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ENHANCING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND STAFF EFFICIENCY IN THE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT



ASCOM AND RETAIL

A QUICKER RESPONSE TO CUSTOMER DEMANDS

Nowhere is the requirement to constantly assess and maintain operational efficiency sharper than in the retail industry. Shopping malls, supermarkets, specialist stores, security companies and many other similar organisations are under relentless pressure to deliver more for less and to do it now.

In this demanding environment, Ascom wireless communication solutions, supporting platforms and robust, highly flexible handsets offer much more than simple communication. They allow staff to interact seamlessly and efficiently with colleagues, machines, IT systems and customers. In other words, our solutions mean you can deliver a quicker response to a multitude of retail situations and ensure the right person is at the right place at the right time to deal with them. As a result, the improved information pathway our systems create can make a significant contribution towards establishing and maintaining a competitive advantage.

MEET MODERN RETAIL CHALLENGES WITH CONFIDENCE

Without exception, the global retail industry faces many challenges. These can be summarised as follows:

- Increased competition
- Pressure to apply more efficient operational procedures
- Higher customer expectations
- A trend towards fewer, larger retail outlets
- Declining customer loyalty
- More stringent health and safety legislation

Consider these points and only one conclusion can be reached – every retailer must constantly assess new methods of creating a leaner, fitter and more effective organisation.

ASCOM SOLUTIONS GIVE YOU A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Retailers can apply many strategies to achieve the successes they target. Potentially, one of the most defining of these is the application of communication solutions. How you, as a retailer, decide to address this can have long-reaching, positive consequences across your organisation and the positive effects of applying Ascom solutions are experienced in many areas.

Internally, productivity is boosted by smoother, easier connection of people, places and data while decision-making is simplified, allowing system owners to enjoy increased revenue. When it comes to your staff, the ease of communication delivered by Ascom functionality expresses itself in two ways. Safety and security are improved which boosts morale among existing staff and makes recruiting new team members easier and staff deployment can be optimised. Furthermore, your customers also enjoy better service in that their problems can be addressed more quickly and efficiently allowing you to be perceived as a more caring service provider.



WHERE CAN ASCOM MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Critical communication areas within a retail operation can involve both 'human-to-human' interaction and interaction that occurs when a customer, potential customer or member of staff must interact with inanimate technology. Both types of situation occur frequently and although their nature can be diverse, they share one common characteristic in that your ability to deliver high levels of operational excellence is being tested. What is also being tested is the standard of the communication solutions and technology you are applying. It goes without saying that you must have absolute confidence in this technology. But exactly how and where can Ascom apply technological expertise in the retail environment?



FOCUSED SOLUTIONS FOR EVERYDAY RETAIL SITUATIONS – STAFF SECURITY

LoneWorker Alarm With Location

It is an inevitable but sad fact that retail outlets face an increased security risk. Workers who find themselves manning premises without colleagues or working late hours should be able to do so with peace of mind. Ascom delivers this in the form of handsets featuring one-push alarms, PTT (Push To Talk) capability and a location finding function.

