



The online supermarket

## How Ocado Levelled Up Productivity

Ocado is the world's largest online-only grocery retailer. With over 20 years of experience serving customers, Ocado has pioneered the online shopping experience.

Call Systems Technology (CST) has worked closely with Ocado to deliver a call button solution, using AlarmCall.™



### Overview

#### A Fast-Paced Environment

At Ocado's warehouse, there are thousands of items to be picked everyday. Each Picker has a target of 390 items per hour - making time management and productivity key factors for success.

However, Ocado colleagues lacked an efficient way for escalating issues that would occur during shifts. If an issue disturbed the workflow, Pickers would have to stop their work and report to their managers. Management then have to inform an engineer to address the issue to enable pickers to get back to work.

These interruptions translated into significant time losses. Ultimately, these operational disturbances were creating delayed deliveries and affecting customer service.

"OCADO chose the CST product because it has tried and tested, robust and resilient products, that are proven to work in a harsh fast paced environment. The system is used every hour of every day so it had to withstand the constant usage. CST responded well to the initial inquiry and quickly tested various button options before selecting a robust button with high usage between battery changes. They achieved good coverage and were also able to provide Gen2 data monitoring software that was able to produce reports for our production managers to access the success of the system."  
- Ocado

*"Once the systems had bedded in, the system was used to great effect and the results were very impressive."*



## Approach

### Robust Coverage and Long-Life

To help Ocado put an end to downtime in the picking area, and improve internal communication challenges, we implemented a critical alert solution utilising our [wireless call button](#).

First, following Ocado's specifications, we designed a simple and easy-to-manage system. We recognised that the target facility contained a vast amount of metalwork - meaning that we needed to ensure robust coverage that could cope with the fabric of the building.

Another problem identified by Ocado was the short battery life of their previous wireless button system.

They estimated they press the button at least 20 times per day, which meant that the battery life had to cope with over 140 interactions per week. Ideally, the battery had to be at least 1-year.

To deal with these numbers, we supplied Ocado with a wireless button that allows for 50,000 button presses before the battery needs changing - this is over 5.5 times the ideal scenario for Ocado. The button also has a convenient battery system, enabling it to be changed on-site and is simple to use. Also, they're fully integrated with pagers already used by their engineers.

50,000 button presses before the battery needs changing

Over 5.5 times the ideal scenario



250 hours per month saved

Pickers were able to pick 100K more items per month

## Installation

### A Seamless Solution

The system starts by sending a signal through a call button, which sends up to three messages. When the system identifies no acknowledgement from the receiver, it will resend the message.

A key factor that we bear in mind is protecting the system from any data collision. This can take place during multiple transmissions, leading to messages getting lost. Thanks to our unique technology, we can avoid this by programming [AlarmCall](#) to only transmit when there is clear air.

With installation, we placed wireless call buttons along 3-picking lines - Ambient Pick 1 & 2 and the Chill Pick Line. Over 80 buttons were deployed across the site, alongside 6 AlarmCall hubs, 8 repeaters and [Gen2](#) data monitoring software.

## Outcome

### 3 Key Significant Improvements

Pickers can easily call managers or supervisors using the wireless call button if there is a problem or a mechanical breakdown that stops the picks. This enables management and engineering teams to coordinate a quick and effective response that gets the line back up and running.

The time spent by pickers finding managers and engineers was saved, because of quicker engineer responses, translating into an outstanding productivity improvement.

On average, there were 250 hours per month saved. The picking line augmented their pick rate, which turned into 100,000 picked items per month. Meeting the shipment-per-employee targets, which translated into more revenue and paved the way for continued success.