Case Study: Loblaw Companies Limited

Bringing Clearer Communication to Customers Across Canada

Customer - Loblaw Companies Limited

Installer - Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) Group

Solution - 380 counter hearing loop systems installed at more than 70 locations across Canada

Creating a More Inclusive Shopping Experience

As Canada's largest retailer, Loblaw Companies Limited serves millions of customers through a diverse network of grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retail locations across the country.

For customers with hearing loss, everyday shopping can present communication barriers. Conversations at checkout counters, customer service desks, pharmacy counters, and deli departments can be difficult when there is background noise, activity, or physical distance between a customer and an employee.

Loblaw recognised that accessibility means creating an environment where customers can communicate clearly and independently with the team members serving them.

From Pilot Project to Canadian National Rollout

The relationship between Loblaw and hearing loop technology began in 2022 with a pilot program supported by the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association's 'Get in the Hearing Loop' campaign.

Following the success and positive impact of the initial installations, the project expanded significantly throughout 2024 and 2025, ultimately developing into a Canadian national rollout.

To date, 380 counter hearing loop systems have been installed in more than 70 Loblaw locations across Canada.

The systems have been deployed across a broad range of Loblaw's retail banners, including:

- Loblaws
- Maxi
- No Frills
- Pharmaprix
- Provigo
- Real Atlantic Superstore
- Real Canadian Superstore
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Your Independent Grocer
- Zehrs

The large-scale rollout demonstrates that hearing loop technology can be effectively incorporated into a wide variety of retail environments and customer service settings. The initiative also highlights how accessibility solutions can be scaled across a large retail network while adapting to the unique needs of each service point and location.

Hearing Loops Where Customers Need Them Most

The hearing loop systems are installed at key customer interaction points throughout Loblaw stores, including:

- **Checkout counters**
- **Customer service counters**
- **Deli counters**
- **Pharmacy locations**

These are everyday interactions where clear communication is essential.

A typical counter loop installation includes a microphone positioned for the Loblaw employee. When the employee speaks into the microphone, the hearing loop transmits the audio signal directly to a customer's compatible hearing aid or cochlear implant through its telecoil.

Instead of trying to hear a voice through the surrounding noise of a busy retail environment, the customer can receive the intended audio signal directly through their personal hearing device.

The Impact: Better Service and Greater Access

The value of the Loblaw initiative extends beyond the technology itself.

According to Paul Anthraper, District Manager of Market Franchise, Loblaw Companies Limited, the hearing loops have had a significant impact since the first installations:

“Accessibility is about removing barriers so everyone can participate fully. By introducing hearing loop technology in our stores, we’re making it easier for customers with hearing loss to communicate with our teams and navigate their shopping experience with greater confidence and independence. That’s a meaningful change, and one we’re proud to be part of.”

The initiative demonstrates how an accessibility solution can benefit both sides of customer interaction.

For customers, hearing loops can provide greater access to information and services. For Loblaw team members, they provide another tool for delivering effective customer service and creating a more comfortable shopping experience.

Reaching Communities Across Canada

Loblaw's rollout has extended hearing loop access far beyond major urban centres.

The initiative has reached communities across the country, including stores in Whitehorse and Yellowknife, demonstrating Loblaw's commitment to making accessible communication available to customers in a wide range of communities.

As Canada's largest retailer, Loblaw recognises the responsibility that comes with serving such a broad and diverse population.

As Paul Anthraper further explains:

“We serve millions of Canadians, and we have a responsibility to think carefully about the barriers they may face in our stores. When we can remove one of those barriers in a practical, meaningful way, that’s an opportunity we should act on.”

That philosophy is reflected in the company's decision to make hearing loop technology available across its retail network.

Addressing an Often-Overlooked Barrier

Hearing loss is widespread, yet communication accessibility can sometimes receive less attention than other forms of accessibility.

Ann McSweeney, National Executive Director of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA), said, “We dream of a world where people with hearing loss can thrive each day with communication access, full inclusion, and equal participation in all aspects of life, everywhere they go. Through education, advocacy, and technology solutions, our “Get in the Hearing Loop” program is a national movement that is helping build accessible and inclusive spaces toward a barrier-free Canada for the hard-of-hearing community. We hope to change public spaces and lives by sharing information about hearing loops." (Loblaw Companies Limited, 2026)

For the nearly four million Canadians experiencing hearing loss, difficulty communicating at a checkout, pharmacy, or customer service counter can turn a routine interaction into a frustrating experience.

Accessible communication helps remove that barrier.

Loblaw's rollout provides a tangible example of what hearing accessibility can look like in practice.