



Validated Profile: Retail Vertical

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Solution Overview

This document provides guidance and can be used as a validation reference for a typical retail enterprise network deployment.

Retail networks typically encompass hundreds of stores located remotely. Employing a centralized architecture can streamline network management and lower costs, while each individual store maintains its own self-contained network and direct internet connection to enhance performance and reliability. A secure, resilient network is critical for managing inventory, coordination, store operations, and business data.

For a centralized architecture, Cisco DNA Center is a powerful network controller and management dashboard that helps retail enterprises through:

- Automation: Enable device discovery, Plug and Play device onboard, topology diagram, and template deployments.
- Software Image Management (SWIM) and inventory: Provide tools to manage and schedule an upgrade of system images for all Cisco devices, including RMA or replacement of devices.
- Cisco DNA Assurance: Monitor network, client, and service health, and troubleshoot issues.

The following features of wireless deployment are essential for retail:

- Cisco FlexConnect wireless technology enables organizations to configure and control remote-site wireless networks from headquarters, while allowing data traffic local switching to reduce network congestion and improve resilience.
- FlexConnect IP address overlapping enables IP address reuse across different FlexConnect sites to increase usage of IP subnets and support cookie-cutter configurations.
- Wireless mobility provides seamless and fast roaming through stores to streamline inventory management, improve store operations, and enhance customer experience.

The following features of network security play a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of business and customer data:

- Wired networks: Dot1X, MAB, guest access, and so on.
- Wireless networks: Rogue detection, access point (AP) authentication, and so on.

Network high availability (HA) is vital for retail businesses. Technologies such as Stack, Hot Standby Router Protocol (HSRP), StackWise Virtual Link (SVL), WAN, wireless controller Stateful Switchover (SSO), and N+1 HA ensure that if a network component fails, business operations continue with minimal disruption.

Cisco Spaces provides location services to optimize inventory management and identify consumer traffic and data for personalized marketing.

Hardware and Software Specifications

The solution is validated with the hardware and software listed in the following table. For the complete list of hardware and software supported, see the Cisco DNA Center Compatibility Matrix.

Role	Model Name	Hardware Platform	Software Release	Software Release
Cisco DNA Center Controller	DN2-HW-APL-XL	Cisco DNA Center Appliance 3-Node Cluster	2.3.3.7	2.3.5.5
Identity Management, RADIUS Server	SNS-3695-K9	Secure Network Server for Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE) Applications (large)	2.7 Patch 7	2.7 Patch 7
Cisco Wireless Controller	C9800-80-K9	C9800-80-K9	17.3.8a, 17.9.4a	17.6.6a, 17.9.4a
Cisco Wireless Controller	C9800-CL	Virtual Wireless Controller	17.6.6a, 17.9.4a	17.6.6a, 17.9.4a
Cisco SD-WAN cEdge Router	C8500-12X4QC	Cisco SD-WAN Edge Platform	17.6.5a	17.6.5a
Cisco SD-WAN cEdge Router	C8300-2N2S-4T2X	Cisco SD-WAN Edge Platform	17.6.5a	17.6.5a
Remote Site Switch	C9500-24Y4C C9300-48P, T, U C9300-24U, UX	Cisco Catalyst 9300/9500	17.6.6a, 17.9.4a	17.6.6a, 17.9.4a
Remote Site Switch (Legacy)	ISR4451 Cisco Catalyst 3850	Cisco Integrated Service Router Cisco Catalyst 3850	16.12.10a	16.12.10a
Cisco Spaces	Cisco Spaces Connector	Virtual Connector	2.3.4 (2.3.507)	2.3.4 (2.3.507)
Ekahau	_	Ekahau Artificial Intelligence (AI) Pro Software	11.0.2.219	11.0.2.219

Solution Use Case Scenarios

The following use cases were validated on the retail vertical profile. The use cases are categorized into various technology areas to show the breadth of deployment scenarios covered. These use cases evolve based on customer feedback.

