Vocollect Case Study

Jiarong Supermarket and Hypermarket
(Dongguan City, Guangdong, China)
Picking precision is the order of the day

Voice Results

📋 Objectives
– Increase picking efficiency and achieve 100% accuracy for high-value products
– Improve worker satisfaction levels
– Improve customer satisfaction levels

📋 Application
– Order selection (piece-picking)

📋 Installation
– Vocollect VoiceDirect seamlessly integrated with Manhattan's WMS
– Vocollect SR® Series Headsets
– Vocollect Talkman® T5 Mobile Computing Devices

📋 Results
– 'Perfect Order' achieved
– Improve picking efficiency by 47%
– Training time reduced by 50%
– Improved worker satisfaction
– Improved safety

📋 Future Plans
– Order-packing
– Receiving
– Shipping

Vocollect modernizes distribution for Guangdong's supermarket trade

Like the rest of the modern world, China's supermarket industry faces the challenge of an increasingly sophisticated urban customer base. Supermarket chains are seeking to differentiate themselves with new concepts and wider offerings, and permutations of the old FMCG (Fast-moving consumer goods) and fresh produce grocer formula are being introduced at a breakneck pace.

Jiarong knows this only too well. Established in 1992 in Dongguan City, Guangdong Province, this leading hypermarket and supermarket operator distributes a wide range of offerings to its outlets and other retail establishments, including dry groceries, frozen foods, fresh produce and sundry goods.

In 2006, backed by its strong distribution network in the province, Jiarong signed a partnership with SPAR International, the world's largest independent food retail chain. The two companies jointly launched Guangdong SPAR retail chain to manage the distribution needs of SPAR in the Guangdong province.

While an undeniable business coup, the new entity had Jiarong racing to meet the demands of a workload spike. Its countermeasure came in the form of a new Distribution Center (DC), tailor-designed and built to be future-proof.

Jiarong moved its operations into a new 140,000 square meters (approximately 1,506,947 square foot) facility in January. Averaging a weekly throughput of about 600,000 items, including fresh fruits, vegetables, processed foodstuff, perishables that require refrigeration and more, its daily circulation of large trucks for deliveries in and around Dongguan City alone numbers 180.

Moving Forward with Voice

To keep up with the times, Jiarong decided that a technology upgrade would be the best course of action to complement its new DC, starting with the departments that distribute higher value products and that require more attention per pick.

> *"Our order pickers no longer worry about mis-picks, since the Vocollect system tracks their progress on each order in real time. This helps us track and maintain 100 per cent accuracy."*

Min Chen
Voice Project Executive
Dongguan Jiarong
Distribution Center

According to Min Chen, Voice Project Executive, Dongguan Jiarong Distribution Center, many technologies and processes were put forward, but to be considered, they had to fulfill three key assessment objectives:

1. Be easy to implement, easy to integrate and easy for staff to learn and use
2. Help the DC achieve zero picking errors
3. Maximize efficiency and improve productivity

"We decided on Vocollect Voice because it is the only solution that can meet our company's needs satisfactorily," he says. "Vocollect Voice integrates easily and seamlessly with our existing Manhattan's warehouse management system (WMS). We also received strong recommendation from SPAR and that gave us the confidence that the Vocollect solution is of considerable repute."

In April, as part of its overall strategy to build a distribution operation of international standards, Jiarong adopted Vocollect Voice for its new DC launch.

The Right Choice

"We've received very positive feedback from workers who have switched to voice, due to its simplicity of use and language intuitiveness," says Chen. "We are definitely experiencing higher worker satisfaction levels."

One of the main reasons why Vocollect Voice is so easy to adopt lies in it being a speaker-dependent system. Workers first pre-record key words into a system template, in any language they choose, and this is used as the basis of a key word or key phrase communication between each worker and the voice system. As long as their responses are consistent with their recorded templates, there are virtually no voice recognition errors.

Chen explains that this has made the workers feel more in control of their jobs, and their work performances have greatly improved.

The eyes-free, hands-free benefit of voice has always made it ideal for the warehouse world, where all of the interaction with the system is through the headset and microphone through which workers hear instructions and respond to confirm actions – leaving their hands completely free to handle product. Their heads and eyes are up and aware of their surrounding environments, instead of looking at pieces of paper or screen-based devices. This improves overall safety.

Other noted improvements include:

- **Improve efficiency:** Massive improvement of 47% in picking efficiency and productivity.

- **Increase accuracy:** Errors have been virtually eradicated and accuracy levels are now at 100%.

- **Minimum training:** Voice systems reduce labor as they drive productivity. They are extremely user-friendly, with operators becoming proficient much sooner than with other technologies. Jiarong's pickers are trained to use Vocollect Voice in less than an hour, compared to the long hours of training required to effectively use RF.

- **Higher levels of worker satisfaction:** Because of the hands-free and eyes-free feature of Vocollect Voice, Jiarong's pickers are able to focus on their jobs, resulting in higher accuracy, greater productivity and safety.

A Future with Vocollect

The results Chen has noted for Jiarong's DC voice implementation are not silo incidents. Vocollect has thousands of installations globally and a proven track record for improving food and retail product distribution. As such, Chen is now keen to explore the use of Vocollect Voice in other areas of the new DC.

"We now have the first mover advantage, so we intend to look into deploying Vocollect Voice in areas like order packing, receiving and shipping applications in the long-term," he says.

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About Vocollect

In the complex supply chain industry, accuracy and productivity are of paramount importance. The proven track record of voice in driving quantifiable performance improvements has made it a natural fit for process reengineering efforts to solve key business challenges. Vocollect, a business unit of Intermec, Inc., is the number one provider of end-to-end voice solutions for mobile workers worldwide, helping customers achieve a higher level of business performance.

Together with our partners, we enable 500,000 workers at nearly 2,000 companies around the globe to distribute US$5 billion in goods every day. Contact Vocollect today to learn how we can help you transform your operational and workforce performance. For more information, visit www.vocollect.com.