concerns for Micro Market operators. Data security or transaction security is a primary concern. Payment transactions are normally encrypted and secure from the kiosk through to the processor, but the

type of network and connection can either add to the security or add a layer of risk.

Management data – reporting, updates and monitoring – may not be inherently secure, so the connection and network can also be a key

factor in overall security.

Because the market is unattended, it is a target for “shrinkage”. One common method to discourage that is to include security video to monitor the market. Usually the security video is

not streamed live, but stored locally and uploaded on demand when there is a need.

Because video consumes more data than payment transactions, any cellular connection needs to allow for expected volumes.

## The OptConnect Difference

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After years of being the leading provider of reliable wireless solutions for ATM deployers in the U.S., OptConnect recently extended their proven technology to operators of other financial or transaction terminals requiring communication services including kiosks, electric vehicle charging stations, micro-markets and smart safes.

“Offering our wireless solutions to other businesses is a natural expansion of our business,” says OptConnect Director of Business Development Wayne Vandekraak. “We’ve made significant investments in our products and support systems over the years, and have a proven track record of great quality service.”





Utilizing a private cellular 3G or 4G network – by far the most secure communications system available, OptConnect offers a fully managed service solution that combines hardware, communications, monitoring, a lifetime warranty and 24/7 tech support into one single monthly package with zero capital investment.

Unlike carrier's cellular data plans, the OptConnect program guarantees no overages, protecting retailers from additional costs during busier days and months that require higher volume transaction use. In addition, unlike DSL which uses dynamic IP addresses that change daily and make it difficult for the financial institution to recognize incoming data from the Micro Market, static IP address are available from OptConnect at no additional charge.

"Through OptConnect's managed service solution, merchants are also guaranteed to stay current with the latest technology without having to pay for costly upgrades or replace equipment," notes Todd Hallenbeck, who recently joined OptConnect as business development manager after working in the cellular industry for the past 20 years.

Hallenbeck provides an example. "We have a



client that – without our managed service solution in place – would have had to come out of pocket to replace hundreds of their modems because they were running 2G."

"The cellular companies only have so much air space so they are phasing out 2G to make room for 4G," he says. "Which means routers need to be upgraded to a more current version."

According to an August 2012 article in the Wall Street Journal, AT&T Inc. will phase out its 2G wireless networks by Dec. 31, 2016 to make better use of its limited airwaves by upgrading to faster 3G and 4G technology. Verizon is also shuttering its 2G network and has begun the process of phasing out its 3G network in favor



of 4G-LTE service, according to a December 2014 Gigaom report.

"Our customers are protected from having to replace out of date equipment," Hallenbeck says. "They have the peace of mind of knowing they have a lifetime warranty. We replace obsolete equipment, at our expense."

In addition, OptConnect puts the merchant in control of their connections through a web-based portal. OptConnect's portal allows merchants to manage and monitor their Micro Markets remotely. They are alerted to problems and can reset their routers from anywhere.

"Not only do we have years of experience and the knowledge to provide the strong communications resource a Micro Market needs, OptConnect's total communications solution is easier, faster, less expensive, more reliable and more secure," says Vandekraak. "Our wireless solution allows a merchant to put the equipment where they want it, not where physical lines dictate it must go. "

The right connection solution should save retailers time and money. Proper implementation can allow for higher levels of

## OptConnect Micro Market Program Highlights:

- **Fully Managed Service Solution**
- **Hardware (3G & 4G)**
- **Private Cellular Network Data Plan**
- **Watch-Dog Monitoring**
- **24/7 Technical Support**
- **Lifetime Warranty**
- **Expert Partner – leading provider of wireless solutions for ATMs**
- **No Large Capital Expenditure**
- **Total Communications Solution**
- **No Data Overages**
- **Access to OptConnect web-based portal to monitor their Micro Markets**

security through data encryption and a more secure communications network. For many merchants dealing in high transaction volume, a cellular connection is a logical addition to the operations and security of the retailer – and OptConnect is the obvious choice for merchants who need a fast, flexible, secure and more affordable connection.

Interested in learning how OptConnect's Wireless Managed Service can impact your business? [Contact us today to get started: 877-678-3343](tel:877-678-3343)