Focus Area	Use Cases
Day 0 - 1	

Use Cases		
Bring up a new site with wired devices in Cisco DNA Center:		
Discover devices and topologies.		
• Provision configurations.		
Deploy device configuration templates.		
Deploy wireless networks for a new site in Cisco DNA Center:		
• Upload a floor map under a Cisco DNA Center site.		
 Add new APs with Plug and Play, assign new APs to the new site location, and locate them on the floor map. 		
Create and provision FlexConnect wireless profiles and policies on the new site.		
Integrate with Cisco Spaces. Monitor real-time device locations and client behavior.		
Manage and provision wireless networks with Cisco DNA Center:		
Modify wireless settings and network profiles.		
Create new SSIDs and update existing SSIDs.		
• Update profiles, tags, AP zones, and so on.		
Onboard new APs with Plug and Play.		
RMA or refresh APs through Cisco DNA Center workflows.		
Change AP locations and reprovision APs.		
Manage and provision network security with Cisco DNA Center:		
Monitor threats and manage rogue rules and aWIPS profiles.		
Configure guest access Wi-Fi with traffic segmentation.		
Apply MAB/DOT1x authentication for AP onboarding.		
• Configure wired and wireless endpoint security policies, such as Dot1X and PSK.		
Scan network devices and provide security advisories.		

Focus Area	Use Cases		
Inventory management	Manage network inventory with Cisco DNA Center:		
	Onboard devices via Plug and Play.		
	Discover devices by IP address or Cisco Discovery Protocol (CDP).		
	• RMA broken devices.		
	• Run compliance checks.		
	Move devices between locations.		
	Manage device certificates.		
	Manage password changes.		
Device configuration	Manage device configurations with Cisco DNA Center:		
	Use device templates to deploy new configurations.		
	Track device configuration changes.		
	Use Assurance audit logs to monitor any errors that occurred during configuration.		
Software image management	Manage device software and schedules upgrades with Cisco DNA Center:		
(SWIM)	Upgrade network routers and switches, including SLV pairs and stack switches.		
	Upgrade wireless devices, including wireless controller SSO pairs and C9800-CL virtual machines.		
	Schedule AP rolling upgrades.		
	Generate SWIM reports.		
System health and utilization	Monitor network and device health, client endpoints, and network utilizations with Assurance:		
monitoring	Monitor network device health and utilizations.		
	Monitor system health for each location.		
	Monitor network services, such as AAA and DHCP.		
	Monitor wireless controllers and APs.		
	Monitor the number of wired and wireless clients and details.		
Troubleshooting	Troubleshoot network issues with Cisco DNA Center:		
	SSH into devices and run CLI commands.		
	Compare device configuration changes.		
	Run a path trace and discover any link failures.		
	Analyze the root cause of high CPU utilization.		
	Check audit logs for troubleshooting applications or device PKI certificates.		
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Focus Area	Use Cases	
System and Network Robustness		
Wireless	Verify system-level resiliency during the following events: • Wireless controller failover (N+1 wireless controller). • Wireless controller SSO.	
WAN	 Single AP failure. Verify system-level resiliency during the following events: Remote sites lose WAN connectivity. Remote sites recover WAN connectivity. When remote site APs cannot reach wireless controllers, FlexConnect APs enter standalone mode. 	
Local device	Verify system-level resiliency during the following events: • Distribution layer SVL failover. • Stack access switch member failure. • Link failure between distribution and access switches.	
Latency	With 100 ms latency, FlexConnect Local Authentication is applied to reduce the latency requirements of the remote sites.	
Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE)	Verify system-level resiliency during the following events: • Policy Service Node (PSN) failure. • Policy Administration Node (PAN) failover. • Cisco ISE PSN change. • Cisco ISE upgrade.	