Threat management

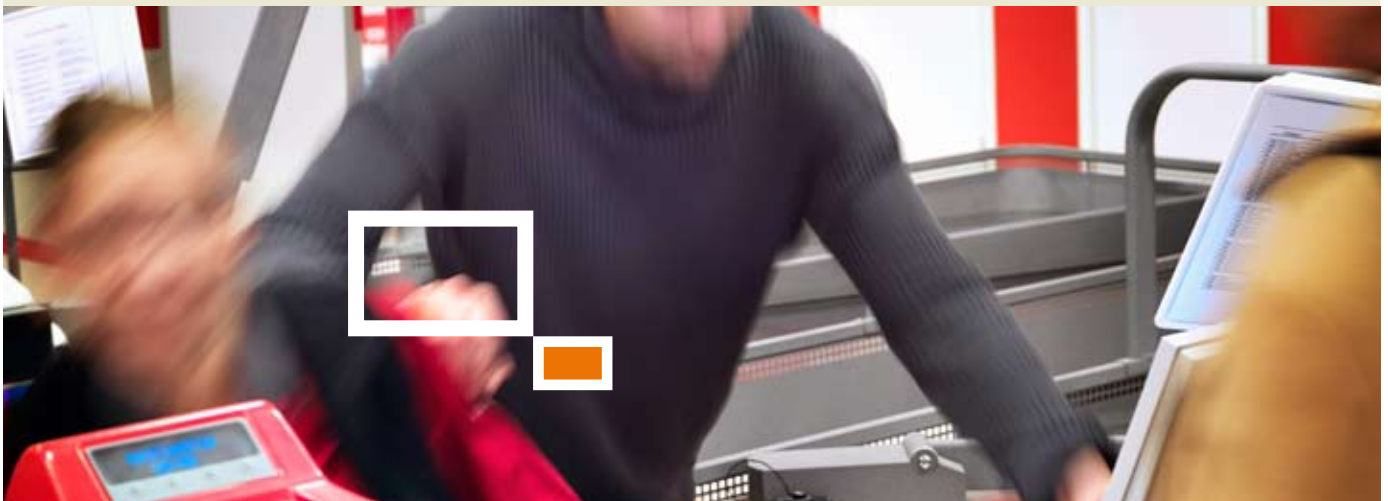
When a retail outlet receives an unwanted visit from shoplifters, silent alarms with fast, direct, priority connection to security staff or police can be activated discreetly. This feature is also particularly appreciated at high-risk premises such as jewellers and currency exchanges.

Burglar alarm

As well as being connected directly to the relevant security services, burglar alarms can also be linked directly to handsets. This allows staff on the premises to evaluate a prompt and effective response.

Speech monitoring

When a handset alarm is activated, the microphone on the handset is discreetly activated in a highly sensitive mode with the speaker muted. This default setting gives the answering party the opportunity to listen to events as they occur and take an appropriate decision on how to act. This feature provides a high level of security for staff on scene as well as allowing security personnel to monitor and survey the situation remotely.



FOCUSED SOLUTIONS FOR EVERYDAY RETAIL SITUATIONS – CUSTOMER SERVICE

At the cashdesk

The individual functions and flexibility offered by Ascom solutions allow for more effective management and service of customers. For example, when a cashier needs a price check, cash exchange or supervisor support, they can do so instantaneously and discreetly at the push of a button. This facility ensures checkout queues keep flowing, allowing customers to enjoy a more relaxing retail experience.

Quicker customer assistance

Even in the most efficiently run retail outlets, situations occur where customers cannot find the item they are looking for or have some other product related query. In these cases, a push button facility with direct access to the relevant staff member allows problems to be addressed immediately, increasing customer satisfaction and contributing to sales revenue.

Cleaning

In supermarkets or other food retail outlets spillages occur. With direct, one-push communication to staff responsible for cleaning, disruption to customers is minimised and a pleasant shopping environment can be maintained.

Fitting room assistance

In larger fashion retail stores it is a well-established fact that if a customer takes a garment into the fitting room that turns out to be the wrong size, they tend to leave without completing the purchase. The reason being that it's simply too much hassle to try to find a member of staff to take care of the problem. With a simple push-button in the fitting room, assistance will arrive in seconds – the result is a happier customer and a complete purchase.

Contacting parents via a paging device

Parents leaving their children in a stores crèche can be given a pager and discreetly notified if their child needs to be collected earlier than agreed. With a communication system from Ascom there is no need to announce over a loudspeaker system causing unnecessary worry.

Recycling station

If a bottle recycling station or other similar apparatus jams, it can be extremely frustrating for the customer. This is understandable, as they may be standing there with large quantities of material to be recycled. Solve this problem by simply installing a single push-button connected to the relevant member of staff who can provide assistance.



FOCUSED SOLUTIONS FOR EVERYDAY RETAIL SITUATIONS

– OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Fire alarm and evacuation

When a fire alarm is activated, a message can be instantaneously sent to all staff detailing the location of the alarm allowing the member of staff closest to the area in question to quickly verify the threat. By doing so, retailers can avoid false alarms, unnecessary evacuations and the loss of business these situations inevitably create. If the threat turns out to be real, the quicker response and ease of communication an Ascom system delivers can ensure a faster, safer and more orderly evacuation.

