

Vocollect Case Study

BiRite Foodservice Distributors

Complete Foodservice Resource



Voice Results

Objectives

- Increase accuracy
- Improve productivity
- Reduce training time
- Reduce operating costs
- Increase customer satisfaction

Application

- Order selection

Installation

- Vocollect Voice seamlessly integrated with WMS developed by BFC Associates
- Vocollect SR & SRX Series Headsets™
- Vocollect Talkman® T2 Mobile Computing Devices

Results

- Accuracy improved by more than 90%
- Mispicks cut to almost zero
- Training time reduced significantly

ROI

- Payback in less than 12 months

Vocollect Voice® Makes BiRite Foodservice Distributors 'Top Pick' by Customers

BiRite Foodservice Distributors is considered the largest independent broadline foodservice distributor in northern California, with annual sales that top \$240 million. Located just minutes from San Francisco, the company operates from a 235,000 square-foot state-of-the-art facility. BiRite provides customers with a wide range of product offerings, including: dry groceries; meat; seafood; poultry; dairy; frozen foods; disposables; warewashings and cleaning chemicals; equipment and smallwares. In this competitive business, however, reputation is only as good as the last shipment to the customer's loading dock: a missed case or the wrong product can create big problems.

When BiRite began investigating warehouse management systems (WMS) to help it deliver higher customer satisfaction and increased operational efficiencies, it turned to BFC Associates, a warehouse management software developer, for recommendations. Once BFC Associates assessed BiRite's needs, it recommended Vocollect Voice.

The Challenge

Getting it Right the First Time

Imagine that you are the region's leading independent foodservice distributor and your largest customer has just called indicating that its delivery is incorrect. No problem, you can correct it, right? Sure, but what is the impact? In this industry, it's huge, according to BiRite General Manager Dennis Collins.

"We knew we could do better. Even though our mis-pick rate out of some 30,000 to 35,000 cases everyday was low, it had an effect on our customers, and an impact on our productivity. If somebody mis-picked 10 cases of apple pie and sent a customer french fries instead," said Collins, "that's a problem. From a customer-service point of view, it hurt us, but it also hurt us financially. With the cost of fuel and labor, it was expensive to fix. Depending on where the customer was located, it would cost us one person and an entire shift to fix the mistake. We needed to work on preventing the mistakes in the first place."

That's when BiRite turned to BFC Associates, the provider of its warehouse management solution and a Vocollect Total Solution Provider. When BFC recommended Vocollect solutions be evaluated, BiRite agreed.

"The entire process took about four weeks and now 60 employees are using the system."

Dennis Collins
General Manager
BiRite Foodservice
Distributors

"When BFC came in," added Collins, "we were doing all of the picking manually; we had no handhelds, no headsets, nothing. Our selectors were just going out with a stack of labels and picking products. When you're picking orders at 2 a.m. under the best of circumstances, it's a challenge for any human being to maintain focus all night long. We knew we had to automate."

The Solution

A 'Call-to-Action' that Keeps Employees Focused

"The hands-free and interactive capability of the Vocollect Talkman is the key," said Collins, "and to me makes it the best solution. Deploying this kind of technology that helps people stay focused and acts as a kind of double-check is a major step toward reaching our objectives."

BFC Associates president Lyle Castle explained how his firm supported BiRite through the selection and implementation process. "We worked extensively with BiRite to understand their system to be able to fully integrate it with our WMS," he said. "They have coolers and freezers, so the system had to work in a multi-temp environment, all the way down to minus five degrees. Given our experience with Vocollect in other situations, we knew it would perform well. When it came time to roll it out we used a phased approach, implementing voice-enabling technology in two quick steps. We started out with just a few selectors and trained them on the Vocollect Talkman units, then moved on."

Castle explained that BFC based the training on his firm's Truck Builder® module for pallet-mapping. "We basically started with one truck," said Castle, "and we showed employees how to build it and pick it a specific way."

"The entire process," explained Collins, "took about four weeks, and 60 workers are now using the system."

The Results

Turning Customers' Heads & Driving Profitability

With the goal of improving order accuracy, increasing productivity and throughput, and reducing employee training time, BiRite had high expectations when it gave the go-ahead to implement Vocollect Voice.

"There was just no question that it had to help us reduce our mis-picks," said Collins, "and we are extremely pleased. At this point, we've seen our order accuracy improve by more than 90%, and our mis-picks have dropped to virtually zero." Training has also improved dramatically. "New employees come right out of the chute and don't make any mistakes," said Barulich.

"Vocollect Voice takes control and directs them to where they have to go. We set up test routes and test orders and have trainers walking behind the employees, listening in on training headsets to gauge their understanding. We have noticed a huge improvement - training has gone from two weeks to a matter of hours." BiRite officials also expect to see a significant return on investment. "I always assumed that the return on investment would take a couple of years," commented Collins, "but we are already saving money every time we don't have to make an emergency delivery to a customer. Plus, it enhances our image with our customers because we aren't making emergency deliveries - we are not plaguing them with those kinds of mistakes anymore."

Collins told the story of one demanding customer with very high standards. The customer threatened to take its business to a competitor. "Now that we've installed Vocollect Voice, this customer has done a complete 180 and is now complimenting us on the job we're doing. You can't put a dollar value on that, but if I had to, it would be in the millions."



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About Vocollect

Vocollect, Inc. is the number one provider of voice solutions for mobile workers worldwide, helping customers achieve a higher level of business performance through voice. Every day Vocollect enables over 300,000 workers worldwide to distribute more than \$3 billion dollars' worth of goods from distribution centers and warehouses to customer locations. A global team of over 2,000 supply chain reseller and channel partner experts supports Vocollect Voice offerings in 60 countries and in over 35 languages. Vocollect's VoiceWorld Suite integrates with all major WMS and ERP systems, including SAP, and supports the industry's leading mobile device solutions.

For more information, visit www.vocollect.com