Topology

One Cisco DNA Center three-node, 112-core cluster is deployed in the sample topology. A distributed Cisco ISE cluster is integrated with the Cisco DNA Center cluster. The Cisco ISE cluster deployment includes two PANs, two monitoring (MnT) nodes, a Platform Exchange Grid (pxGrid), and multiple PSNs.

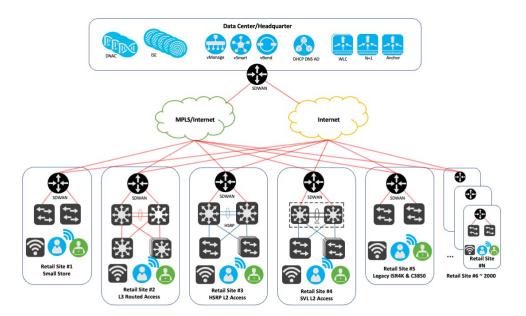
The Cisco DNA Center cluster manages 2000 remote sites connected via two WAN networks. The sites are configured as follows:

- Data center/headquarter site:
 - One Cisco DNA Center cluster
 - One Cisco ISE cluster

- · Cisco SD-WAN: vManage, vSmart, vBond
- Two wireless controller SSO pairs; each pair manages 5000 APs of 1000 sites
- Two wireless controllers provide N+1 redundancy
- One guest anchor wireless controller
- Multiple servers for DHCP, DNS, AD, NTP, and so on
- 1900 small store sites: one floor, one switch, and two APs per site
- 50 medium store sites: one floor, two switches, and 10 APs per site
- 30 super store sites: two floors, 10 switches, and 50 APs per site
- 20 distribution centers/warehouse sites: two floors, 50 switches, and 210 APs per site

The following figure shows the logical topology of the retail vertical solution test bed.

Figure 1: Solution Test Logical Topology





Note 1

If you are viewing this guide on cisco.com, click any of its figures to view the full-sized version.

Site #1 represents the small retail site deployment, where a Cisco Catalyst 9300 switch is used as a Layer 2 access switch. A Catalyst 8300 is used for routing and Cisco SD-WAN services.

Site #2 represents the medium to super large retail site deployment, where multiple Catalyst 9300 switches are used as Layer 3 routed access switches. A Catalyst 9300/9500 switch pair is used in the distribution layer. A Catalyst 8300 is used for Cisco SD-WAN services.

Site #3 represents the super large retail site or distribution center/warehouse deployment, where multiple Catalyst 9300 switches (and stacks) are used as Layer 2 access switches. A Catalyst 9300/9500 switch pair is used in the distribution layer. HSRP is configured for load balancing. A Catalyst 8300 is used for Cisco SD-WAN services.

Site #4 represents the medium to super large retail site deployment, where multiple Catalyst 9300 switches (and stacks) are used as Layer 2 access switches. A Catalyst 9500 switch SVL pair is used in the distribution layer. A Catalyst 8300 is used for Cisco SD-WAN services.

Site #5 represents the legacy retail site deployment, where Catalyst 3850 switches are used as Layer 2 access switches. A Cisco ISR 4000 is used for routing and Cisco SD-WAN services.

Sites #6 - 2000 are simulated by tools. Devices and APs are assigned for each site.

Scale

Solution test verified the scale numbers listed in the following table. For the software and hardware capacity, see the *Cisco DNA Center Data Sheet*.

Attribute	Scale Numbers
AP	10,000 (5000 APs/wireless controller) distributed across 2000 sites
Network devices	3000
Wireless endpoints	300,000
Network profiles	10
Retail sites	2000
Buildings and floors	4000
SSIDs	20
WLCs	7 (4 for two wireless controller SSO pairs, 2 for a N+1 HA wireless controller, and 1 for a guest anchor)

Solution Key Notes

This section describes technical notes that are useful for deploying the retail vertical profile.

