

Which? Report highlights need for hi-tech delivery system

The equivalent of nearly 20 million working days in the last year was wasted waiting for workmen who failed to turn up. Workers from gas and electricity suppliers kept people waiting the longest - around four and a half hours on average - closely followed by builders. A further 110 million hours were spent waiting in for deliveries that did not arrive when promised. In the survey, computer goods took longer to arrive than any other type of delivery, followed by home electricals and furniture. Dell kept its customers waiting the longest of all the retailers in the survey - six hours on average, which is the better part of a working day. Argos was the next slowest; there was an average wait of just over four and a half hours for their deliveries. Companies that delivered more promptly included Amazon and John Lewis, with an average waiting time of just 2.8 hours, and Next, whose 1.6 hour wait was the shortest. With a huge increase in the number of home deliveries sparked by internet shopping, the gap between what consumers want and what companies

deliver appears wider than ever.

This report has prompted a leading distribution company to call for retailers to raise their game. ByBox, which is the UK's market leader in overnight parts distribution within the field service market, has 14,000 drop boxes at locations across the UK enabling deliveries to be made to secure box banks where recipients can then collect them when they receive a text to let them know the delivery has been made.

Chief Executive Stuart Miller believes this approach is a logical way to make waiting around for deliveries a thing of the past. However, he believes retailers need to give more backing to systems like ByBox, which is already used in the consumer retail market by La Poste, in France, and Jersey Post, in the Channel Islands, to ensure there are enough drop centres to make it convenient for customers. "ByBox is a secure drop-box system where distributors can leave deliveries at certain locations. A text message is then sent to the customer when the drop has been



made so they can collect it, meaning they waste no time waiting around," explained Stuart. "The key to the system is having enough locations around the UK so there is always somewhere very local for goods to be delivered to and picked up from. "We currently have 750 locations around the UK in places like service stations, commercial centres and industrial units. "With commitment from the retail industry, this could be expanded so that anyone only need walk far as their nearest shopping centre or Retail Park to pick up their deliveries. And they are guaranteed to be there every time."