



Boots the Chemist Goes Digital with MOTOTRBO™



Boots Enjoys Future Proofed Communications in a Single Handset at National Stores Service Centre in Nottingham

Boots the Chemist is the United Kingdom's leading health and beauty retailer. The company supplies its 2,600 outlets in the UK and Ireland from an 800,000 sq ft Stores Service Centre (SSC) in Nottingham. The SSC stocks thousands of product lines and is set to handle Boots' entire range by 2009. It operates 16 hours a day, six days a week and services many stores on an almost daily basis.



Streamlining On-Site Communications in a Time-Critical, Performance-Driven Environment Built on Lean, Efficient Operating Practices

SSC employees were using a number of disparate technologies to communicate with colleagues in their functional group. Engineers, system managers and production line 'jam busters' had all set up one-to-one communications systems based largely on DECT or mobile phones to meet their individual needs. Poor coverage in some areas was impacting on voice quality and the ability to reach key people quickly.

In addition to one-to-one communication, group calling was becoming essential to coordinate teams instantly, resolve issues rapidly and maintain the fast order turnaround times and high service standards that Boots stores around the country depend on. The SSC decided to replace its multiple communications systems with a single, integrated solution. Logistics managers evaluated the options for providing communications for its 140 users and considered implementing a trunked analogue two-way radio system. The team consulted a Motorola Authorised Dealer who proposed a cost-effective conventional digital solution for its wider coverage, improved audio clarity, greater capacity, efficient use of spectrum and ability to combine a broad range of functions into a single device.

MOTOTRBO Offers Maximum Value for Money with Unrivalled Performance and the Flexibility to Meet the Needs of Multiple User Groups

The SSC selected MOTOTRBO for its comprehensive, scalable, next-generation feature set that would also support its requirements for a lot longer than older analogue technology and make on-site communication between all functions and work groups simple and efficient.

The slightly higher network costs of digital over analogue were compensated by its lower set-up, hardware and licensing overheads. Digital's ability to provide two slots on a single channel meant that only three MOTOTRBO DR3000 repeaters were required to deliver six talk channels and ensure complete coverage in all buildings and outside areas on the Boots head office complex. The SSC purchased 55 MOTOTRBO DP3600 hand portables and 18 MOTOTRBO DM3600 fixed mobiles for use by its 140 users.

After the radios had been pre-programmed to meet the needs of different work groups, setting up the new solution took just half a day. Users were already familiar with the cell-phone look and feel of the MOTOTRBO handsets, which made training quick and easy. Most staff became confident in the key functions after just 20 minutes training, which helped increase their effectiveness from day one.

Organisation name
Boots the Chemist

Industry name
Distribution

Product

- MOTOTRBO DP 3600 hand portables (55)
- MOTOTRBO DM 3600 fixed mobiles (18)
- MOTOTRBO DR 3000 repeaters (3)

Solution Features

- Single on-site communications system
- Five programmable feature buttons
- Users competent after 20 minutes training
- 140 users working 16 hour, 2-shift day

Benefits

- Talk time extended by 40%
- Hardware costs cut by 50%
- Licensing costs halved
- Five man-days saved each month

“Motorola is the gold standard for quality and reliability in two-way radio. I am confident that we will achieve a 100% return on our investment within 12 months.”

Chris Revill, Logistics Engineering Manager, Store Service Centre, Boots Plc

Boots Standardises on MOTOTRBO for On-Site Communications at 800,000 sq ft Distribution Centre that Services 2,600 Outlets in the UK and Ireland

Boots the Chemist wanted to replace the different mobile and DECT communications systems used at its Nottingham Store Service Centre (SSC) with a single on-site solution. MOTOTRBO was implemented in half a day. The cell-phone look and feel of the handsets ensured rapid user adoption, while MOTOTRBO's flexible programming capabilities enable the radios to meet the needs of all user groups. MOTOTRBO has helped the SSC to improve response times, boost operating efficiencies and cut costs.

MOTOTRBO DP3600 hand portables come complete with UHF antenna, 1300mAh NiMH battery, belt-clip and Impres single unit charger, providing an out-of-the-box solution. The long-life battery means that most Boots SSC employees are able to work 16 hours without the need for recharging. Dustproof, water resistant and subject to accelerated life testing to military standards, in common with all Motorola radios, the DP3600s are resilient enough to withstand the everyday wear and tear of a busy warehouse environment.

The MOTOTRBO DM3600 fixed mobile radios with their plug-and-play functionality are used by desk-based staff such as line managers and function heads. Both hand portable and mobile models benefit from a two-line alphanumeric display, digital calling options, call forwarding, easy-to-use menu keys, and large volume control knob. Channel switching allows supervisory staff to communicate with all user groups. Five programmable buttons allow users to tailor functionality to streamline communications and have been programmed by DCRS to customise the radios to the SSC's needs. Three of the buttons are used to provide one-stop hot lines to the warehouse management system control room, the engineers' help desk and the Engineering Flow controller. A fourth button delivers manual dialling facilities to save users scrolling down the menu list if they know the ID of the radio they are calling. The fifth button is used as a keypad lock to protect against accidental transmission. The SSC's jam busters, who resolve non-technical faults such as broken pallets and tears in packaging, use the MOTOTRBO radios to communicate across the distribution centre and smooth the flow of goods coming in and out of the SSC. Frequent calls are made by the jam busters but transmission usually lasts for only a few seconds. The team of engineers also has its own channel, which is used to alert colleagues instantly to equipment problems and ensure machinery breakdowns are fixed before they impact on delivery schedules to the stores. Engineers only communicate when machinery is malfunctioning, which tends to mean that fewer, longer calls are made. The SSC's information technology managers use the MOTOTRBO hand portables to liaise with each other when monitoring performance of the automated warehouse management solution on the factory floor. Other user groups include controllers, production teams and operations managers.

The six talk channels were configured to match the calling patterns of the different user groups while ensuring maximum availability. Average talk time is five seconds, with a time-out timer after 30 seconds. Some 60% of the calls are group calls, but the ability to broadcast to all users in a group simultaneously has made a significant impact on response times in a time-critical environment.

Digital Doubles Channel Capacity and Halves Licensing and Hardware Costs while Improved Operating Efficiencies Save Five Man Days Per Week

Choosing digital over analogue has improved channel efficiency by doubling capacity per channel and reduced licensing costs. Hardware costs have also been cut by 50%, while TDMA protocol batteries extend talk time by 40% and enable most users to work two shifts on a single charge. MOTOTRBO's ease of programming and comprehensive feature set provide the flexibility to accommodate the different communication needs of Boots' 20 user groups within a single handset.

Reworking day-to-day practices and escalation procedures around the functionality of the MOTOTRBO two-way radio system is already generating significant efficiency benefits. The SSC estimates that it saves five minutes per person per day using the radios, which adds up to almost six hours per day or nearly five man-days each week. These efficiencies have been achieved within only three months of go-live and the SSC anticipates even greater savings in the future.

For more information please contact your local Motorola Authorised Dealer or Distributor



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