



Manufacturing

Frantschach Heightens Warehouse Efficiency by Deploying SpectraLink Wireless Telephones

Background

Amid the industrious aisles of machinery, employees at German-based Frantschach Industrial Packaging have an important task at hand. The manufacturer produces stand-up pouches made of paper, which are used worldwide for the packaging of cement, building materials, food, pet food, liquid household products, personal care products, and chemicals.

Now, 30 key Frantschach personnel carry Polycom® SpectraLink® Wireless Telephones snapped onto a belt loop or tucked in a shirt pocket, to better communicate with their peers and keep production running smoothly. Beyond the benefits a wireless telephone system brings employees, Frantschach's strongest benefit in operations is in having one network it can use for voice and data communications and applications.

Out with the Old, in with the New

Frantschach, the largest worldwide manufacturer of industrial sacks, spent a year in search of a new, high-tech wireless system that could replace its existing DECT wireless telephone system, which is a voice-only, wireless alternative in Europe that is similar to home cordless. Frantschach found its answer in Polycom's 802.11 wireless LAN-based SpectraLink Wireless Telephones, and it promptly set about replacing its existing DECT system. While the two wireless technologies are comparable in initial deployment costs, long-term savings and network expandability are two key reasons the 80 year-old manufacturing company decided to upgrade to the new technology.

Deploying the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones will result in long-term savings on installing cabling and wireless infrastructure. The 802.11-based infrastructure converges voice and data on the same wireless network. Frantschach is using the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones for voice communications and Symbol handheld barcode scanners for inventory management. In the future, the wireless network can support the addition of other wireless data applications as the company grows their facility.

"In addition to taking our wireless communications farther than we could go with DECT, we really wanted to deploy a system that we could expand in the future," said Guido Kirstein, Purchasing Manager for Frantschach Industrial

"Already, for our warehouse and production employees, we see an impressive increase in productivity and that is worth its weight in gold."

Guido Kirstein, Purchasing Manager for Frantschach Industrial Packaging

Daily Use

- 30 key Frantschach personnel carry Polycom® SpectraLink® Wireless Telephones to better communicate with their peers and keep production running smoothly

Solution

- Polycom® SpectraLink® 8000 Wireless Telephones

Results and Benefits

- 802.11-based wireless LAN to support voice communication as well as handheld scanning devices
- Long-term savings in cabling, installation, and network management
- Improved employee communication to increase production-line efficiency
- Seamless integration to the Siemens HiPath PBX for advanced telephone

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Packaging. "With the pace at which technology is moving forward, we searched for a solution that would give us a standards-based, converged network for wireless voice and data applications."

Ready, Set, Go!

Kirstein calls the implementation of the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones fast and easy, resulting in minimal disruption to the production line. Frantschach partnered with NK Networks, a system integrator also based in Germany, to install the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones in Goslar and Sendenhorst, two cities approximately 250 kilometers apart. The companies devoted approximately one day at each facility to complete installation and spent another day training employees. The SpectraLink Wireless Telephone users found it easy to learn to use the durable, lightweight handsets because they offer the same features and functions as the plants' wired telephones.

"We intentionally held off incorporating applications onto the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones in order to introduce a system as simple as possible to employees," Kirstein said. "The rest of the system's advantages will be reaped at a later date."

Each Frantschach location installed approximately 15 SpectraLink Wireless Telephones connected through SpectraLink Telephony Gateways to the existing Siemens HiPath telephone system. The SpectraLink Telephony Gateways utilize Siemens' proprietary digital interface to deliver advanced telephone features such as multiple line appearances and display functions. Ten Symbol Spectrum24® wireless LAN access points provide wireless coverage for the 15,700 square meter facility.

Building For the Future

The decision to install the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones is a no-brainer for Frantschach, but nonetheless, one that is being carefully watched by its European manufacturing counterparts.

"We've received a great deal of interest from other companies in the area, asking how well our employees have taken to it and how much it actually costs," Kirstein said. "When you look at your company's communication goals in the long run, cost is not an issue. Already, for our warehouse and production employees, we see an impressive increase in productivity and that is worth its weight in gold."

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