Vocollect Case Study

Maines Paper & Food Service

Experience Excellence

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 Manhattan Associates WMS
- Vocollect Talkman® T2 Mobile Computing Devices

🖥 Results
- Accuracy improved to 99.97%

🖥 ROI
- Payback in less than 12 months

Stocking Up on Technology and Serving Perfection with Vocollect Voice

Maines Paper & Food Service is the seventh largest broadline distributor in the country, and one of the largest independent systems distributors in the country. In addition, Maines is the nation's largest food service distributor in the Burger King system. Their legacy began in 1919 when Floyd L. Maines, Sr. founded Maines Candy Company and sold nickel candy to local grocers. The average order was $20 and first-year sales were $30,000.

Since then, Maines has witnessed - and led - many changes, including the growth of voice-technology: today's way to talk "Warehouse Management".

The Challenge
Managing Information, Inventory and Operations

Over the past 84 years, Maines Paper & Food Service has expanded its products and services to the point where it can provide food service customers with virtually everything they want and need. Today it is truly a "full-line" distributor, serving thousands of customers throughout the United States.

In addition to a vast array of foods — meats, seafood, dairy, deli, produce, beverage, frozen food, etc. — the company carries an amazing range of non-food products and supplies. Customers can order everything from commercial ovens to uniforms, tableware and cleaning supplies, even kitchen design services.

But Maines knows that, for customers, what matters even more than a full product line is being sure they'll get what they need, when they need it. That's why the company has built an extensive distribution system, spanning six facilities. It's anchored by a 300,000-square-foot distribution center near Binghamton, NY, where 60-70 order selectors work each shift, every day. In an average week, they'll log 400,000 picks at this facility alone. And, thanks to Maines' continued growth, there's an everincreasing volume of product to move. To keep up with growing demands — and forge ahead in a highly competitive industry — Maines knows how vital it is to manage information, inventory and warehousing operations better than ever before.

> "I was a skeptic until I saw the Talkman system at work in the real world, with real people. Now I'm a believer."

Bill Kimler
Director of Systems & Inventory Control
Maines Paper & Food Service

The Solution
Technology Engineers for the DC

"Looking forward, Maines Paper & Food Service upgraded the Warehouse Management System at its flagship Binghamton DC. Its choice: the next generation of PkMS® by Manhattan Associates, known for its extended supply chain execution (x-SCE™) solution. The upgrade ensures that Information Technology will remain a core competency at Maines: a way to deliver on its commitment to be part of the solution for customers, and to be as easy to do business with as possible.

With these goals in mind, Maines also installed the Talkman® system by Vocollect. Decision makers had investigated voice technology thoroughly, and were convinced that it is both mature and proven. In site visits, they had also seen how well the Talkman system works in rugged, noisy environments, and how well suited it is to critical warehouse applications. Maines also reports being impressed with the practical knowledge and experience that Vocollect has built into very aspect of its Talkman system, including the solidly-engineered Talkman T2 terminal. It was clear that Vocollect knows the warehouse and understands how end-users such as order selectors work. To Maines, this real-world expertise spoke volumes.

The Talkman system, described by Bill Kimler, Director of Systems and Inventory Control, as his easiest installation — ever — was up and running within a few days. It immediately gave order selectors a more natural and intuitive way of doing their jobs: simply listening and responding to spoken commands. Maines has also incorporated a full-featured interface that connects PkMS and the Talkman system and keeps the two in constant communication. Real-time information empowers proactive inventory management.

The Results
Closing in on Perfect Accuracy

As Maines' most advanced site, Binghamton was already very accurate on order selection: nearly 99.9 percent. However, with 400,000 picks a week — more than 20,000,000 a year — even 1/10 of one percent in errors becomes very significant.

With the Talkman system in place, errors have dropped to between 1/3 and 1/4 of what they had been. What's more, as Kimler reports, Maines is driving toward an even lower error rate — 1:9,000 — to reach 99.99 percent accuracy. Near-perfect accuracy all but eliminates re-work, returns, credits and other costly steps. In fact, based on savings that are directly related to improved accuracy, Maines calculates that the Talkman system paid for itself within its first year on the job. Also, though it's harder to quantify, having a worldclass order selection system has clearly been a boon for the company in terms of marketing, enabling it to sign up additional customers.

Other benefits to factor in: various ways in which the system enables selectors to "work smarter." For example, they can research the status of slots at any time to check on shorts. In fact, by reporting shorts via their Talkman terminal as they go through their assignments, they initiate the replenishment process on the spot. Selectors can also specify one of six stations to print their next batch of labels. This allows selectors to start their next assignment at the nearest location, without a trip to a central office. They're automatically logged in and their labels, ready and waiting.

For Maines, the key is that the benefits of voice are multiplied across a high-volume, labor-intensive environment, where improved accuracy and productivity translate into impressive cost savings. Big-time results — fast.

About Vocollect

Vocollect, a business unit of Intermec, 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 $3.5 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