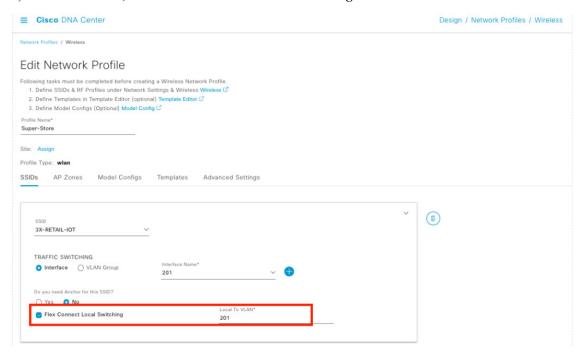
Wireless FlexConnect at Remote Sites

The FlexConnect solution enables retail operations to configure and control APs in remote sites from the corporate headquarter through a WAN link without deploying a controller at each site. The FlexConnect APs can also switch client data traffic locally and perform client authentication locally when the connection to the controller is lost. When connected to the controller, these APs can send traffic back to the controller and also perform local authentication.

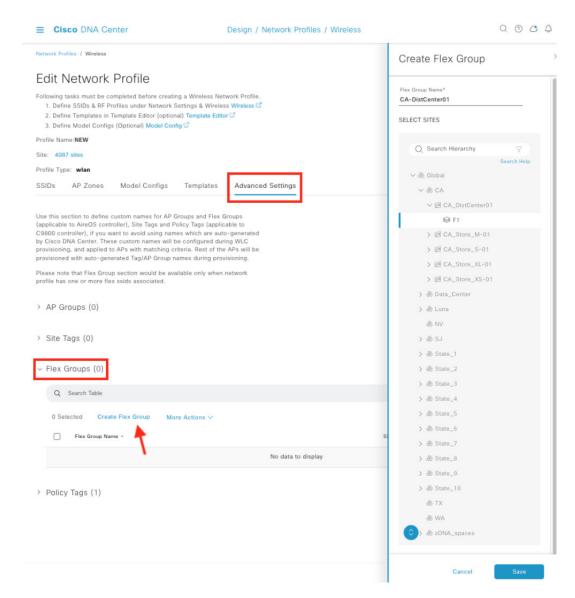
The controller software has a more robust fault tolerance method to FlexConnect APs. Whenever a FlexConnect AP disassociates from a controller, it moves to the standalone mode. The connection between the clients and the FlexConnect APs is maintained, providing the client seamless connectivity. When both the AP and controller have the same configuration, the connection between the clients and APs is maintained.

Procedure

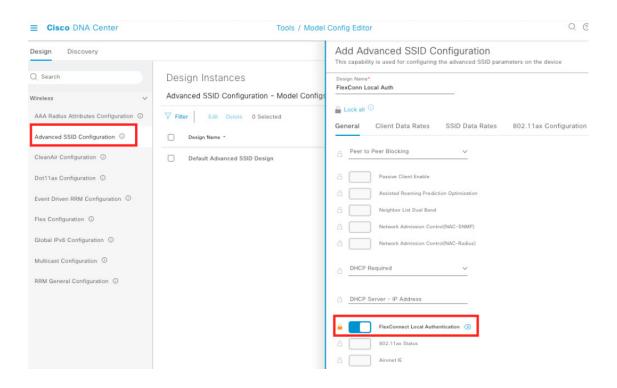
- **Step 1** To configure FlexConnect on Cisco DNA Center, do the following:
 - a) From the top-left corner, click the menu icon and choose **Design** > **Network Profiles** > **Wireless**.
 - b) Choose the wireless profile.
 - c) In the SSIDs tab, check the Flex Connect Local Switching check box to enable FlexConnect.



Step 2 To create Flex Groups, choose **Advanced Settings** > **Flex Groups**.



Step 3 To configure FlexConnect local authentication, choose Tools > Model Config Editor > Advanced SSID Configuration.



IP Address Overlapping

In FlexConnect deployments, by default, if you reuse the same IP subnets at separate locations, wireless controllers detect multiple client sessions with the same IP address as IP THEFT. As a result, clients are blocklisted.

