

Bell Works Chicagoland Comes Alive Through a Complete Redevelopment Effort

Customer: Bell Works Chicagoland



Bell Works



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Joel Shandelman

Chief Technology Officer/Chief Energy Officer and Management Consultant at Bell Works




Market: Hospitality

Location: Chicago, USA

The Ameritech Center in Hoffman Estates, originally built as the former AT&T research facility, is being transformed into **Bell Works Chicagoland**. It is a destination for business and culture unlike any other in the region. By combining world-class workspaces, curated dining options, one-of-a-kind retail experiences, exciting cultural and entertainment events, and much more, it will become everything a great downtown can offer, all under one roof. It has been dubbed “the Metroburbs” for offering the same mix of work, retail and cultural activities that are typically found in an urban core, but within a suburban community.

The 1.65 million square foot former corporate campus, vacant since 2016, is being completely redeveloped by **Somerset Development**. Somerset is highly regarded for its expertise in the planning and development of innovative and environmentally conscious communities that evoke a strong sense of place and reflect a distinctive character. Somerset sees great potential in the facility and its suburban location near the vibrant city of Chicago. The company is modeling the total revamp of the Chicago area property after its highly successful Bell Works New Jersey mixed use development.

“Bell Works Chicagoland is a place with its own gravitational pull,” says Ralph Zucker, President of Somerset Development Company. “With office, residential, retail, hospitality, and more, this metroburbs has everything you would have in an urban core under one roof. It’s an amazing place, offering the ultimate amenities for life and work.”

Challenge 	Solution 	Result 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The re-imagined Ameritech Center – now Bell Works Chicagoland – needs enterprise networking throughout the massive facility▶ VLANs must be built-in to support private networks for tenants▶ The wireless network must support thousands of users and businesses in a vast space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Robust, highly secure family of Allied Telesis enterprise switches and router/firewalls▶ Wireless access points throughout the 1.65 million square foot facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The network supports all manner of uses, including business, retail, hospitality, entertainment and more▶ Pre-built network access is a selling point for prospective tenants

The Bell Works Redevelopment Depends on Strong Partnerships

The redevelopment of the old AT&T building is a massive undertaking that involves Somerset’s experienced team working side by side with partners ranging from architects and space designers to financial backers and technology specialists. The building’s total available area has been subdivided into many smaller spaces ready for immediate occupancy by a wide range of businesses. Everything they need to set up shop is available to them, including the modern technology businesses need for today and the future.

That technology plays a key role in supporting all aspects of the renovated facility. Each tenant area is provided with both wired and wireless access to the Internet, and running in the background is a network to play music if the tenant chooses. On a grand scale, the network also supports building security and operations, including the HVAC system for the entire facility.

Somerset chose the local IT consulting company [JK Consulting](#) as the lead IT systems integrator and ongoing managed services provider. The professionals of JK Consulting have over 100 combined years of engineering experience, in addition to website, hardware, software, and network experience in both corporate and residential markets. They are ideally positioned to manage the deployment of all the new technology throughout the Bell Works facility as well as provide ongoing managed services for the network and related technologies.

“JK Consulting brings the ideal mix of knowledge and experience to Bell Works Chicagoland,” says Joel Shandelman, Chief Technology Officer/ Chief Energy Officer and Management Consultant at Bell Works. “They have a critical role of integrating all the state-of-the-art technologies into the facility and keeping it all running smoothly for our tenants and residents.”

[Allied Telesis](#) is the partner providing the enterprise network for the entire facility. Somerset Development chose Allied Telesis for the

Chicagoland project based on the excellent networking experience the company delivered at the Bell Works New Jersey build-out. “We are very pleased with the comprehensive and future-forward network that Allied Telesis provided for the New Jersey Bell Works facility,” says Shandelman. “The tenants get the high performance connectivity that their businesses need, and the reliability of the network reduces the need for onsite maintenance and support. It’s a win for everyone.”

