

Next-generation robot coming to Lowe's stores

LoweBot is rolling out to Bay Area stores to enhance the customer experience and free up employees to deliver project expertise

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Following a successful test of OSHbot, the autonomous retail service robot, at an Orchard Supply Hardware store, Lowe's will introduce LoweBot, the latest-generation robot, in Lowe's stores throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Kyle Nel, vice president of disruptive innovation and executive director of Lowe's Innovation Labs, stopped by to discuss the evolution of OSHbot to LoweBot.

Q) Hey, Kyle, thanks for catching up with us today. For those who don't know about OSHbot, can you tell us about it?

A) OSHbot was a huge milestone for Lowe's – our first foray into bringing autonomous robots into a store. With OSHbot, which worked out of a San Jose Orchard store over the past year and a half, we wanted to learn about how customers and employees would react to in-store robots – and how we could make their lives and jobs better. We've learned a lot, to say the least. For example, we learned that some customers loved OSHbot so much, they wanted it to answer more types of questions than our initial robot was designed for. We also learned that OSHbot could do more than just help with customer service; it proved to be a powerful tool to help employees with inventory scanning.

Q) So LoweBot is the next generation of OSHbot? Where's it going?

A) An important part of the Labs process is to tear down and learn from our work. OSHbot taught us a lot about what works, and what doesn't, in the field of retail robotics. Once we had those learnings, it was time to decommission OSHbot and plan for a larger stage. And that's LoweBot. We're bringing autonomous retail robotics to 11 Lowe's stores over the new few months, to learn how we need to adapt the technology and program to make the greatest impact at Lowe's. The first one is currently working in the Lowe's of East San Jose.

Q) What do you say when people bring you concerns about robots taking over jobs?

A) When we launched OSHbot, our goal was to assist our employees – and help free them up to work with more customers. Just like smartphones are designed to augment, not replace, people, we believe robots can play a similar role. When we talked to the folks at the Orchard store who worked with OSHbot, we heard just that – stories about how the robot helped them spend more time with customers. In addition to helping employees monitor inventory, LoweBot can also help customers with many short, transactional trips – freeing up associates to spend more time sharing project expertise with customers.

Q) Why do you think more retailers aren't doing similar work?

A) You'd have to ask them. What's unique about Lowe's is that we put the customer first in all cases, and are committed to making meaningful investments in innovation to continue to better serve them. Our leadership has the foresight to understand that retail (and the world for that matter) is changing rapidly, and we can do more than react to the future – we can create it. We're fortunate at

Labs to have the mandate to push the organization beyond its comfort zone, to constantly be producing in-market executions that will drive the future of our business.



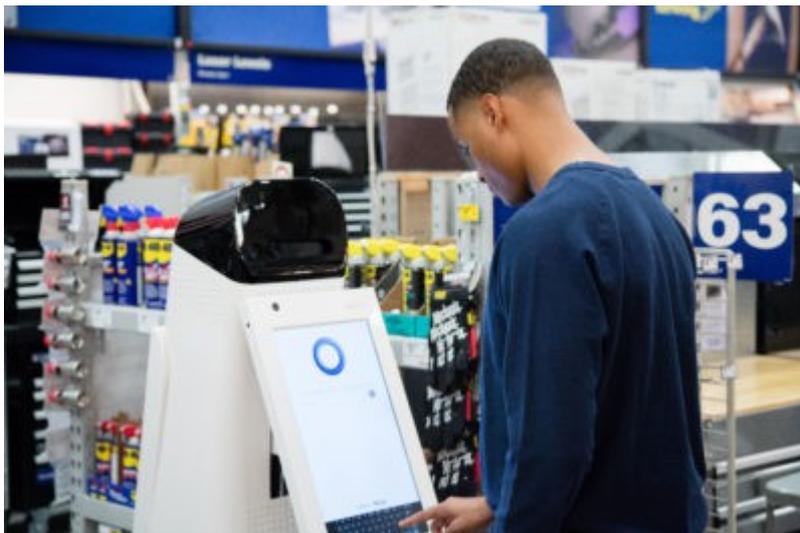
LoweBot Profile

Height: 5 feet

Weight: 180 pounds

Mode of locomotion: wheels – guided by highly intelligent sensors

- Features 19.5-inch front screen that moves up and down on its own and allows customers to search through thousands of products in the store
- Uses the same laser-based sensors as autonomous cars to navigate around the store. Knows its location with very high precision
- Uncovers price and inventory discrepancies using advanced computer vision and machine learning
- Has an advanced voice recognition system that uses a combination of natural language processing and advanced microphones on-board to figure out what customers are asking.
- Understands English and Spanish



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