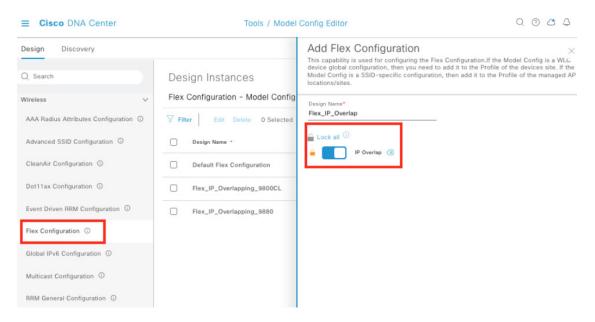
In the FlexConnect Deployment feature, the Overlapping Client IP Address capability allows you to overlap IP addresses across multiple FlexConnect sites while keeping all the supported functionalities in FlexConnect deployments. Network administrators can use a cookie-cutter configuration across sites with the same subnets to simplify management and integrate separate networks without concern of IP addresses overlapping.

You can enable IP address overlap on Cisco DNA Center with the following procedure.

Procedure

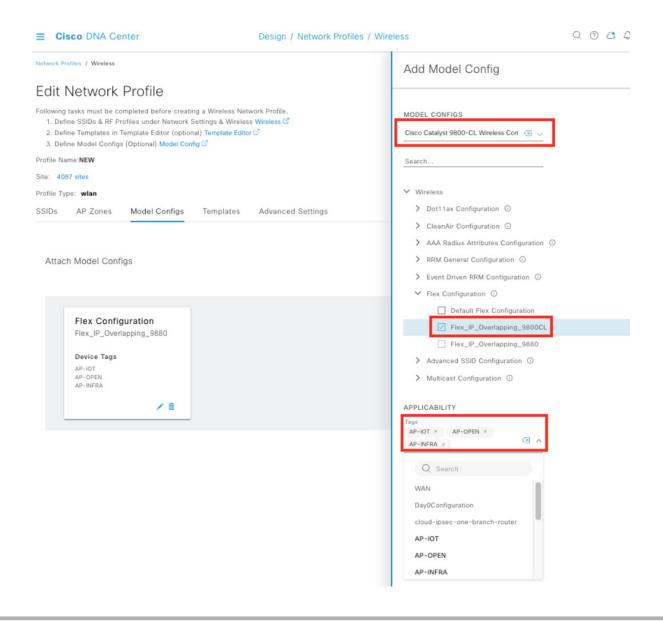
Step 1 To create a model configuration, do the following:

- a) Choose Tools > Model Config Editor > Flex Configuration.
- b) Click **Add** in the upper-right corner.
- c) On the **Add Flex Configuration** slide-in pane, toggle on **IP Overlap** to enable IP address overlap.



Step 2 To add the model configuration to network profiles, do the following:

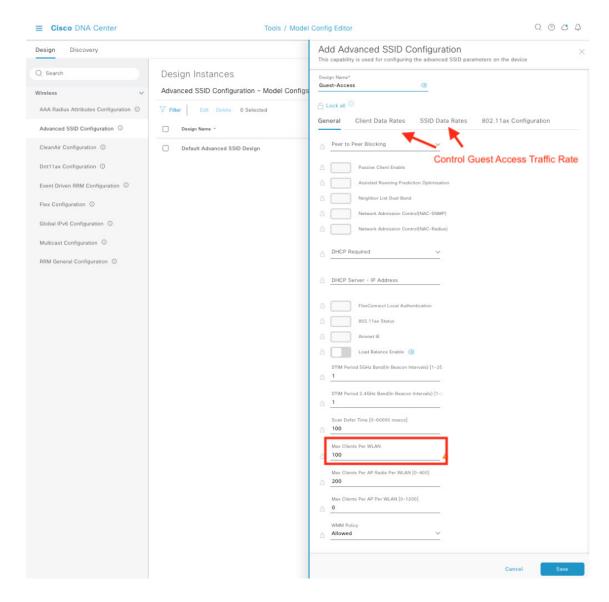
- a) From the top-left corner, click the menu icon and choose **Design** > **Network Profiles**.
- b) Choose the profile.
- c) Choose Model Config > Add Model Config.
- d) On the **Add Model Config** slide-in pane, choose the wireless controller type and FlexConnect model configuration and add the corresponding AP tags.



