

**COMPANY: GLIDEWELL DISTRIBUTING CO.**  
**INDUSTRY: WHOLESALE FOOD DISTRIBUTOR**

## **VOICE-POWERED RESULTS:**

### **OBJECTIVE**

- /// Enhance and deliver brand promise of speed, service and value to customers by improving order accuracy, worker productivity and reducing training time/expense.

### **RESULTS**

- /// Achieved order accuracy of 99.66%.
- /// Increased worker productivity, equating to \$84,240 in annual labor savings.
- /// Eliminated four order checkers due to improved order accuracy, resulting in an additional labor savings of \$99,840 annually.
- /// Reduced product 'shorts,' resulting in store credit savings of \$89,752 annually.
- /// Reduced training from 1-2 days to an hour.
- /// Achieved payback in less than nine months.

### **FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

- /// Expand Vocollect Voice® to put-away and receiving applications.

*"We are in a highly competitive market; and as a private, family-owned company, customer service is our differentiator. Vocollect Voice not only improved our customer service, as was evident by our reduction in weekly 'shorts,' but it also provided a very impressive ROI in less than nine months."*

**Nick Glidewell**  
Director of Sales  
Glidewell Distributing Co.



### **Glidewell Distributing Supplements Its Long Heritage of Service with Vocollect Voice**

Since 1946, when J.W. Glidewell began his distribution business with a GMC panel truck in Fort Smith, Arkansas, Glidewell Distributing has had one mission: to help sellers of high- and small-ticket consumables increase sales and profit. In that time, the company has learned that speed matters – meaning priority delivery on every order; and precision matters – getting products out the door on-time, every time.

Today, still operating as a family-owned business, Glidewell is proud to tout customer service as its key competitive advantage – and differentiator. To sustain stellar performance across the board, the company relies on Vocollect Voice and the expert advice and service from Speech Interface Design (SID).

Glidewell is proud to have been one of the first pilot sites for Vocollect's new VoiceLink® 3.0, the first middleware application from Vocollect to leverage leading-edge open source technology and combine it with industry-leading voice applications to drive process improvements for both Operations and IT.

## **The Challenge:** **Improve Accuracy, Boost Service**

For Glidewell, it was the typical 'good news, bad news' scenario. In October 2005, the company acquired Southern Wholesale and brought on more business and employees; but with more orders came order accuracy challenges. Providing food, tobacco and other convenience store items to approximately 2,000 accounts in Arkansas and Oklahoma, Glidewell handles 6,500 SKUs, fulfills more than 800 orders per day and delivers using 14 routes/trucks per day.

"When more orders started coming in, the last thing we wanted was our service to suffer. That's when we worked with SID to learn more about Vocollect Voice. With SID's help, we did a 'test drive' via a site visit at Indian Nation, a convenience store distribution company, and were impressed by its 'hands-free' and logical nature. We saw where it would cut down on errors because of the focus it brings. Operationally, we decided to jump right in."

Prior to voice, Glidewell Distributing employed a manual paper-based picking process that had numerous opportunities to provide a significant enhancement to its order selection operation, including increased worker productivity and accuracy improvements.

"We are in a highly competitive market; and as a family-owned company, customer service is our differentiator," said Nick Glidewell, director of sales at Glidewell Distributing. "We must achieve quick and accurate order processing and delivery, so we look for ways that technology can help. Vocollect Voice not only improved our customer service, as was evident by our reduction in weekly 'shorts,' but it also provided a very impressive ROI in less than nine months."

## **The Solution:** **Combined Team of SID and Vocollect Voice**

As they moved toward implementation, Glidewell management had key goals for Vocollect Voice, in addition to improving key metrics for order accuracy, worker speed and reducing training time/expense:

**An infrastructure for "best practices"** – Via voice-directed instructions, Vocollect Voice provides consistent task execution in an accurate manner. This has vastly reduced

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**Jamie Glidewell**  
Director, Warehouse Management  
Glidewell Distributing Co.

costly truck runs that Glidewell previously encountered in delivering "missed" products after delivery.

**Real-time labor management** – With access to real-time, accurate data, Glidewell management can see what order is being selected, and by whom, seconds after the actual occurrence. In addition to empowering team members to take more ownership of their performance levels, it allows supervisors to manage proactively. For example, action can be taken on an order 'short' seconds after it's discovered, versus at the end of the assignment, thereby assuring truck deliveries are on-time and complete.

Glidewell credits much of its implementation success to support provided by SID. "Our voice deployment was flawless, and completed within just a few months. The SID team was with us every step of the way," said Nick Glidewell. "There were no surprises because they thought of everything and guided us through the process."

Today Glidewell's WMS manages all aspects of order entry, printing out order lists, load sheets and manifests, as well as invoicing and other functions. The WMS is programmed to interface directly with Vocollect Voice. Due to the nature of its business, Glidewell supervisors often have to shuffle orders. With VoiceLink 3.0, they can easily reorder assignments, elevate the priority of assignments, suspend assignments or cancel them outright. "With VoiceLink 3.0, I'm able to better manage my workers as well as streamline the truck-loading process," said Jamie Glidewell, director of warehouse management.

## **The Results:** **Near-Perfect Order Accuracy and Fast Payback**

Glidewell realized tremendous savings as a result of Vocollect Voice. Annual labor savings from increased worker productivity in order selection totals \$84,240. Additionally, Glidewell realized an annual labor savings of \$99,840 through its ability to completely eliminate four order checkers due to improved order accuracies that Vocollect Voice delivers. This brings the total annual labor savings to \$184,080.

Glidewell has also seen a dramatic reduction in its product shorts – products they used to have to resend to customers because of original order inaccuracies. With order accuracies gained by Vocollect Voice, store credit savings total \$89,752 annually. Vocollect Voice also requires less training than paper-based or scanning systems. For Glidewell, training went from 1-2 days to an hour. All told, Glidewell's labor and store credit savings total \$273,832, a significant savings for a mid-sized distribution company. Best of all, the company achieved full system payback in less than nine months.

"The results are tremendous," said Nick Glidewell. "Our orders are near-perfect now; and when there is a problem, voice forces you to address it. If we ever had to go back to our previous process, our people would throw fits. They're passionate about voice."

Next up, Glidewell will expand Vocollect Voice to its put-away and receiving applications. Nick Glidewell summarizes, "As we continue our heritage of growth, we believe this 'forward-thinking' will enable us to out-compete those who don't invest in technologies like voice. It's one of our new differentiators."



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