

ASCOM WIRELESS SOLUTIONS PRESS BACKGROUNDER

Name:	Ascom Wireless Solutions – business unit of The Ascom Group
Founded:	1955
Positioning:	Leader in on-site wireless communications
Size:	1 150 employees
Revenue:	265.2 CHFm, (308.3 MCHF) 2008
Head office:	Gothenburg, Sweden
Senior executives:	Fritz Mumenthaler, Head of Business Unit Wireless Solutions & Executive Board Member, Stefan Bramberg, VP Technology, Dennis Andersson, VP Sales, Peter Hårdi, VP International Marketing & Product Management, Peter Thomsen, VP Finance & Controlling, Anders Melin, VP Supply Chain Management, Rolf Veldman VP Human Resources
Key markets:	Healthcare, Elderly care, Manufacturing, Process industries, Secure establishments, Retail and Hotels
Customers:	More than 75,000 systems installed across Western Europe and US. Examples of key customers: Volvo, Nestlé, BMW, Marriott, Astra Zeneca, the majority of university clinics in Europe
Position:	Market leader in work place telephony and professional messaging with a market share of 30%
Customer value:	Quicker response to mission-critical processes
Solutions:	Customised wireless solutions, including on-site paging, messaging, alarms, mobile devices, voice and data communications
Partners:	Aastra, Alcatel Lucent, Avaya, Cisco, GE Healthcare, Innovaphone, Mitel, STT

The market leader in professional on-site wireless communications, Ascom Wireless Solutions, is one of two core business units within The Ascom Group. Founded in the 1950s and headquartered in Gothenburg, Sweden, and with subsidiaries in 10 countries Ascom Wireless Solutions was traditionally a paging company, but today provides tailored wireless solutions to fulfil market-specific needs.

The company offers a broad range of customised solutions, which enables quicker response through smart integration with existing systems. The solutions are based on VoWiFi, IP-DECT, DECT, Nurse Call and paging technologies, smartly integrated into existing enterprise systems. More than 75,000 systems are installed at major companies all over the world, including the majority of university hospitals in Europe.

The company has an advanced R&D department and supply and logistics operations in Sweden, as well as sales organisations throughout Europe, the US and Asia-Pacific.

As a market leader itself, Ascom Wireless Solutions, counts market leaders in all sectors among its customer base. However, the company works with organisations of all sizes, from those with international operations to local companies.

Market sector breakdown

Healthcare

Ascom is the leader in on-site wireless communications technology and integration for the healthcare sector, with solutions installed in a third of healthcare establishments in Western Europe.

Ascom's solutions combine cordless phone, alarm, pager and messaging systems to enable healthcare practitioners, laboratories, radiology departments and support staff to respond quicker and more effectively. Although hospitals in Europe and across the US are currently investing huge sums of money in information technology, they often cannot realise the benefits of these investments fully.

While processes within individual departments – such as radiology or wards – are improved, bottlenecks in the information flow between departments are often not addressed.

Ascom works closely with healthcare establishments to remove these bottlenecks, helping improve staff productivity so that more time can be devoted to the crucial issue of patient care. This means less waiting time for patients who then receive more attention from medical staff and can be treated more effectively.

Not only does this result in greater patient satisfaction, it also frees up beds for new patients more quickly, helping to reduce the ongoing problem of ever-increasing waiting lists. A professional on-site communications infrastructure also contributes to effective risk management by ensuring quicker response to emergencies, better co-ordination of resources, and improved safety within the healthcare environment.

Elderly care

Ascom on-site wireless communications enables quicker response. This delivers numerous benefits for the staff, residents and managers of care homes, nursing homes and assisted living facilities. One of the most important benefits for people working within elderly care is the time saving. Accurate, timely information – such as resident calls – go direct to the right person and minimises unnecessary 'running about'. Staff gains more time for care duties and meaningful interaction with residents. Providing even better care under less stressful conditions also increases job satisfaction. And residents will benefit from prompt attention from designated carers which helps to ensure residents' physical and psychological wellbeing. The residents feel safer knowing quality care is always within easy reach.

The benefits of an Ascom wireless solution will become increasingly valuable over time. That's because they help to meet many of the challenges facing elderly-care professionals- challenges that will only intensify in the future.

Industry

Ascom has a customer base of more than 20,000 systems installed throughout the world. Wireless communications technology is now becoming an integral part of an organisation's investment in systems for monitoring, control and production planning, helping increase efficiencies and return on investment. In turn, leading to greater organisational agility, quicker response to on-site emergencies, fewer disturbances (which inevitably lead to production downtime), and improved information flow.

Typically in process industries, manufacturing and utilities, operations are physically dispersed and key individuals are on-site but out of sight. So with health and safety and physical security paramount, getting the right information at the right time – regardless of location – and responding quickly to critical situations helps reduce risk and means the difference between life and death.

Ascom's on-site wireless communications and integration technology for customers within manufacturing and process industries helps keep staff in touch, providing time-critical information directly to individuals' pockets – via phone, pager, handset – as speech, text, alarms or data.

Retail

Customer satisfaction is the driving force behind successful retailing and many retail groups use an Ascom solution as part of their service strategy. The thinking behind is the ability to provide rapid, secure and unambiguous communication to give quicker response to customer needs. Adopting a truly mobile platform also significantly improves store efficiency and helps empower employees in their day-to-day responsibilities.

Shops and shop assistants are today – unfortunately more than ever before – exposed to a number of security risks in their daily work. This trend makes many working situations unsafe and reveals the obvious need for reliable security.

Ascom's security solutions for shops and shopping centres ensure that staff can get on with their daily tasks safely and effectively. In the event of an alarm, for example when a shoplifter has been detected, security staff can always be reached and the time from reaction to appropriate action is minimized. The right problems are solved at the right time and unnecessary and expensive evacuations can be avoided.

Hospitality

While each hotel is unique, there are still many similarities. Guests demand efficient service; those working in reception areas want to feel personally safe around the clock and technical staff want to know quickly when and where any fault has occurred.

Ascom's dedicated hotel communication solutions are complete. They are compatible with other existing systems such as booking, management, lift and fire alarms and telephony platform – transforming the hotel's existing fixed system into mobile systems enabling the level of service, security flexibility and efficiency desired by every hotel.

Summary of key market-driven issues

- Greater efficiencies – wireless communications can lead to improved patient care, security and comfort and reduced waiting times in hospitals, as well as improved monitoring, production and control operations in manufacturing and process industries.
- Future proofing – whether WiFi, IP-DECT, DECT or on-site paging, key decision-makers can ensure their chosen technology is right for improving communications and information flow.
- Litigation – is one of the biggest threats faced by the healthcare sector, so optimising interdepartmental communications can be a major step towards avoiding court cases.
- Production downtime – wireless communications enable production staff to respond quicker to disturbances that lead to production delays or cause defective products or services.
- The agile organisation – why wireless communications can lead to improvements like faster adjustment of scheduling and responding more quickly to customers' demands.
- Increased security – in all workplaces where staff safety has top priority, the Ascom wireless communication solution for personal security is a must.