Stocktaking, inventory and goods handling

Carrying out an inventory, ordering new stock or accepting a delivery are all essential parts of retail operations. They are also tasks that can be accomplished by Ascom communication solutions and handsets. Bar-code scanning device may communicate through the handsets with direct connection to relevant software offer optimal efficiency to all retail outlets. Furthermore, when a delivery arrives, a message can be sent to the relevant members of staff who can ensure it is unloaded and distributed correctly and quickly.

Freezer and refrigerator alarm

If the temperature in a freezer or refrigeration unit drops below a certain level, an alarm notification is automatically generated and sent to the relevant member of staff responsible for maintenance. In large food retailers, responding to such incidents before food perishes represents an opportunity to reduce wastage costs as well as ensuring the retail environment is always clean and pleasant.



ASCOM AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY
EXPLOIT YOUR AREAS OF MAXIMUM OPPORTUNITY





Establishing and maintaining a competitive edge in the retail industry involves ensuring customers enjoy a pleasant shopping experience. When attempting to achieve this, your ability to deliver a quicker response to a wide spectrum of situations will be tested – as will the communication solutions at your disposal.

Applying Ascom wireless communication solutions across your operations allows you to deliver customer service excellence today and create the added service value that will allow you to maintain this in the future with reduced costs.



ASCOM AND OPTIMAL COMMUNICATION

PUTTING YOUR DEMANDS IN FOCUS

We have already established how important communication solutions can be in the retail sector. The effective running of organisations and processes increasingly depends on the timely and focused transfer of information, not just between people, but also between people and a diverse range of inanimate equipment. But in the course of day-to-day operations, just how do Ascom wireless communication solutions give you the edge? To answer this, it is necessary to consider the key elements behind what makes Ascom solutions uniquely effective.

Technology independent

Ascom continually develops and offers a range of technology platforms that are used as the base for tailor-made solutions. This could involve Paging, DECT, IP-DECT or WiFi. Platforms can be mixed on the same application and every one enables a high level of smart integration and interfacing with existing retail management information technology such as computer, BMS or alarm systems. All this can be done to suit a customer's particular requirement.

Seamless integration

Ascom's wireless platform portfolio complies with a variety of open standards. These enable seamless, vendor neutral integration with an almost unlimited array of existing equipment, business systems legacy or IP-PBX.

Operational efficiency

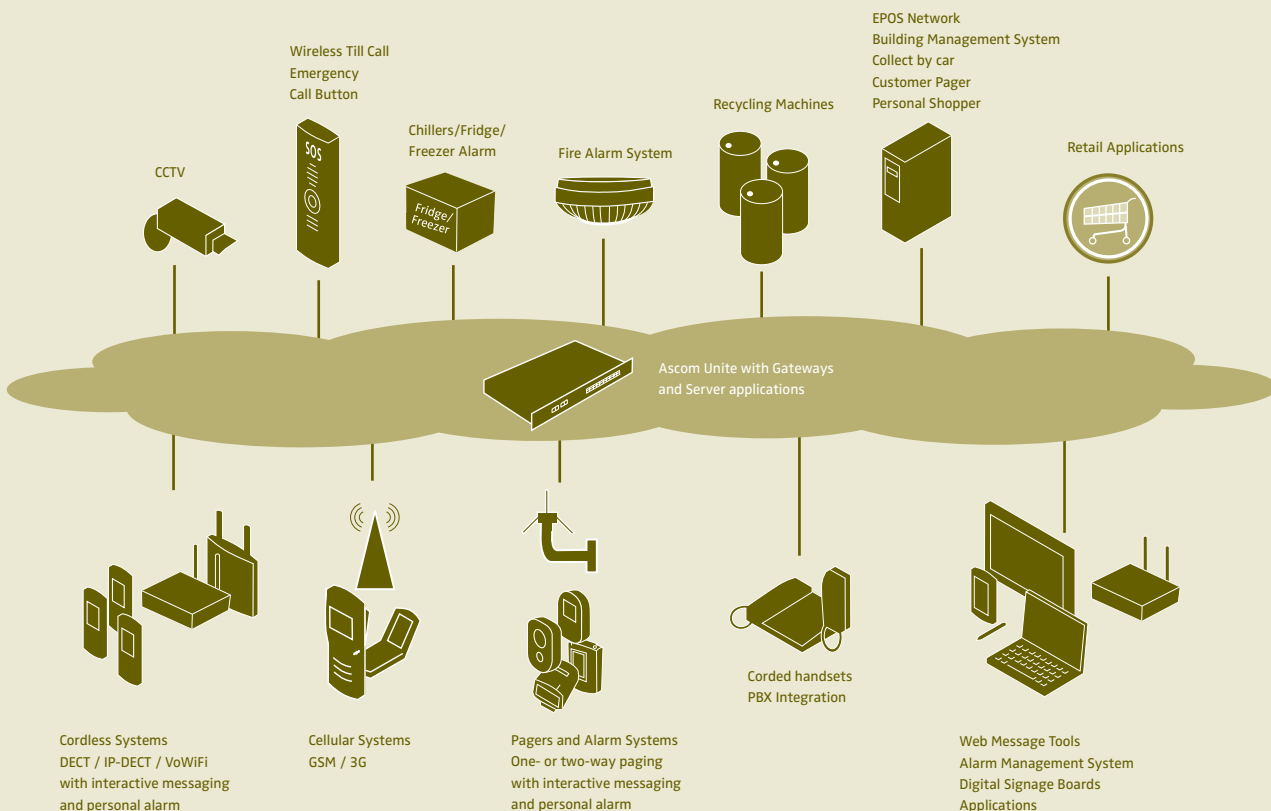
A wireless communication system from Ascom allows for remote administration. The remote configuration and management of VoWiFi and IP-DECT systems and functionality as well as DECT handset configuration and software upgrades represents reduces administration, enhances operational practicality and reduces costs across your operations.



