



SoftBank Robotics engages Ricoh to support the European launch of its ingenious cleaning robot



SoftBank Robotics selects Ricoh to deliver post-sales services for its autonomous vacuum sweeper, ensuring customers enjoy an exceptional experience while supporting ongoing market expansion.

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

Headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, SoftBank Robotics designs and manufactures cobots (collaborative robots) to support businesses across a range of industries. In the space of ten years, the company has become a world-leader in the humanoid robotics market, with offices in Paris, London, San Francisco, Boston, Shanghai, and Singapore. Customers currently use more than 35,000 SoftBank cobots in 70 countries worldwide.

Whiz, the world's first commercial cleaning robot, is the latest ingenious creation from SoftBank Robotics. Having launched in 2019, the company knew that providing fast, effective post-sales services would form an essential part of commercial success. Developing in-house capabilities would take up time and funds; how could SoftBank Robotics deliver outstanding support to Whiz customers, rapidly, cost-effectively, and at scale?

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Stefano Bensi, General Manager of SoftBank Robotics EMEA



OBJECTIVES

SoftBank Robotics develops interactive, engaging, and productivity-enhancing robots that benefit humanity, making people's lives easier, safer, and more connected. The company's autonomous vacuum sweeper, Whiz, can be taught up to 600 individual routes, and is designed to clean large environments including hotels, offices, hospitals, and airports, enabling human workers to focus on more important tasks.

After launching Whiz in 2019, focusing on the United States and Far East, SoftBank Robotics recently expanded into the EMEA region. To bring Whiz to these new markets, the company forged links with an established network of industry-leading distribution partners. But to achieve long-term commercial success, the company recognised that customers would want access to fast, responsive, post-sales support to keep their cobots in peak operating condition.

SoftBank Robotics knew that building in-house services functions across Europe would take large amounts of time and expenditure, potentially slowing the momentum of the expansion. Keen to move fast and focus its energy and resources on innovation and ongoing growth, the company decided to outsource responsibility for maintenance and repairs of the Whiz cobots, and searched for a specialist service provider.

SOLUTION

Along with genuine robotics expertise and international support capabilities, the Whiz service provider would have to work to tight schedules. After investigating several potential options, the company decided to harness a dedicated maintenance and repair service from Ricoh.

Stefano Bensi, General Manager of SoftBank Robotics EMEA, explains: "We chose to work with Ricoh based on its extensive geographical coverage, technical support and customer care capabilities. They will support our appointed distributors across the region in supplying an unparalleled level of service to help meet and delight the needs of their clients. We are seeing an accelerated adoption in Whiz and this agreement is a vital aspect to ensure the resilience of user experience."

When Whiz customers report issues, SoftBank Robotics distributors hand the requests to the Ricoh Service Operations Centre (SOC) in Poland. Ricoh works to identify the problem based on the error code shown on the Whiz interface. For software faults, SoftBank Robotics engineers provide the resolution; for hardware issues, Ricoh collects the device, completes remediation at its repair centre in France, and returns Whiz to the customer's location, all within a ten-day timeframe.



Softbank Robotics knows that with Ricoh we can depend on a reliable partner to provide the responsive post-sales support that our customers expect and is synonymous with our brand values, while we focus our energies on innovation, increasing sales, and exploring new markets for Whiz. With Ricoh, Softbank Robotics is well-placed to bring our products to more and more European customers to meet ever-increasing demand, improving our customers' lives and making the world a better, happier place."

Stefano Bensi, General Manager of SoftBank Robotics EMEA



BENEFITS

Backed by Ricoh, SoftBank Robotics is offering a compelling product to European cleaning professionals, combining state-of-the-art smart cobot technologies and fast, reliable post-sales support. Ricoh ensures Whiz devices are maintained in optimal condition ready for redeployment, so customers can enjoy an exceptional experience that helps to build brand loyalty.

Ricoh provides Whiz support in ten key EMEA countries. The Ricoh service infrastructure across Europe will help SoftBank Robotics to continue to focus time and capital on scaling operations and bringing the cobot to other markets.

David Mills, CEO of Ricoh Europe, comments: "Our work with SoftBank Robotics demonstrates the value that Ricoh can deliver to original equipment manufacturers in the robotics space and beyond. Ricoh has the engineering expertise available on a global level to handle complex support tasks for these companies, allowing them to concentrate on the product development and sales work that ensures they continue to grow quickly."

The partnership with Ricoh also functions as a powerful marketing tool to attract more Whiz customers, and Softbank Robotics emphasises Ricoh's global service and support capabilities to keep the Whiz cobot at peak operational efficiency.

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services that enable individuals to work smarter from anywhere.

With cultivated knowledge and organizational capabilities nurtured over its 85-years history, Ricoh is a leading provider of digital services and information management, and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation and optimize business performance.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group has major operations throughout the world and its products and services now reach customers in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2021, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 1,682 billion yen (approx. 15.1 billion USD).

For further information, please visit www.ricoh-europe.com