

HVAC WHOLESALER RAISES THE BAR WITH 24/7 ORDER PICKUP



Contractors can now get the parts and equipment they need, without waiting, even after regular store hours.

When they're waiting in line to pick up an order, they're losing money and time.

More Than a Supply House™

Johnstone Supply is a leading HVAC/R wholesale distributor with more than 420 locations across the U.S. and Canada. The independently owned Kenilworth Group supplies contractors across central New Jersey and New York and is known for its commitment to innovations that serve its customers.

The company prides itself on being "More Than a Supply House™," offering a broad range of training, technical support, digital technologies and other resources to help its customers manage and grow their business. On a typical day, its service counters buzz with energy as contractors rush in to get the parts and supplies they need for their jobs. And when peak season comes around, the pace picks up even more.

by texts, the website and mobile app. These digital solutions provide fast, no-fuss ordering night or day, from the contractor's office or in the field.

But that fast, convenient process could slow to a crawl when customers came to pick up their order. During peak season, the service counter might be swamped, with lines at every register. "You've called ahead and ordered and now you're waiting 10 or 15 minutes just to pick up an order that you wanted right away," said Operations Specialist Tim Janes.

That delay is more than an inconvenience for contractors. During peak season, they work long hours to bring in as much income as possible, and keep their loyal customers happy. When they're waiting in line to pick up an order, they're losing money and time.

The missing link in digital convenience

Johnstone Supply takes many orders over the phone or at the service counter, but a growing number come

A solution in sight

Of course, long lines aren't unique to Johnstone Supply – it's an industry-wide concern. Johnstone Supply knew that providing a faster option would be a huge win for their busy contractors. So, when





traffic location, with plenty of opportunities for customers to check out the lockers and watch others picking up orders.

As they configured their solution, they reviewed their inventory and found that 95% of their non-equipment parts and supplies would fit into one of two compartment sizes. Branch Manager Kevin Tilton said, "If it's something that fits inside the locker, we're going to put it in the locker

they came across the automated locker solution from Apex Supply Chain Technologies® at a local tradeshow, they had to look into it. They learned that the lockers use technology with 99.5% uptime, and provide data visibility with valuable insights for improving customer service and operations.

It was obvious that the Apex Will-Call Solution could be a game-changer for busy contractors – and would give Johnstone Supply a distinct advantage over other wholesalers.

for you. So you just show up with the cell phone, and either scan the code or type it in, the door opens and you're on your way."

Janes added, "Some companies have parts runners who pick up for them, so for them it's really nice because they just have a barcode and they grab and go."

Taking lines out of the process

The company took a strategic approach to selecting the right order pickup system, as well as where they should locate it. They chose an outdoor locker system and placed it where it could be used seven days a week, 24 hours a day – just outside the store's main entrance. It's a convenient, high-

Pickup that works overtime

More importantly, 24/7 pickup is a big plus for HVAC contractors, given their unpredictable schedules. They get calls at all hours of the day from customers with emergency heating or air conditioning needs, and keeping them safe and happy requires getting equipment and supplies as soon as possible.



Previously, this meant a Johnstone employee would have to arrange to meet the customer at the store to hand over the order. Now, the employee simply goes in, loads the locker and the customer can pick it up at their convenience.

That means emergency orders are a lot more efficient for contractors. As one said, 'It's great! Yeah, it's easy to pick it up. If we can't get this part, our customer can't have heat.'

Tilton sees many advantages. "Customers swear by it. We have one who stops by regularly at 4:30 am. He works in Manhattan, so he's trying to get ahead of traffic and get his day going. Some of our other guys do this as a second job

and don't get off work 'til 5pm, so now they can get their parts outside, after we're closed," he said.

