



Manufacturing

Daily Use

- More than 1,000 employees rotate the 300 SpectraLink Wireless Telephones in shifts throughout the plant's 24-hour workdays
- Durable handsets withstand the rigors of the demanding workplace considering drops, bumps and shift hand-offs

Solution

- Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephone System

Results and Benefits

- Eliminates the delays and frustrations of overhead paging and walkie-talkies
- Seamless integration to the plant's Siemens HiCom PBX
- Eliminates the problem of disappearing handsets since the wireless telephones are specifically programmed to the PBX and only operate on campus

SpectraLink Wireless Telephones Flex Voice and Data Muscle at Bridgestone/Firestone

Background

The ubiquitous telephone has become a more important tool for Bridgestone/Firestone South Carolina than what the world's largest tire manufacturing company ever envisioned. Bridgestone/Firestone is using Polycom® SpectraLink® 6000 Wireless Telephone System for instant voice communications among its workforce. The company has also benefited from using messaging applications through utilizing the Open Application Interface (OAI). Bridgestone/Firestone has customized applications to connect voice with data applications, accessible via the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones. The result for Bridgestone/Firestone is a telephone system that gives employees direct voice communication and alerts managers on their SpectraLink Wireless Telephones of critical situations in the plant's production network.

The more than 300 SpectraLink Wireless Telephones have brought managers, engineers, service technicians, and manufacturing floor plant employees at the 45-acre facility a bevy of production benefits.

On a typical workday at the Aiken, South Carolina-based Bridgestone/Firestone plant, machinists reach to their SpectraLink Wireless Telephones clipped to their belts to call supervisors for immediate responses to arising problems. As the massive plant cranks out steel belted radials and white walls, the production network is monitored by a connection to messaging applications server. Any abnormalities in the production network immediately trigger an alphanumeric message to the respective SpectraLink Wireless Telephone. Bridgestone/Firestone has found OAI extremely beneficial to its production plant and is connecting alarms and other facility devices to the messaging system.

Resilient Tools

More than 1,000 Bridgestone/Firestone employees rotate the 300 SpectraLink Wireless Telephones in shifts throughout the plant's 24-hour workdays. The SpectraLink Wireless Telephones have proven more resilient than any other voice communication device the giant manufacturer has deployed.

"Coverage is critical to getting the job done and SpectraLink Wireless Telephones provide coverage everywhere inside the plant," Doughton says. "The distributed Base Stations allow us coverage around the outside perimeter of the facility."

Rob Doughton, Bridgestone/Firestone Network Service Leader

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Managers can confer on projects without scheduling meetings and employees can alert supervisors of work issues before they interfere with productivity.

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Bridgestone/Firestone continues to deploy SpectraLink Wireless Telephones, providing more employees with the convenience of instant communications. Installation and deployment continues to be what Doughton calls extremely simple, as the SpectraLink Wireless Telephones integrate seamlessly with their Siemens HiCom PBX.

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

Bridgestone/Firestone chose SpectraLink Wireless Telephones after carefully reviewing other systems. None met the communication and facility demands that were critical for the manufacturing plant.

The overhead paging system Bridgestone/Firestone had in place was difficult to hear with the high noise level on the factory floor. As is common with overhead paging, pages were oftentimes difficult to decipher. Having to stop work to respond to a page or hunt down the appropriate person only compounded the difficulties with the overhead paging system and made staff communication inconvenient. "With our new SpectraLink Wireless Telephones, we can simply call the intended party directly and eliminate time delays," Doughton says.

In addition to the overhead paging system, Bridgestone/Firestone used to use walkie-talkies which created entirely different problems. "We had a lot of complaints about too much traffic on the radios from people who used walkie-talkies," Doughton says. "You had to listen to see if the traffic was directed to you."

Cellular telephones were another option Bridgestone briefly entertained. Employees that carried cellular telephones at the

plant had limited coverage that did not extend beyond 20 feet onto the factory floor.

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In addition to trumping cellular telephones on coverage issues, SpectraLink Wireless Telephones prove much less expensive than mobile phones on a cellular network.

"The airtime bill for that many cell phones every month year after year would be astronomical," Doughton says.

Another advantage Doughton found in SpectraLink Wireless Telephones is that they are specifically designed to meet the requirements of the demanding work environment at Bridgestone/Firestone. The handsets are designed to withstand a 24-foot drop onto a hard floor. This is important to Bridgestone/Firestone considering the drops, bumps, and shift hand-offs that occur throughout the 24/7 shifts at the plant.

Since the handsets are programmed specifically to Bridgestone/Firestone's telecommunications system, employees do not take the handsets off work premises, which has proven to be another benefit of the system.

"Previously, our radios tended to disappear from the plant in pairs," Doughton says. "These SpectraLink Wireless Telephones work only at the plant and they don't tend to disappear."

SpectraLink Wireless Telephones have become such an integral part of Bridgestone/Firestone's corporate environment that Doughton keeps several spare SpectraLink Wireless Telephones and simply programs one of the spare handsets, providing the employee with a temporary replacement.

"The system continues to grow as more people realize that they absolutely cannot do without a portable phone," Doughton says. "If it improves production, we're happy to oblige."

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