Remote Location Guest Access

For remote stores, guest authentication cannot be done on a FlexConnect local authentication-enabled wireless LAN (WLAN). Instead, for guest access, a WLAN is set up with a centrally-managed SSID tunneled back to a wireless controller in the DMZ zone. When associating a guest SSID to a profile on Cisco DNA Center, if an anchor wireless controller is checked, the **Flex Connect Local Switching** option is not available.

You can configure the max number of clients and max client data rate on a guest WLAN by choosing **Tools** > **Model Config Editor** > **Advanced SSID Configuration**. Then attach the model configuration to the network profiles as the following figure displays.



Local DHCP Server

In a typical store site setup, a FlexConnect AP is linked to the local switch through a trunk interface with a native VLAN, and DHCP pools are set up on the local switch. The FlexConnect AP gets its IP address from the first DHCP pool (NATIVE) while the other DHCP pools (LOCAL-SWITCH) are reserved for wireless endpoints when they connect to a locally-switched WLAN.

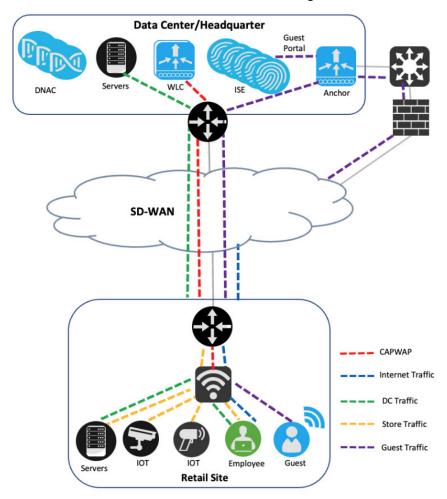
Location Services by Cisco Spaces

Cisco Spaces is a location services platform that runs on the cloud and offers real-time location data and analytics for various industries. By using wireless APs and other network devices, the platform gathers data on individuals' movement and assets in physical spaces. Then this data is analyzed to generate insights into user behavior, traffic patterns, and other significant metrics. The Cisco Spaces Connector 2.3.4 was verified in a solution test.

Currently, the Cisco Spaces Connector 3.0 does not support multiple interfaces.

Remote Site Traffic Flow

When using the FlexConnect wireless deployment at remote store and warehouse sites, the traffic generated by business wireless endpoints is locally switched. AP Control and Provisioning of Wireless Access Points (CAPWAP) traffic and guest access are transmitted to the central wireless controller. Any store-to-store traffic is obstructed by the Cisco SD-WAN policy or TrustSec. Additionally, traffic to the internet and cloud-based applications can exit directly through the local internet link instead of being redirected to the data center. This can be achieved through the Cisco SD-WAN Direct Internet Access policies.



Cisco Intelligent Capture

Cisco Intelligent Capture (iCAP) offers real-time technical insights into various wireless metrics from the viewpoint of both the client and AP. iCAP provides a direct communication link between Cisco DNA Center and APs, enabling each of the APs to communicate with Cisco DNA Center directly. This channel allows Cisco DNA Center to receive packet capture (PCAP) data, AP and client statistics, and spectrum data, which may not be available through wireless controllers. With iCAP, even the most challenging wireless issues can be resolved effortlessly.

To integrate iCAP with Cisco DNA Center, see the Cisco Intelligent Capture Deployment Guide.