Surveillance and logging

Because our systems and accompanying management software enable comprehensive logging and tracking of how communications flow within your retail organisation, system administrators can deliver clear and accurate reports to managers. As a consequence, potential problem areas can be identified and addressed quickly.

ASCOM RETAIL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM



Ascom VoWiFi, IP-DECT, DECT and Paging applications can not only co-communicate on the same system, their open architecture enables smart integration with practically any enterprise process or third party equipment.

ASCOM AND YOUR FUTURE

USE OUR EXPERIENCE, SHARE OUR VISION

Choosing a communication solutions partner can potentially be one of the most defining decisions a retailer has to make. Why is this? Quite simply, the consequences of making the right decision will have a positive impact on costs, system upgrade opportunities, running costs, administration time and much more. Furthermore, any positive consequences will be felt not just today but tomorrow and beyond. There is much to consider – and Ascom is uniquely placed to help you find the right solution and apply it with optimal efficiency.

Optimised for today, ready for tomorrow

An Ascom system is designed to offer optimal value and efficiency in respect of total cost of ownership. We achieve this by supplying technology, solutions and robust, highly flexible products that reduce the cost of legacy installation competence, hardware and dedicated cabling, local configuration and proprietary components. In practical terms, this means we can plan, design and deliver a system tailor-made for your organisation, fully compatible with existing systems and fine-tuned to help you achieve your commercial ambitions. In addition, we apply open architecture standards. This gives you peace of mind, as you can be sure we are planning future system development around an existing Ascom installation that will not become redundant or require frequent replacement.



Market leading knowledge and support

With our extensive knowledge base and long experience of working across many segments and applications, Ascom is uniquely capable of helping customers find the best options for their individual needs. Starting with an assessment of your operations and continuing through to system specification, development and installation, you have full access to expertise and consulting of the highest quality. After installation, our Service and Maintenance Packages offer comprehensive cover and qualified support, ensuring you receive maximum value from your chosen solution.

A proven partner

With over 50 years of experience in our field and some of the world's largest retailers in our client list, it could be said that we are a world leader in wireless communication solutions. We have achieved our success and credibility through our commitment to delivering fit for purpose solutions that directly benefit efficiency and safety as well as adding value to the customer experience. We also attribute our success to the fact that we are never complacent and constantly seek to innovate and develop for the benefit of our customers, both new and old.



