CASE STUDY

Retail stocktaking

Scanning efficiency leads to faster, more accurate stocktakes

Background
Wilkinson, a leading UK retailer with over 260 stores throughout England and Wales, sells a range of over 25,000 major branded and 'Wilko' brand products for the home and garden ranging from DIY and kitchenware to gardening, home accessories, pet-care, household disposables and confectionery. With such a large product range, stocktaking is a very important business function and quite a challenge. To ensure the job is done efficiently, Wilkinson employ a specialist stocktaking company to travel around their stores, stocktaking most twice a year.

As part of an overall drive to improve stocktaking efficiency, Wilkinson have recently upgraded their stocktaking hardware and established dedicated stocktaking teams of 14 stocktakers for their stores in the North, South and Midlands. They previously used a combination of CASIO DT-800 and DT-810 hand held terminals, using a software platform developed by BNE Electronics Limited. When it came time to upgrade the old system and hardware, Wilkinson approached BNE who developed a wireless system incorporating the DT-X5 handheld terminal.

System
The new system offers many improvements in efficiency. The stock-take data is communicated wirelessly, which eliminates time wasted from staff walking back to the central store computer and downloading the data. Also, the DT-X5 holds a database of all the stores stock, so that when an item that isn't on the database is scanned, it is immediately identified and separated from other stock. Previously this irregular stock was only identified at the end of the stocktake when the data was downloaded and matched against the database. The item then needed to be located in the store – a time consuming process. As Helen Cutts, Stocktake Manager from Wilkinson states, "The new dedicated stocktaking teams now take only 3 1/2 hours to stocktake a large, 3 story store, with the DT-X5 system saving a further 45 minutes."

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As the terminals are travelling around the country, the option to use standard alkaline AA batteries eliminates the hassle and extra baggage of carrying battery chargers and docks. All the terminals can be stored in one bag with spare batteries. If they run out of batteries, they are easy to replace with batteries that Wilkinson stock.

Benefits
The terminals have been found to be easy to use and ergonomic. The numeric keypad has also proved to be a popular. As Helen says, "We have reduced the number of count errors, as the DT-X5 keyboard is less sensitive, meaning accidental bumps don't get entered as stock. They are lightweight and have a good clear screen and have proven very popular with our stocktakers."

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