

Buffalo Bills Go Digital with Saia Communications

As part of the National Football League (NFL), the Buffalo Bills entertain, inspire and compete in front of 80,000+ fans at home-field games during the season. Keeping the entire operation connected, from their practice facility to New Era Field, is pivotal to delivering the ultimate fan experience and ensuring that the highest standards of safety are met.

As the franchise continues to evolve, security and safety policies also change. The increased numbers of security personnel, screening areas for fans, and processes for emergency situations demand reliable communications.

Employees started experiencing coverage issues, channel congestion, and noticed increasing background noise interference on their analog radios in both the practice facility and game stadium. To get the communications system their operation needed, the Buffalo Bills teamed up with Saia Communications to go digital.

The Challenge

New Era Field is the home of the Buffalo Bills football team. With nearly 3,000 employees, vendors, and partners trying to keep up with thousands of enthusiastic football fans on a typical game day, reliable two-way radios are the foundation for effective communication.

Although an analog system worked in the past, operations management discovered that the system could no longer provide sufficient capacity and coverage that their operation needed. Some of the problems they were faced with included:

- Static interference issues with their current radio equipment
- Background noise levels making it difficult to hear
- Cross-talk from other channels or businesses in the area
- Facility staff being forced to physically walk to employees they were trying to communicate with
- The NFL expanding safety protocols across the league
- Coordinating events with external agencies

New Era Field needed greater capacity and coverage for its 2.1 million square foot stadium, in addition to their team's Training Center and practice facility that is 95,000 square feet. However, obtaining new frequencies in a major metropolitan area, and coordinating frequencies close to the Canadian border, was challenging. The organization had to make a decision to purchase new equipment, switch to a digital network, and embrace a communications system that they could trust.

The Solution

The Buffalo Bills had been planning to upgrade their communications system for a couple of years and needed to finalize a customized solution to connect their entire operation. While consulting with Saia Communications, a thorough evaluation was conducted in order to understand the unique work environment and the needs of each user from the team, management, coaches, trainers, concessions, medical staff, emergency response, media partners, and security personnel.

Saia Communications migrated the Buffalo Bills towards using an entirely digital two-way radio system. Saia even repurposed the existing analog radios to perform with their new fleet of digital two-way radios in Buffalo

in order to save their initial investment. The new Motorola radios of choice were the XPR3500e and SL3500e models, that have advanced features such as:

- Intelligent Audio with background noise cancelation
- IMPRES battery and charger technology for extended battery life
- Enhanced safety features such as Man Down, Lone Worker, and GPS tracking
- 128 available channels
- Improved network coverage and expandability
- Wi-Fi and Bluetooth technology
- Instant push-to-talk (PTT) buttons

“This year, all the channels are now digital, with a dedicated channel for coordinating emergency response. For interoperability, one channel is reserved for analog communication with law enforcement, ambulances and emergency services,” Mike Saia, Vice President of Saia Communications.

The top priority for the Buffalo Bills organization is the safety of everyone. They hold fan safety and experience in high regard and take every measure possible to ensure the highest standards are met. The only way to ensure everyone's safety is to have the proper communications solution in place for their employees, partners and management teams.

“The most important thing is safety. To have that safety and security, you need to have a great communications system. The digital radios don't just keep up with the ever-growing concerns of people coming into the building, but having that seamless communication is paramount to successful operations,” Andy Major, Vice President of Operations & Guest Experience for Buffalo Bills.

The Benefits

The new Buffalo Bills Motorola digital system connects fans, employees, and partners to the command center. By switching to digital portable two-way radios, the technology is where it needs to be today and also has the expandable infrastructure to grow as communications needs change.

The workforce at New Era Field and the practice facility gained confidence that their Motorola digital radios in Buffalo will instantly connect them to the right person no matter where they are. Intelligent audio helps to filter out background noise and static interference, eliminating the need to repeat instructions. Other benefits that the employees noticed include:

- Transitioning from analog to digital radios is user-friendly and much easier than expected
- All partners have 100% confidence in reliable connectivity
- The new radio system is much less likely to experience downtime or channel congestion
- Focus on fan safety and experience with a reliable communication tree working without any concern or worry about technology

The communication goals of the Buffalo Bills were achieved, and implementation was completely seamless. Upgrading their equipment eliminated all of the communication issues they were experiencing. At any given time, employees are now able to contact who they need to contact and hear the radio calls the first time.

“We feel so confident that we have the right people on the radio channels with no interference. It saves us from physically locating someone to deliver a message. The comfort level with our radio communications that we’re at today is at an all-time high,” Andy Major, Vice President of Operations & Guest Experience for Buffalo Bills.

About Saia Communications

As a family company and a leading Motorola Solutions Channel Partner for over 40 years, [Saia Communications, Inc.](#) remains a trusted resource in communications solutions for commercial and government agencies across Western and Central New York. Over the last 10 years, Saia has led the way with developing new technologies, such as the SaiaNet wide-area trunking system and Motorola’s Connect Plus. As the migration from analog to digital trunking continues, Saia continues to invest in comprehensive upgrades for all 17 communications towers they manage and maintain in order to provide their customers with the best digital network.

Product Knowledge

Saia Communications is dedicated to providing sales and services of 2-way radio communications equipment. While Motorola digital two-way radios in Buffalo were used at New Era Field and the Buffalo Bills practice facility, Saia has relationships with other industry-leading innovators to ensure that customers get the equipment they need.

System Implementation

Saia Communications has an extensive tower network that supports Motorola’s advanced wide-area digital trunking system, Connect Plus. Teams can pair applications with this system to make their jobs more efficient and safe, including text messaging, location tracking, traditional dispatch, and more. Saia has also added WAVE to the Connect Plus system to allow interconnection to any smartphone, mobile device, computer, and landline.

Site Monitoring and Maintenance

The experience and [expertise](#) of Saia Communications technicians allow them to provide the best service to their customers. Sites are monitored efficiently through IP systems via SaiaNet, allowing for system health to be maximized and downtime to be reduced.

FCC Licensing

Saia Communications prepares businesses for authorizations that are necessary to commission a communications system. By having extensive knowledge of the guidelines that companies need to adhere to, Saia ensures that all systems are compliant with local codes.

Post-Sale Service

Between remote system monitoring and a team of skilled technicians, Saia Communications guarantees a prompt response to customer support throughout their coverage area. This proactive maintenance and management approach helps to reduce overall downtime and keep systems operational.

Saia's team of professionals helped the Buffalo Bills achieve their communication goals and can help your team do the same. Whether it's Sales, [Service](#), System Design or Engineering, our staff is familiar with the complete line of [Motorola products](#) and supporting equipment to meet your communications requirements and budget.