

A fixed location wireless help button allows customers to discretely call an associate for assistance.

Wireless Call Buttons Leverage 2-Way Radios to Improve Customer Service and Reduce Payroll Costs

Sprawling stores with something for everyone benefit greatly with affordable wireless call button systems to facilitate customer service.

With home center stores that range from 40,000 square feet to more than double that, there is something for everyone at this sprawling Midwestern chain. Varied departments and product offerings allow customers to shop for sporting goods equipment, kitchen cabinets, paint, work clothes, and even baby chicks. To ensure customers are served in a timely fashion, this chain recently rolled out wireless shopper call buttons in each of their stores.

Help? Just A Push-Button Away

Each department within this sprawling store has a Ritron Quick Assist wireless call button. Customers needing assistance simply press the red “Need Help?” button. A pre-recorded voice message, specific to that location, is instantly and discretely transmitted to all radio-equipped personnel in the store. The message is programmed to repeat every 60 seconds, until an associate responds to the customer and clears the alert by pressing the “reset” button.

“Customers are thrilled with the prompt response,” said the Corporate Loss Prevention Manager.

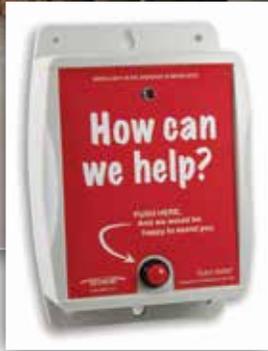
While customers appreciate associates hustling to assist them, what they don’t see is the behind the scenes activity that gener-

ates the quick action. When the assistance needed message is heard, protocol requires an associate from that department to immediately acknowledge they have the call. If the call is broadcast a second time, without an acknowledgment by a store associate, a department manager will respond and assist the customer.

In the 6+ months since the call buttons have been operational, the request for assistance has not escalated to the point where a store manager was required to assist—even during the hectic Christmas shopping season.

In addition to enhanced customer service, the call buttons are yielding positive results in other areas. Previously, store managers identified merchandise shrink in specific areas. These high-value, susceptible items are now placed under lock-and-key, and a wireless call button is located next to the merchandise. This serves to prevent theft while still maintaining prompt and attentive customer service.

The battery powered shopper call buttons are mounted on a stand which can easily be moved around the department. If the call button is not effective in a specific department, the recorded message can be changed and the callbox redeployed to a different department.



Highly visible and readily identified wireless help stations enhance the customer shopping experience and worker productivity.

How it Works

The Ritron Quick Assist® wireless shopper callbox enhances the shopping experience by providing a fast and easy means for a customer to ask for assistance. Available in the VHF MURS license-free business frequency band, and the licensed VHF and UHF business frequency bands, the Quick Assist® is compatible with any other business band analog two-way radio operating on the same frequency. A transmit LED lets the shopper know that their message has been sent and that an associate will soon arrive. The rugged polycarbonate housing is gasket-sealed and features a tamper-proof internal antenna. Bold graphics and simple messaging increases visibility and ease of use.

Each call button is wireless, powered by 6 AA alkaline batteries and operates completely independent of any other networks or infrastructure. Installation is simple and inexpensive and can be accomplished by store personnel. The call button does not require a wireless IP connection to the store network, and therefore less susceptible to maintenance headaches, system glitches, cost and downtime associated with systems that do.

A Natural Extension

Wireless radio call buttons are the next logical step in leveraging the 2-way radio-equipped workforce for improved efficiency. The US made Ritron call button is cost-effective and easy to seamlessly integrate with an existing 2-way radio system - no additional infrastructure required.

“It was an ideal add-on given the fact that they are already using radios in all of their stores” said the local Ritron reseller who has a longstanding relationship with the chain. “This gives them the ability to provide targeted customer assistance whenever and wherever it is needed, especially

since they did not want to broadcast “customer needs assistance” calls over the existing PA.”

The chain’s management team liked the idea, but wanted to ensure that it would work as promised. “We proved the concept in one store then started rolling out to other 7 other locations at the end of the 30-day test,” said the reseller.

More Productive Employees

Although there are no hard metrics or printouts associated with the system, which is intentional, employees certainly appear more productive. That’s because workers stay actively engaged in stocking, receiving, pricing and other “back-of-house” activities UNTIL they’re called.

“Communications are a lot better” said the Corporate IT Manager. “People are more collaborative, and the opportunity to be more productive seems to be there.”

“We can have people putting up freight, or receiving goods, or pricing items without sacrificing customer service,” he continued.

Summary

The Ritron Quick Assist has enabled this Midwestern home-center chain to “raise-the-bar” on customer service and can compete at a higher level, at minimal cost and complexity. Installation was simple and fast because the product is wireless, requires no infrastructure, and is operational with very minimal training. Store associates can engage in “back of house” activities like receiving freight, pricing, or other productivity-enhancing activities until called. Most importantly, for customers, wireless call buttons are helping management and associates deliver on the promise of enhanced customer service and improved productivity.