Retail Innovation Shout Out: Meet the New Robot Greeters at Orchard Supply Hardware

by Sonia Parekh

The Orchard Supply Hardware store (owned by Lowe’s Companies, Inc.) in San Jose, CA has a new store greeter who will make you feel like you are in a science fiction movie instead of a hardware store. OSHbot, the newest release from the Lowe’s Innovation Lab, is equipped with a 3-D camera to scan and identify items and a screen where customers can search for items. Once an item is selected, the robot leads the customer through the store to the location where they can find the product. The robot also has a database of all the inventory that is available in the store, so they can let customers know if something is out of stock, as well as direct them to a sales associate to help order it or find it at another store.

The robot speaks both Spanish and English, and unlike people who need to sleep, the robot roams the store overnight and updates its database with new merchandise locations for products that have been moved or have been recently stocked.

OSHbot will likely never replace humans, but can certainly be helpful to the store sales staff. It’s an interesting example of consumer experience innovation that may ultimately end up driving business model innovation as well.


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