

COMPANY: NORAUTO
INDUSTRY: AUTOMOTIVE

VOICE-POWERED RESULTS

OBJECTIVES

- ▄ Increase warehouse productivity
- ▄ Comply with automotive industry traceability standards
- ▄ Reduce error rates to 1 per 1,000 picks in six months
- ▄ Implement a scaleable, open and sustainable tool to keep pace with the group's rapid growth

VOICE-POWERED RESULTS

- ▄ 15% increase in selection productivity
- ▄ No productivity loss when WMS came on-line
- ▄ Picking error rate reduced 50% in several weeks' time

ROI

- ▄ Achieved payback in under 12 months



Norauto equips its Lesquin warehouse in Northern France with Vocollect Voice-Directed Distribution™

Norauto is an international group which has expanded significantly over the past five years following the acquisition of several brands, including Midas, Auto5 and Maxauto, and the creation of Carter Cash. These investments doubled the Group's sales and tripled its number of outlets. Following this expansion, in 2000 the Information Systems Department embarked on a complete overhaul of the Group's resources, including the launch in 2004 of a project to replace its Warehouse Management System (WMS). A Projects Supply Chain Department was subsequently created in November 2005 to support the Group's growth and adapt information processes to its changing needs.

"The combination of Manhattan Associates' warehouse management system and Vocollect's Voice-Directed Distribution™ means that we can confidently meet the challenge of our emerging supply chain requirements."

Laurent Houvenaghel,
Supply Chain Projects Director, Norauto

THE CHALLENGE

Improve accuracy and productivity amid rapid growth and expansion

The project commenced with the replacement of Norauto's home-grown proprietary WMS. Developed more than 15 years ago, the system had become too costly to maintain.

In parallel to the installation of the Manhattan Associates' WMOS software package, the Supply Chain Projects unit selected and deployed Vocollect's Voice-Directed Distribution marketed by reseller Psion Teklogix. With the previous system, selectors had to rely on paper lists to prepare orders. Human errors inevitably occurred, especially when the worker had to pick heavy or voluminous packages.

Investment in Voice-Directed Distribution™ emerged as the best solution in light of Norauto's considerable growth. The Lesquin warehouse delivers products to 150 stores for all Group companies except Midas – each week it processes approximately 60,000 order lines and handles between 200 and 250,000 different products.

THE SOLUTION

Adapt Manhattan Associates' WMS to Vocollect's Voice-Directed Distribution

To meet its needs, the warehouse opted for Voice-Directed Distribution, in conjunction with the Manhattan Associates' WMOS. This has facilitated order verification very early upstream, as soon as the article is picked, not just on the basis of its location in the warehouse.

"With a new picking error rate of 1.3 per 1,000, we've exceeded the quality levels required in our trade."

Laurent Houvenaghel,
Supply Chain Projects Director, Norauto

Each of the 30 order selectors is now equipped with a Vocollect wearable computer. Via a headset, the worker receives all the instructions needed to fulfill an order: aisle or section location, task number, number of lines, and the volume and number of items to be prepared. A two-way dialogue is then set up between the warehouse order selector and the computer, which guides the employee through the order fulfillment process step by step, checking that the correct number of required items is selected. The worker can interrupt the task at any time to report a missing item or to skip an aisle if it is too crowded.

"The application requires that items are stored in an orderly fashion and indexed accurately in the warehouse management system. As a result, when we installed Voice-Directed Distribution, we also created a new storage supervisor position," adds Laurent Houvenaghel.

THE RESULTS

Benefits all along the supply chain

The new processes came on-line completely transparently, without any major technical hitches. Furthermore, it took less than two hours for each warehouse worker to master the new techniques involved. The flexibility of the new tool met with the immediate approval of the workers as it adapted to their pace of work and methods. In just a few weeks, the stores served by the Lesquin warehouse reported a halving in error rates. "A very good order selector, using paper order lists, has a typical error rate of two per 1,000 picks. We have set a realistic goal of an error rate of 1 per 1,000 picks for all workers by the end of the year," remarks Laurent Houvenaghel.

A year earlier, 70% of stores checked the Norauto packages they received, compared with just 30% today – eloquent proof, if needed, that the benefits of Voice-Directed Work extend way beyond the distribution center, itself.



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