

WHITEPAPER

Streamlining Self Checkout (SCO) Installations: A Comprehensive Guide to Successful Implementation

Abstract

This whitepaper draws on extensive experience gained from the installation of thousands of self checkout (SCO) lanes in various retail store environments. It explores the complexities of SCO installations, covering topics such as removing existing lanes, SCO cabling pathways, existing Point of Sale (POS) movements and future expansions. The paper also underscores the critical importance of effective communication and project management for successful self checkout projects. It concludes by highlighting the unique advantages of choosing our services for SCO installations.



Variables

There are different variables when installing SCOs in a retail environment. In a rollout, each site will be different based on the particular store's floor layout of the particular store, and the number of SCOs initially installed. This often involves removing or modifying existing registers to make room for the new SCOs and adding a telephone extension at the staffed SCO attendant station.

Removing Existing Lanes

POS - If Lane(s) are being removed, this will require the existing POS equipment to be taken down and boxed up so they can be shipped back to the corporate depot. Depending on the retail environment, this might involve an EFT pin pad, scales, screen monitors, coin changers, clothing de-taggers, receipt printers, and a host of other devices used at a lane.

Tandem Lane - In some instances, two or more lanes are being removed and a new tandem lane is being installed to maintain the count of staffed registers. This involves removing the existing POS equipment from two single lanes, and then reinstalling them in the new tandem lane. Often the existing data cabling can often be reutilized when moving lanes around, and in other instances additional cabling may need to be installed to accommodate this movement.

Telephones - Each lane usually has a phone that will need to be removed altogether or moved to a new lane while maintaining the same internal extension numbers. In some cases, a phone that is being removed from a lane that is being taken down can be reutilized at the SCO attendant station.

SCO Cabling Pathways

There are only two cable pathways to SCOs in a retail store, under the floor, or from overhead using power poles.

Under the Floor: This duct work is commonly referred to as the Walkerduct. This involves a long rectangular piece of metal that runs under the tile floor across the front of the store. The duct under the floor duct is usually broken into three separate channels for clean power, dirty power, and data cabling. There are multiple underground conduits coming from the edge of the store that T into the Walkerduct providing access to potentially install additional cabling. Pulling cabling in these environments can be extremely challenging due to the lack of conduit/duct space. This method requires a site survey to evaluate the capacity of the existing duct work.

Power Poles: Power poles are the most common method of getting data and power to the SCO area from overhead. In many instances short 3' walls can be installed so the SCOs can back up against these short walls in a corral formation. Sometimes there are no walls and the SCOs are placed back to back and a power pole services a group of 4 or 6 SCOs. When short walls are utilized, in many jurisdictions data cables can be installed in the wall without conduit once the cables have been inspected. This obviously lowers the cost of the project, but it could be difficult to add additional cables in the future without damaging the existing walls to some degree. Keep this in mind when you decide how many data cables are needed at each location. It is not that expensive to add more cables when you are already pulling multiple cables to the same location.

SCO Cabling

Every organization is going to have different requirements about how many cables are needed for each SCO, and the attendant station.

Some clients only need two or three cables to an SCO lane. For one of our clients, we pulled 4 cables to each SCO. The breakdown is below. Other clients only need two or three cables to a SCO lane.

- 1 for the SCO
- 1 Security Camera
- 1 Upcoming Rollout Project
- 1 Spare

SCO's Expansions in the Future

As SCOs gain acceptance and popularity, a recent trend in the last several years is to go back to stores we already completed and install additional SCO devices.

SCO Installation Timelines

Sometimes SCOs are involved with remodel projects so there are weeks of time to get the cabling installed as construction progresses. At other times it is a short two-night project, and it is critical that everyone involved (general contractor, electricians, data contractor and often flooring contractors) are completely prepared to accomplish the task within the prescribed time period.

Whether it is a long-term remodel project or a short two-night task, everyone must be prepared to accomplish their function within the prescribed time frame. This requires clear and consistent communication about preparations and scheduling with the general contractor and the customer. Effective communication is indeed the key to successful project management. It ensures that everyone is on the same page, reduces the chances of misunderstandings, and helps keep the project on track and on budget.

Here's why you should consider Telecom

Designs services for your self checkout project:

1. There are many moving parts involved when installing SCOs from the low voltage perspective. We have extensive experience with these projects, and we know how to avoid the problems and pitfalls that can be the difference between success and failure.
2. We have installed thousand SCO units in multiple retailers across the United States.
3. In addition to the actual data cabling, we can facilitate all movements with the existing stores POS system as part of the SCO project. We can also manage phone sets being moved or added at the attendant station. We will program the SCO units themselves if asked, although this is commonly done by the company IT department or the SCO provider. Having a single low voltage vendor streamlines efficiencies and reduces costs.
4. One of the most important aspects of our service is that we take ownership of the process. There are often challenges that come up during the installation, especially on a short two-night project. You do not want to hear excuses, or "it is not part of my job" from your vendor. You want your vendor to have analytical people project managing the project and doing whatever it takes to make the store 100% operational from an IT perspective by the time the store opens the following morning. Telecom Designs provides this exclusive white glove service.

Conclusion

We are a very motivated group of low voltage project managers and technicians that have over 30 years of experience in the retail sector. Contact us and let us show you how we can help your organization facilitate successful SCO installations at a single store, or hundreds of stores.

About Us

Telecom Designs has over 30 years of Retail Network Management experience in delivering and supporting on time and on budget technology deployments for new store openings, closings, renovations and technology migrations, for supermarket, pharmacy, big box, department, convenience, discount, warehouse, and specialty store customers. Our national network of field service technicians allows us to go above and beyond with exceptional service and attention to detail for our clients and partners throughout North America.

Give us a call today, or contact us at sales@telecomdesigns.com. We look forward to sharing our knowledge and 30+ years of experience in the space.

