RETAIL RESET

Keeping Frontline Worker Needs
Front of Mind: UCaaS

spectralink

The retail sector was already tackling growing demand for digitalization and changes in shopper behavior when the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

Social distancing brought about an incredible acceleration in eCommerce popularity[1] and trends like Buy Online Pick Up In-Store, or omnichannel shopping.[2] Unfortunately, safety concerns have also exacerbated staff shortages, with record numbers of retail associates leaving the workforce.[3]
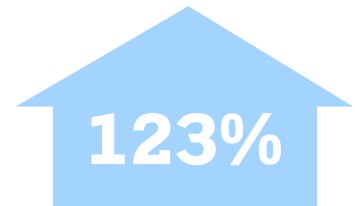
So how can retailers face this challenging environment and put frontline workers back at the heart of their operations?

123%

Knowledgeable store associates can generate a **123%** increase in sales revenue.[4]

First things first

Store operators and IT need to get on the same page early on in the planning process if they want to design a Unified Communications (UC) system that really works for all those involved. Far too often, these departments only come into contact at the deployment stage, when it is too late to realize that the latest app or gadget doesn't really improve frontline worker efficiency or safety.

Instead, you need to think carefully about mobile worker needs at the UC planning stage, drawing on the opinions and suggestions of both store operators and IT.

It's also important to think about how activities on the shop floor are changing or can be improved. As retailers start to migrate to UCaaS (Unified Communications as a Service), it is finally possible to imagine new ways of using mobile devices to improve communications, productivity, and safety. It's finally time to regroup all top-class services and tools on a single handset for all your frontline worker communication needs.

Communications

Using a range of devices inevitably means carrying different handsets on a toolbelt or running back and forth from one location to to another to log information on a fixed device such as a computer. Both these options are impractical and a drain on resources.

In retail, there generally used to be a PBX-centric model where each store had its own PBX, and within each store, you had:

- **A landline** to talk to HQ, other stores, or customers
- **Wireless telephony** to talk to storage or other departments
- **Walkie-talkies** to talk to each other within the store
- **A computer** to log information and use productivity apps
- **The till/checkout** with Point of Sale systems

Imagine you're a customer calling into a store to find out if a product is available: you probably have to wait a little for someone that is doing price changes or talking to another customer to reach the landline. They then will put you on hold as they reach for their walkie-talkie and speak to their colleague in another area of the shop floor. Failing that option, they will have to switch devices again and use a wireless phone to speak to the storeroom and find out if the product is available. All this time, you are on hold, wondering what is going on and wishing you'd just ordered it online.

With UC tools, however, it's an entirely different story. The sales associate can pick up the call from wherever they are in the store, shortening pick-up times and bringing you onto the call with colleagues from elsewhere in the store or the stockroom. They can even connect you with another store nearby or add video conferencing to show you the model they have found and check if it's exactly what you are looking for.

44% of customers still want the option to speak to a store associate remotely, highlighting the multichannel nature of shopping today.[5]

Productivity

With UCaaS, frontline workers are finally empowered to work more productively and to really make their operations efficient, whether it's taking stock, inventory management, or clienteling, wherever they are in the store.

Helping them be more productive on the move also means allowing workers to continue to use all the productivity tools they need without learning how to use new ones. The flexibility of Spectralink's UCaaS solutions means that not only will tools be interoperable with existing systems, but they will be able to accommodate new ones develop as your business model changes to adapt to new trends such as:

- Growing preference for BOPIS
- Multichannel shopping research by customers
- Mobile supported in-store browsing
- IoT and interactive store experiences

As the sector experiences mass resignations, training takes on added value both as a means to increase employee loyalty through investment in skills development and in helping to bring new resources up to speed.

Future of retail training

- **47%** of retail staff want training to be delivered digitally
- **74%** would welcome mobile training
- **41%** want training to be continuous, with bite-sized modules
- **24%** want to access training on demand
- **Only 14%** receive training via a mobile or app

UC allows retailers to provide training materials such as on-demand short-form videos directly on handsets so that staff can complete modules in quiet moments during their shift without having to leave the shop floor and access a computer or another device. Enabling workers to use their downtime more productively improves operations but also increases staff satisfaction.

Employee Safety

In case of danger, retail employees are typically advised to lock themselves in a safe place. They also need to call for help as quickly as possible. This is only practical if the device they carry all the time is equipped with an emergency push-button feature that they can easily press as they run to safety. Your people shouldn't have to choose between quickly alerting emergency services and getting to safety!

