

The Wireless Solutions provided by Advanced Wireless Communications are a perfect fit for the grocery industry.

Highly-successful Pittsburgh-based grocery chain Giant Eagle had a challenge on its hands:

With 219 stores in four states, with more than \$5 billion in annual sales, and hundreds of thousands of happy, loyal customers,

Giant Eagle needed to find ways to sustain the momentum, streamline operations, enhance an already highly-rewarding shopping experience, and give all those customers more reasons to stay happy – and loyal to Giant Eagle.

It was a challenge that Ted Denmen, Eastern Regional Sales Manager for Advanced Wireless Communications of Lakeville, Minnesota recognized immediately.

“It was a classic case of a great retailer working to stay ahead of the curve,” Denman recalled. “They wanted to make their stores an even nicer place to shop – And to find ways to stay way ahead of the competition. “

This was about enhancing already-successful programs and elements, not “fixing” them. The challenge was to take things the company was already doing well and to find ways to do those things even better. After a series of meetings, AWC and Giant Eagle agreed to develop a pilot program that would incorporate a series of small, wireless, high-tech “tweaks” intended to fine-tune their customer service, improve productivity, and keep the competition at bay.

The Component Technologies

AWC and Giant Eagle settled on a system of strategically-placed wireless equipment throughout the store. A call button

GIANT EAGLE WANTED TO MAKE THE ENTIRE IN-STORE EXPERIENCE EVEN MORE POSITIVE. THEY TURNED TO ADVANCED WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS.



Getting more momentum out of success. Giant Eagle's number one goal was to enhance the customer's already-positive in-store experience – and stay ahead of the competitive curve.

system would be tied into a network of pagers, and two-way radios with headsets to be worn and used by employees and supervisors store wide. Industrial cordless phones were added to help staff get out of the office and stay in touch with the customers and employees in the store. Four button pendants were placed at the registers to offer assistance to the cashiers. Pagers were given to customers to alert them when their prescriptions were filled at the pharmacy. To coordinate all these systems, the team brought in AWC's proprietary "Instant Assistant".

Instant Assistant

"Instant Assistant is the backbone of the system," says AWC founder Ken Coons. "It's computer-based. When someone pushes a call button, the signal gets relayed to IA, and IA sends word out via the two-way radios, pagers or telephones."

Beyond typical "customer needs assistance" calls, Instant Assistant can be programmed to support operations throughout the store. From security response

to checkout lane support, maintenance to stock room and systems monitoring (cooler and freezer temperatures, for example), from the parking lot to the loading dock, Instant Assistant can expedite and coordinate communications at the push of a button.

And, because it's computer-based, IA can log events, track response times, and generate reports at the store and corporate levels.

The Wireless Advantage

It was critical that the system be completely wireless. Giant Eagle saw the cost efficiencies in both installation and maintenance. Being wireless, gives them the flexibility to reconfigure quickly and economically, should technologies – or even the store floor plan design - change.

"By keeping things wireless, we were able to make these enhancements without having to commit to a complex, inflexible, hard-wired system that might be obsolete a year or two later," said jim lampl, Director of Conservation for Giant Eagle. "AWC's



Call boxes can be larger and free standing (above) or small and fixed (below). Once the button is pushed, Instant Assistant alerts the appropriate responder(s) via pager or two-way radio, then monitors response times and generates reports that help store and corporate level management assess progress.



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approach gave us enhancements for today without restricting our options for tomorrow.”

All The Tools. All The Training.

Getting the system in place was only half the battle. There was still the challenge of training Giant Eagle’s people how to use it effectively. That job fell to AWC partner Plant Management Consulting.

“PMC came in and got the job done right with employees, supervisors – even with customers,” said Tom Joyce, Store Director. “Between the simple equipment and the effective training, it was obvious this system was a simple and effective improvement for everyone.”

A Better Shopping Experience.

While the pilot program is not complete at this writing, Giant Eagle is confident AWC’s wireless solutions are positively affecting their customer’s shopping experience. Customers are getting help faster – and without overhead paging. Supervisors are getting freed-up to spend more time on the floor. Management is able to emphasize the importance of Giant Eagle-style

service and (via IA generated reports) to see and measure genuine results – including a return on their investment in these technologies.

And, most important of all, customers who already liked Giant Eagle are discovering even more ways to enjoy the Giant Eagle shopping experience.



Jim Lampl, Director of Conservation for Giant Eagle, above, using a two-way radio and headset. To the left, the pharmacist is using a wireless headset that is connected to the department’s land line phone. Allowing her hands free when taking an order.



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