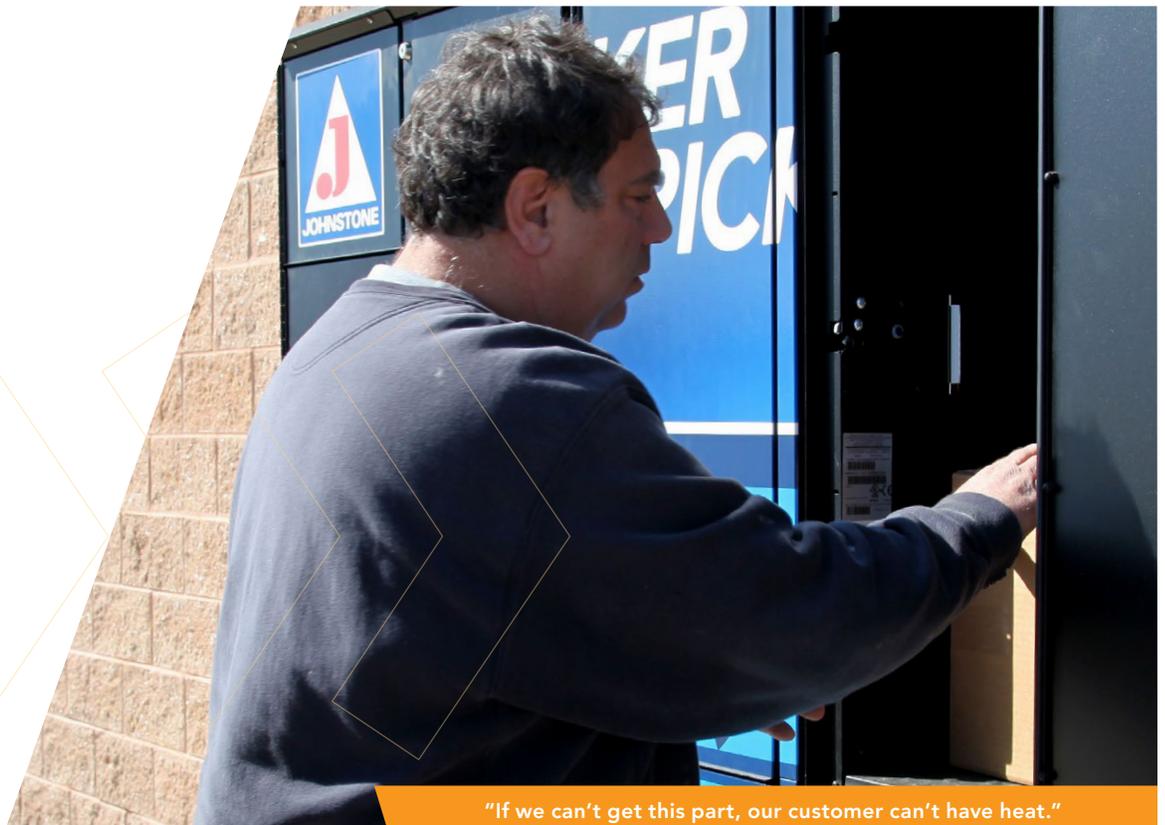
At first, some customers were reluctant to use the lockers, possibly thinking they wouldn't understand the technology or they were hard to use. So Johnstone Supply began sending assistants out to the lockers to help if needed. They also promoted them at their "Customer Appreciation Days," where they offered hands-on demonstrations and prizes for people who tried them.



I think the lockers are great, they're safe and secure. We all work a lot of hours, so you just come after hours and unlock it, get your parts and go to work.



— Brian Ringwald,
Customer



"If we can't get this part, our customer can't have heat."
— Joseph Paino, Customer



You've got to be up-to-date with the technology.



— Danny Chavarria, Territory Manager

Customers expect a seamless experience

With the success of its first Will-Call Order Pickup lockers, Johnstone has since rolled out similar solutions at five additional locations. Self-serve order pickup has reinforced Johnstone Supply's role as an essential resource for its HVAC contractors. Of course, it will never replace the knowledge and friendly help they get at the service counter, but it gives them the speed and flexibility they need to compete in today's "need it now" world.

Territory Manager Danny Chavarria added, "You've got to be up to-date with the technology. Younger people expect this kind of stuff. They don't want to be inconvenienced by having to rush to the stores to get there during operating hours."

Tilton agreed, saying, "I would strongly recommend it to anybody. It's a fantastic tool that puts the option of picking up materials into the hands of the customer rather than feeling beholden to the hours of the supply house."

"It's one of those things that's just going to keep growing as more customers take advantage of it," he said.



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