At the same time, even though we tend to think of stores as busy places, there are a number of instances when staff have to work alone: security guards at night, workers in the storeroom, logistics pickers, and other staff in large, distributed environments, workers cleaning or opening the store early in the morning or late in the evening. These lone workers are often the only ones about, and if something happens to them, no one will be able to intervene in a timely manner.

If a lone worker slips and gets hurt or has a medical emergency, your devices should be able to automatically call for help.

Spectralink's Versity devices include both a push-button man-down alert and a setting to call emergency services when the device senses a rapid fall followed by a period of 30 seconds or a minute of inactivity. This means that lone workers will get the help they need immediately, even if no one else is about.
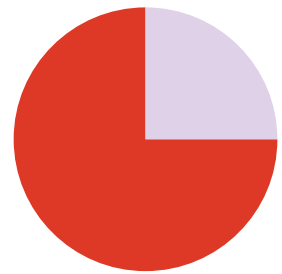
75% of UK retail workers have experienced a situation where they felt their physical safety was at risk.[7]

Empower frontline workers with Spectralink's end-to-end support

With over 30 years of experience enabling communications in retail, Spectralink understands that every store is different. But they all have frontline workers who need to keep productive and connected on the go. That's why we strive to give you mobile communications wherever and however you need it, designed with your team in mind right from the start.

With full flexibility and interoperability with all the major UCaaS providers, Spectralink helps you redesign customer interactions for frontline staff, giving them timely, accurate information from a single device all while keeping them safe.

No more rushing about between different tools and devices as all voice, presence indicators, data, and video communications can be accessed via a single device with seamless, crystal-clear voice quality and one-push emergency buttons.

Whatever you need, wherever you need it. We're with you.

The mobile device you provide your retail associates with is a crucial part of how you do business, so we make sure it's a perfect fit. But we also know that it's just one part of a wider communications, productivity, and safety system. That's why we're here to help you create a UCaaS system that fits your needs and truly empowers your workers.

SOURCES

[1] https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2020/11/16/new-technological-behaviours-will-outlast-the-pandemic

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[3] CNBC, A record 4.3 million workers quit their jobs in August, led by food and retail industries, https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/12/a-record-4point3-million-workers-quit-their-jobs-in-august-led-by-food-and-retail-industries.html

[4] "5 Ways Mobile Apps are Driving the Store of the Future: Improving Revenue,

[5] Loyalty, Productivity, and Cost Control," MicroStrategy, 2015.

[6] Modern Retail, Harness the Pull of Peak Season with Staff Productivity, https://modernretail.co.uk/peak-season-staff-productivity-revenue-streams/

[7] Yoobic, Frontline Employee Workplace Survey 2021,

[8] Censuswide, Empowering the Forgotten Frontline, 2021

We're with you to enable mobile communication on your terms.

More collaborative

Our Versity smartphones offer your sales associates end-to-end unified communications all in a single handset. Enable them to use the full range of productivity tools they need without compromising voice quality for within store and outside of store calls. Discover how much more your devices can do with real-time inventory management, enterprise visibility, and location-based IoT-powered marketing.

Future-Proof

We work with the industry's largest ecosystem of application partners and offer an open, Android platform for custom app development. This means that you can have all your existing communications tools on a single device, but also that you can develop or access new tools for new needs as your business grows and changes.

More Secure

Our devices offer a leading fleet management tool, AMIE®, to easily manage all your Spectralink devices solutons, diagnosing issues before they impact your business. We also ensure that your customer's information remains secure because we partner with leading mPOS vendors to safeguard their data and payment information at every turn.

Safer

The safety and security of your workers is key. With Spectralink SAFE™, associates can alert security or call for help with just one click. Our handsets are equipped with emergency calls systems to ensure that your staff never have to choose between getting to safety and calling emergency services first. And to protect lone workers, our critical man-down alert tools are fitted with activity and sharp fall sensors.

Longer lasting

Unlike consumer-grade smartphones, our purpose-built, enterprise-grade devices are designed to withstand wear and tear. We know devices need to last through multiple shifts and resist falls on concrete floors; that's why both our Versity devices are rugged, and all devices are fitted with swappable batteries.

More knowledgeable at your side

Spectralink has studied the pain points of retail businesses for over 30 years. We bring that to the planning stage to support you in designing the communications system that works best for your team. In short, we make mobility work for your retail environment.

TALK TO SALES

About Spectralink

As an award winner in mobile technology, Spectralink has been transforming the way our customers work and communicate for 30+ years. Through our determination to do extraordinary things, we enable mobile workforces and empower our customers and partners to explore what's next, what's possible. With our enterprise grade, best-in-class mobile solutions, we are with our customers wherever they work, however they need us. Our people, commitment to innovation and our passion are our foundation for success.

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