

**COMPANY: PREMIER DECORATIONS**  
**INDUSTRY: RETAIL STORE DISTRIBUTION**

## **VOICE POWERED RESULTS:**

### **OBJECTIVES**

- ▄ Increase pick accuracy in a seasonal warehouse
- ▄ Improve customer service

### **RESULTS**

- ▄ 50 per cent increase in pick rates
- ▄ Near 100 per cent accuracy in orders
- ▄ Time spent on training cut from days to hours
- ▄ Safer and tidier working environments



*“We needed a solution that could be tailored to meet our needs, especially the seasonal changes in our distribution centre. Considering the timeframe, the whole operation was a success.”*

**Ron Athwal,**  
Logistics Operations Manager for Premier Decorations

### **Fulfilling seasonal peaks**

Premier Decorations Ltd is the UK’s number one provider of Christmas decorations and other seasonal products, delivering its wide portfolio to leading retail outlets, including Wilkinsons, John Lewis, Focus, BHS, Debenhams and the Co-op, to name but a few. It also distributes to garden centres, Cash and Carries, wholesalers, and multinationals across the UK and Ireland.

Its 18 years of operation have seen the company go from strength to strength, resulting in the operations outgrowing their warehousing facilities. The company had to establish a new, dedicated National Distribution Centre (NDC) and implement a technical solution that would meet its supply chain needs.

## THE CHALLENGE:

### Improving pick accuracy and managing stock levels

Finding a new warehouse was the easy bit. The main challenge was fitting the premises with appropriate technology to support an operation that, at its peak would see over 500 pallets being delivered across the UK daily. The solution had to cater for non technical users where operatives might have a limited grasp of the English language; a typical requirement in warehouses where seasonal surges in demand require a similar increase in staffing. Premier regularly boosts its staff from 16 in summer to over 50 for Christmas.

Until it moved to the new NDC in Wrexham, Premier had used a paper-based pick system in its warehouse. Although this could cope with customer demand, a more robust, intuitive solution was needed to meet retailers growing demands.

## THE SOLUTION:

### The season of good cheer - coming together

Christian Salvesen was appointed to orchestrate the management of the NDC. Vocollect's Voice Partner, VoiteQ, was chosen to manage and install Vocollect's Talkman® T2 terminals and VoiteQ's proprietary middleware, VoiceMan® as well as to provide training and 24/7 support. VoiceMan adds voice functionality to Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), and already had a good track record with Christian Salvesen's proprietary Ultima WMS. Combined, all three solutions were able to meet Premier's seasonal needs.

*"Vocollect's world standard Voice-Directed Distribution™ system met our most – important criteria – increased pick accuracy. For Premier, customer service is paramount, especially when supplying seasonal products. It's got to be right first time. After all, Christmas doesn't wait."*

**Ron Athwal,**  
Logistics Operations Manager for Premier Decorations

"We wanted a solution tailored to our needs, especially the seasonal changes in our distribution centre," commented Ron Athwal, logistics operations manager, Premier.

"Vocollect's world standard Voice-Directed Distribution™ system met our most important criteria – increased pick accuracy. For Premier, customer service is paramount, it's got to be right first time. After all Christmas doesn't wait."

## THE RESULTS:

### The gift of Christmas present

Premier has reaped the benefits of voice. Training time is now hours rather than days and as Vocollect recognises all speech patterns and dialects, there has been no problem with foreign workers using it. Premier has also enjoyed a safer, tidier, work environment. "The health and safety benefits from operatives having hands and eyes free are key, especially when you have forklifts whizzing round the warehouse. As we no longer use paper for picking, the warehouse is tidier and we have saved on stationery and man-hours," adds Ron Athwal. Voice allows operatives to continue working once a consignment is complete so they aren't continually returning to the control centre for new pick lists. In a warehouse the size of Premier's this has meant a huge productivity boost. Premier now ensures all pick-faces are stocked-up before the pick shift starts and has achieved a near 100 per cent order accuracy and a 50 per cent increase in pick rates. Using voice for replenishment has meant each time a pick is made the replenishment team is informed, so stock outs have been eliminated and orders are completed in time, every time. Voice is now paving the way for the future of Premier's warehouse. Presently the intake and put-away process is managed by handheld Radio Frequency terminals but Premier is considering expanding voice into this area. With room to expand into the Wrexham site, more Talkman® terminals may be on the next Christmas list.



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