“We developed a proven track record with Somerset Development as we worked with them on the New Jersey project,” says Joe Jones, Senior Systems Engineer with Allied Telesis. “It’s great to be working with JK Consulting on this second redevelopment effort. Our two companies are of the same mindset when it comes to deploying networking solutions that are easy to manage while supporting a wide range of needs, now and into the future.”

“We’ve had a great experience working with Allied Telesis on this project,” says Justin Kelm, President and Owner of JK Consulting. “Their products provide great performance and resiliency and are easy to learn, deploy and maintain. Their people are knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. They’ve been so helpful in getting our team familiar with the equipment and the network in general.”

Networking for a Bustling Metroburb

The building had been a central office for the Ameritech Corporation, a major telecommunications company. Thus, fiber and copper infrastructure were already there, including patch panels that interconnect the edge closets back to the central networking room. Allied Telesis was able to reuse this infrastructure but added new fiber optic cables to interconnect telco closets far on the other side of the building back to the central core. Some infrastructure also existed for the physical security of the building, including video surveillance and card readers for doors.

Working with the existing elements and incorporating the broad requirements for the full network, Allied Telesis designed the network topology, which includes extensive wireless connectivity throughout the massive facility. Allied Telesis and JK Consulting systems engineers worked collaboratively to do the testing, installation, and deployment.

The networking team began with a proof of concept project to demonstrate the network’s ability to provide services such as wireless access for the tenant businesses; connectivity for the building management system, to manage components such as the HVAC system; and connectivity for the physical security network. The PoC moved into production once the capabilities were proven.

“We have a single network in Chicago and everything is Allied Telesis. All our services run on that network,” says Shandelman. “We have a brand new Siemens Desigo CC building management system and they implement on top of Allied Telesis. We leverage this converged network for every service we deploy and it saves us a lot of money.”

Network Reliability and Ease of Management and Maintenance

Many unique features of the Allied Telesis networking solution enable ease of use and management of the network. For example:

Related



Autonomous Wave Control (AWC)



Autonomous Management Framework (AMF)



Vista Manager EX

- Continuous Power over Ethernet (CPoE) capabilities allows surveillance cameras connected to a port on a switch to continue operating if a switch reboots or there is a power loss somewhere. The camera will still run and spool the video recording until the impediment is cleared.
- The Allied Telesis “zero touch” network management platform does a complete backup of the entire Bell Works network every day. So, if a switch malfunctions, it can be swapped out and the system recognizes the new switch and automatically pushes a configuration to it to get that switch up and running without an expensive visit from a network technician.
- Proactive anomaly detection via Net.MonitorSM network monitoring and smart technologies built into the switches alerts that there is a problem and precisely where it is, thus helping to reduce interruptions.
- All devices are managed through a single pane of glass using Vista ManagerTM EX, the backbone of the network management solution. Also running is the Autonomous Management FrameworkTM (AMF) solution, which delivers a suite of features to automate configuration management and simplify network management.

These and other capabilities exclusive to Allied Telesis ensure reliability in the network as well as ease of management and maintenance.

The Network is a Selling Point for Prospective Tenants

Bell Works Chicagoland is still onboarding tenants, and the complete networking package is one of the benefits in the tenant agreement. “Our network is providing a pathway for them to have access to the Internet, both wired and wireless,” says Joe Jones, Sales Engineer with Allied Telesis. “We have both AT&T and Comcast in the building terminating on our equipment. The tenants don’t have to pull their own circuits for these services unless they want to. One customer is bringing in their own fiber solution, which we are able to segment from the core services that we provide. We also have VLANs created for music that can be played throughout the building, if they choose, and we pipe in entertainment.”

“It’s a great selling point for our prospective tenants, to know that they can move right in and just plug into a network and get going,” says Shandelman of Bell Works. “And we don’t have to worry about the reliability of that network because JK Consulting and Allied Telesis have delivered a great solution.”