MULTIPLE LOCATIONS, DIVERSE NEEDS AND DEMANDING CUSTOMERS ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR ASCOM

How do you successfully deliver state-of-the-art wireless communication solutions to a retailer with over 350 stores, a diverse retail offer, high customer demands and 6 000 staff? A good question – and one which Ascom was pleased to consider when one of the world's largest retail chains issued us with this very challenge.

Starting with a well-defined ambition to develop a system that supports customer satisfaction through delivering a quicker response to their diverse needs, a customer-intimate solution was applied. By applying this solution, the supporting system infrastructure could be seamlessly integrated with legacy hard wire telephone systems. In this way, everyone in the organisation, from boardroom to stockroom could enjoy instant voice and text communication and a wide diversity of applications specifically devised to address problem areas in stores.

Using a pre-programmed push-button messaging facility and interfacing with the DECT environment, units were installed at every cashdesk and fitting room in the store. With a single push of a specific key, checkout staff was able to request assistance for a multitude of everyday retail problems including supervisor assistance, price checking, cash exchange, cleaning and much more. The system delivered instant messages to pre-programmed recipients, allowing them to act promptly to address the problem. Using the same principle, customers in the fitting room were able to receive prompt assistance when required.

In this case, throughout the retailer's entire operation, Ascom experience and expertise delivered qualified benefits in terms of cost and time efficiency through effective, empowering technology.



The Ascom solution is showing Marks & Spencer a real benefit. Both in cost and time efficiencies. A quicker and more focussed response to customer needs is vital in today's very competitive retail market.



WHEN SECURITY IS A PRIORITY, TRUST ASCOM TO DELIVER

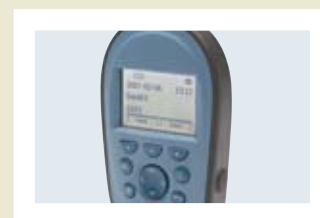
When communication requirements require solutions above the ordinary, our expertise can be invaluable. This was the case when UK retailer Boots were approached by the government to operate a funded programme to provide daily methadone prescriptions to street drug users as part of a rehabilitation program.

To support this service, Boots were obliged to provide access to their store pharmacy for up to 60 prescribed methadone users every day. Of course, this created a security challenge, as the general shopping public would be moving freely in the same retail space. With this potentially problematic situation in mind, Boots approached Ascom.

After a comprehensive overview of sites and requirements, Ascom UK 'Press for Assistance' Emergency Wireless Call Buttons were distributed at 11 to 13 locations within the store. The system enables staff to activate the call button if they see a theft or require security assistance and previously, it had been used primarily at high-value fragrance sales points, cashdesks and pharmacy areas throughout Boots stores. The PFA button activates a group of alarm receivers carried by security & store management teams. All pagers activated display the exact location of the call button i.e. CLINIQUE – PHARMACY – BANK OF 12 TILLS GROUND FLOOR CONSULTATION ROOM 1 – PHOTO – OPTICIANS

The system was designed to provide security staff with a precise incident location thus allowing them to initiate and execute a faster, more appropriate response. In this respect, the solution proved to be a great success as response times are now measured in seconds rather than minutes. Further benefits of this application were an increased feeling of security amongst staff – and a retail chain that was no longer seen as a soft target for theft.

Ascom makes Boots the Chemist a safer place to work with a communication solution based emergency wireless call buttons linked to paging devices.



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ASCOM WIRELESS SOLUTIONS is a world-leading supplier of on-site wireless communication solutions based on VoWiFi, IP-DECT, DECT, Nurse Call and Paging systems. Our expertise and experience allows us to deliver solutions that can contain both message handling, alarm and mobility platforms for speech and data communication. Professionals in industry, hospitals, secure establishments, elderly care, the retail sector and the hotel industry all benefit from the smart integration our tailor-made solutions represent. In turn, they enjoy facilitating mobility, enabling efficiency and increased personal security.

Every one of the 75 000 systems we have installed worldwide is unique, designed to solve specific customer problems and built to last. Thanks to our scalable and modular architecture, as well as the optimal integration of modern wireless and IP applications, some of the systems we originally supplied 20 years ago are still in operation and reliably serving our customers' needs.

Ascom
Wireless Solutions
P.O. Box 8783 SE-402 76 Göteborg, Sweden
T +46 31 55 93 00 | F +46 31 55 20 31
www.ascom.com