Ekahau Integration

Ekahau can integrate with Cisco DNA Center through Ekahau AI Pro. This integration allows network engineers to design, plan, and optimize Wi-Fi networks using Ekahau AI Pro. After, they can export the design to Cisco DNA Center for deployment.

With this integration, Ekahau AI Pro can import network topology information and client information from Cisco DNA Center, allowing network engineers to design their Wi-Fi network based on real network data. Then Ekahau AI Pro can export the design to Cisco DNA Center, where the network can be deployed and managed.

Also, this integration enables Ekahau AI Pro to receive network configuration information from Cisco DNA Center, such as the locations of APs and their associated configuration settings. This allows network engineers to easily monitor the wireless network and identify areas that require optimization.

Overall, the Ekahau AI Pro integration with Cisco DNA Center provides network engineers with a streamlined, efficient process for designing, planning, and optimizing Wi-Fi networks.

If you are using Cisco DNA Center-exported Ekahau projects, the schema version 1.7 used in Ekahau AI Pro Version 11.1.0 and later is not compatible. Although Ekahau AI Pro doesn't provide a support statement, you can use the earlier Version 11.0.2.219, which is compatible with the exported projects. We recommend using the supported version until the latest schema version is supported.

Latency Impact

Latency can have a significant impact on retail operations and affect customer satisfaction. To ensure optimal performance, the round-trip latency between the AP and controller must not exceed 300 ms, and CAPWAP control packets should have priority over all other traffic. When it isn't possible to achieve the 300-ms round-trip latency, a practical solution is to configure the AP to perform local authentication

Onboard Devices with Plug and Play

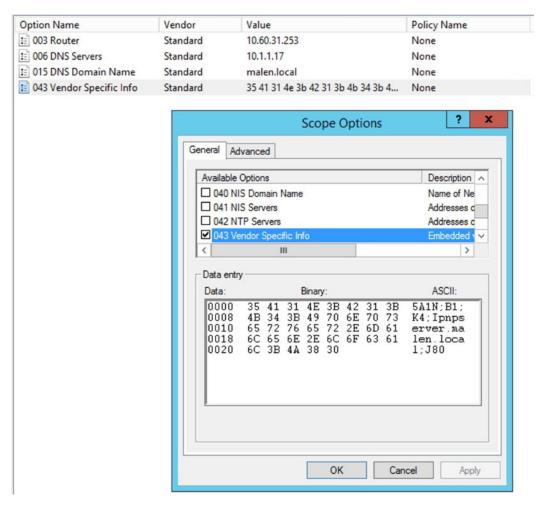
Plug and Play provisioning provides a way to automatically and remotely provision and onboard network devices with minimal network administrator and field personnel involvement.

If the Cisco DNA Center system certificate is issued by an external CA server, its common name (CN) should include the **pnpserver** hostname. Before starting Plug and Play, the DHCP pool should contain the option 43 string with the FQDN, B1, DNS server, and domain name.

See the following sample DHCP pool configuration on a Cisco switch.

```
ip dhcp pool PnP_Pool
network 214.2.64.0255.255.255.0
default-router 214.2.64.1
option 43 ascii "5A1D;B1;K4;Ipnpserver.<domain-name>;J80;"
domain-name <domain-name>
dns-server <dns-server>
```

A sample DHCP pool option configuration on a Windows Server is as follows:



For more details, see the Cisco DNA Center User Guide, Release 2.3.3.

Configure Access Points Workflow

To prevent Cisco DNA Center from running out of memory (OOM), we recommend that you limit the selection of APs to 2000 at a time when using the Configure Access Points workflow.

References

- FlexConnect Catalyst Wireless Branch Deployment Guide
- Cisco Extended Enterprise Nonfabric and SD-Access Fabric Design Guide
- Cisco DNA Center Administrator Guide, Release 2.3.3
- Cisco DNA Assurance User Guide, Release 2.3.3
- Cisco Spaces

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