TEACHING

What I Configure to Get the Best From Apple Clients

By **Keith Parsons, CWNE #3** · 2026-08-07 · originally on LinkedIn

Yesterday, I shared the Wi-Fi recommendations Apple publishes for its own devices, with every item pointed straight at Apple's support pages. Those are Apple's words.

Here are mine: the design and configuration choices I make on the infrastructure to get the best out of Apple clients. Treat it as a starting list, not a finished one.

Put your 6 GHz radios on the Preferred Scanning Channels (PSC). Wi-Fi 6E and Wi-Fi 7 clients only actively scan the PSCs, so a 6 GHz AP sitting off-PSC gets found slowly, if at all.

Design coverage so a device always has a strong next-AP candidate before it hits its roaming threshold. Apple's own roaming guide puts that trigger around -70 dBm, so your cell-edge overlap and AP density help the client decide whether roaming actually happens.

Turn on 802.11k and 802.11v so Apple devices get the neighbor reports and BSS-transition hints they use to roam well. Be deliberate about 802.11r rather than enabling it by reflex, because Fast BSS Transition helps some designs and causes client problems in others.

Apple devices prefer a wider channel and will favor a 160 MHz AP in their own selection math, but in a dense deployment even an 80 MHz eats spectrum and forces channel-reuse and DFS problems. Client preference and deployment density pull against each other, and wider is not automatically better at scale.

Keep the whole ESS consistent: the same SSID, authentication, and VLAN on every AP. Per-AP config drift is exactly what quietly breaks the fast, clean roaming you are trying to deliver.

Turn on WMM and QoS for real-time traffic, and make the markings survive the wired path. FaceTime, AirPlay, and Wi-Fi Calling all ride the WMM access categories, so getting QoS right over the air buys you nothing if the wired network strips the markings on the way through.

Give 5 and 6 GHz enough coverage that a device is never dragged down onto 2.4 GHz. Keep the good bands strong where Apple devices actually live, and leave 2.4 GHz for the IoT that genuinely needs it. The goal is to push capable clients UP to the better bands, not to lean on 2.4 GHz as a fallback.

Step transmit power up by band. Set 5 GHz at least 6 dB above 2.4 GHz, and 6 GHz about 6 dB above 5 GHz. The higher bands carry more path loss, so leveling their power up keeps those cells competitive and pulls capable clients onto the cleaner spectrum instead of stranding them on 2.4 GHz.

That is my starting list, and I would rather it grow. What do you tune on your infrastructure to get the best out of Apple clients?

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