

# Waitrose & Partners

How UK Consumers' "Favourite Supermarket" Is Making its Customer Service Even Better

[waitrose.com](http://waitrose.com)



INDUSTRY:  
Retail

YEAR FOUNDED:  
1904

HQ:  
Bracknell, Berkshire, UK

EMPLOYEES:  
80,000+

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– Matt Doughty, Customer Service Team Manager, Waitrose

**In today’s competitive retail environment, you can’t maintain a highly successful chain of stores without outstanding service. With that in mind, you can guess Waitrose & Partners’ top priority.**

The organisation has become one of the UK’s most successful supermarket chains—operating more than 300 stores throughout England, Scotland, and Wales—in large part by focusing on its customer experience.

Among its many high-profile awards for customer satisfaction, Waitrose has been named “Best Supermarket of 2020” by the UK consumer publication, Which?

Waitrose & Partners also aims to provide an outstanding experience for its employees known as Partners. They’re called Partners not

because it sounds good but because they in fact own the company. Along with renowned UK retail brand, John Lewis & Partners, they make up the UK's largest employee-owned organisation—the John Lewis Partnership—with more than 80,000 employee-partners.

In fact, Waitrose and John Lewis have been operating together as an employee-owned business for nearly 100 years, making it one of the longest-running successful retail operations in the country.

## **Shopping for a more agile phone system**

The company made some changes to its operations in recent years. For example, Partners had traditionally needed five or six different electronic devices to carry out various tasks on the shop floor—scanning barcodes, taking inventory, etc. But recently the company consolidated all of these services into a single multifunction handheld device. Well, almost all of them.

“We really wanted every Partner with a device to be able to have access to telephony,” explains Phil Hawes, Senior Retail Change Lead for Waitrose & Partners. “Partners were still carrying separate phones around. Or, if they needed to take a call, they had to find the nearest landline phone in the shop.”

Waitrose & Partners determined that the right cloud phone solution could allow them to consolidate partners' equipment even further, and at the same time improve customer service at all of the company's hundreds of stores.

“Putting a cloud phone app on our Partners' handsets meant that everyone—customers, Partners in the store, even Partners calling in from different stores—could more easily and more quickly get connected to the right people,” says Sandra Stigwood, the company's Senior Network Infrastructure Manager.

# "Using a cloud service means we don't have to own and maintain phone hardware assets anymore."

– Sandra Stigwood, Senior Network Infrastructure Manager, Waitrose

## **Operating more smoothly and efficiently than ever**

As the company rolled out the RingCentral cloud phone app on their multifunction devices, the partners began experiencing the operational and customer-service benefits.

“Because everyone is carrying the RingCentral app with them on their main device, it’s much easier for our team to communicate with each other, even while they’re doing other tasks,” says Matt Doughty, a Waitrose Team Manager for Customer Service.

For a Waitrose Wine Specialist and Team Leader, having phone service wherever they are on the shop floor has improved their ability to help customers quickly. “I can also communicate with a customer while I’m tracking down the answer to their question—for example, whether or not we have a particular brand of wine in stock—and tell them in real time.”

## Improving store-to-store communication

Whereas Partners used to have to use a landline phone in the store to make and receive calls, now every partner has a fully functional business phone with them everywhere they go—with company directory, advanced call forwarding, and other capabilities.

As Phil explains, this ready access to phone service is supporting communication among teams and partners at different Waitrose shops. “It’s easier for a Partner in one shop to call a nearby location on behalf of a customer and ask if that store can set aside an item for them.”

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For more information, please contact one of our solution experts. Visit [ringcentral.co.uk](https://ringcentral.co.uk) or call 0800 098 8136.

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