

COMPANY: GUYENNE & GASCOGNE
INDUSTRY: FOOD RETAILING

VOICE-POWERED RESULTS:

OBJECTIVES

- ▄ Improve quality of work of warehouse teams
- ▄ Increase productivity
- ▄ Reduce error rate

RESULTS

- ▄ Pick error rate reduced from 6 to 0.30 per 1,000
- ▄ 12 to 15% productivity gain in order preparation
- ▄ Enhanced security and flexibility for warehouse workers
- ▄ Improved customer satisfaction
- ▄ Withdrawal of paper order lists as part of sustainable development policy

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- ▄ In under 24 months, including roll-out of WiFi & WMS



Voice technology deployed at 66,900m² of Carrefour and Champion warehouses

Specializing primarily in food retail, Guyenne & Gascogne is a family-owned distribution company that operates supermarkets and hypermarkets in the South West of France and Spain. The company is listed on Paris' Second Marché. The group has a 50% stake in Sogara, a joint subsidiary created with Carrefour in 1966, and manages 13 Carrefour megastore hypermarkets. The Guyenne & Gascogne parent company operates its own network of stores, partnering with Carrefour but on an entirely independent basis. The network includes six hypermarkets operated under the Carrefour name and 27 supermarkets operating under the Champion name. The company has facilities in Labenne, in the Landes region, for food products (excluding fishmongery, traditional butchery and frozen foods), which has a workforce of 180, including 75 agents now equipped with voice technology.

“Our long-standing partner Carrefour has used voice technology since 2002. This is endorsement enough for us that Vocollect solutions can be relied upon.”

Eric Martinet,
Head of Purchasing and Logistics,
Guyenne & Gascogne

CHALLENGE

Integrate voice technology into order selection without changing existing IT systems

Guyenne & Gascogne has a 27,000 m² warehouse divided into three sections: fresh produce, dried goods and liquids. Each day, the site receives around 1,700 pallets, which are unpacked and used to prepare and ship more than 45,000 packages to 33 stores. The facility's busiest time of year is July and August. Before voice technology was introduced, the warehouse relied on three paper list based order selection methods: cross-docking, pre-allocation and unpacking. "In 2005, we conducted a three-pronged technical, operational and financial analysis to assess the impact and benefits of introducing voice technology into the warehouse," explains Eric Martinet. Several different technologies were competitively assessed, including a pilot pistol-grip type handheld scanner. The Vocollect solution, marketed by reseller Psion Teklogix, emerged as the most conclusive.

THE SOLUTION

Seamless integration of Vocollect voice recognition technology in the existing warehouse management system

The CYLANDE G.D. Warehouse Management System (WMS) from CYLANDE is the backbone of the Guyenne & Gascogne information system. Consequently, TekSpeech middleware from Psion Teklogix was required to provide the data interface between the Vocollect Talkman® T5 wearable computer terminals and the CYLANDE G.D. software.

"Our pickers have responded eagerly to the new system. In fact, no one would now go back to the old paper method!"

Hervé Laxague,
Head of Logistics and Operations,
Guyenne & Gascogne

Warehouse workers are now equipped with a Talkman® terminal worn at the belt. They receive the order fulfillment instructions issued by the WMS via Vocollect Talkman® SR20 heads. "The system gives pickers complete freedom of vision and movement, making their work much easier and safer," remarks Eric Martinet. The transition from the traditional paper-based method to voice technology was completed in no time and the teams eagerly embraced the new system. More importantly, it took just half a day's training, working in twos, for each picker to become fully operational.

THE RESULTS

Significant benefits – spurring the customer to extend voice technology to other warehouse activities

Optimized order preparation, with instructions issued directly to the operator via the WMS, and faster and more fluid picking following the elimination of paper lists, have resulted in significant productivity gains. Another key benefit for Guyenne & Gascogne is enhanced reliability, as the voice-powered system verifies that each pick corresponds exactly to the order requirements. As a result, the error rate has been slashed from 6 to under 0.3 errors per 1,000 picks. This has translated into improved quality of service and a big jump in customer satisfaction. Last but not least, the new system has led to a notable improvement in safety, as warehouse workers now have more freedom of movement, making them more vigilant. "We are seriously considering extending Vocollect to other warehouse activities, including annual and rotating inventories, along with just-in-time aspects of fresh produce unpacking, in line with our environmental strategy launched over two years ago, which shapes our investments," adds Eric Martinet.



Vocollect Europe:
Voc_emea@vocollect.com
+44 (0) 1628 55 2900
www.vocollect.com

About Psion Teklogix:
www.psionteklogix.com

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