

Retail trade



KIRK IP DECT displaces WiFi telephony

JE James, a multi-site cycle retail store, had a problem – its WiFi phone network was losing it business.

It needed a mobility solution for its staff which was robust, so it replaced the WiFi solution with a KIRK IP DECT solution from Polycom.



JE James Cycles is one of the largest independent cycle retailers in Europe. It has 7 stores based at 4 sites in the South Yorkshire/Derbyshire area. In 2007 it installed a VoIP telephone system at all 4 sites with the aim of minimising its inter-site call charges. A key requirement was a mobility solution for its staff. It was advised to install a WiFi phone solution.

The investment

Within a few weeks it was clear that for JE James this was a bad investment. The quality of the calls across the WiFi network and performance of the WiFi phones were not acceptable in the work place. JE James explains,

“The WiFi phones were losing us business. We probably lost thousands of pounds of business because of them.

When you got a signal the call was clear but it (the WiFi solution) would drop the signal, drop the call, or break up the voice for no apparent reason. This made the WiFi phones totally unusable.

If you are dropping customer calls, customers might phone back once, they might even phone back twice, but after three times they are just not going to and as a result we lost a lot of customers.”

User experience

Even if the call quality had been okay the WiFi phones were not a good solution for the work place as JE James learnt from its experience.

“The battery life was not long enough so you couldn’t use them all day. WiFi phones are very energy hungry. The best you can get out of a phone is about 3 hours talk time and at worst probably 1.5 hours. The phones were not lasting the day.”

The solution

JE James searched for an alternative to WiFi and found the KIRK IP DECT solution from Polycom. This is designed to work with VoIP telephony solutions. After a KIRK specialist had carried out a survey of all 4 sites the company ripped out the failing WiFi network and replaced it with a KIRK IP DECT solution.

IP DECT experience

Commenting on its experience of the IP DECT solution JE James said,

“The KIRK IP DECT solution works superbly well. It is everything you would expect from a phone system, this is the sort of quality we would have expected initially.

The signal strength is fantastic, the sound quality is super clear, the battery life is phenomenal. You’ve got something like a 20 hour talk time and of course we’ve got the KIRK phones which are very robust.”

JE James explained more,

“That (the robust phones) is partially what drew us to them in the first place because although the work place might only be a retail environment our phones do tend to get a lot of abuse”

Staff have welcomed the change to the IP DECT solution. Staff at the Rotherham store have commented that the phones are fantastic and that JE James should have had them from the outset.



Hidden benefit

One unexpected benefit for both the Rotherham staff and the company is the excellent range of the system. Staff have discovered that the phones work in the park across the road from the shop. They sometimes take their breaks in the park so now, if they take their phone with them they can still take calls from customers.

The outcome

JE James summed up the reasoning behind its decision to replace the WiFi network with an IP DECT solution from Polycom by saying,

“WiFi has got a place but in many cases the DECT IP solution is better. It is a much more stable platform and it is less power hungry. In our case it really is the ideal solution.”

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