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**Tony Saurer**

Supply Chain Manager  
Ewing Irrigation Products

## Vocollect VoiceExpress<sup>®</sup> Expands Voice Functionality for Ewing Irrigation Products

Ewing Irrigation Products provides landscape, irrigation and golf course professionals with the supplies they need to create healthy, sustainable environments. Founded in 1922 as an irrigation distributor, today Ewing’s “outdoor lifestyle” products include water management solutions, agronomic supplies, landscape lighting, water features, hardscape (paved areas with little soil), and erosion control.

The main Phoenix, Arizona area-based Ewing distribution center (DC) serves branch store operations in 200 convenient locations across the country. The company ships 1,800-2,000 cartons a day on average, operating one shift five days per week.

Unlike many industries where products are packed and shipped in uniform-sized boxes, the Ewing product line comprises everything from wheelbarrows and 50-pound bags of fertilizer to 20-foot-long sections of PVC pipe and small drip emitters – making the order fulfillment process a complex proposition. Couple that with the issue that if an order arrives late or is incorrect, it isn’t just an inconvenience to branches, themselves; the contractors — Ewing’s key customers — will lose money, because they still have to pay their people.



*"In the early days of our company, it took 12 associates working 12 hours a day, six days a week, to service 100 of our branches. With the Manhattan Associates / Vocollect solution, the same workers can service all 200 stores working only five days a week. And they typically finish the day's order selection efforts in seven hours, allowing us to allocate labor to other workflows."*

#### **Terry Williams**

Vice President of  
Customer Experience  
Ewing Irrigation Products

#### **The Challenge**

### Optimizing the workforce

When Ewing transitioned from paper to handhelds, it gained a performance boost. Even so, workers struggled with the cumbersome nature of handhelds and the company's odd-sized, bulky product mix, and management looked for a way to optimize the individual worker experience and increase efficiency.

#### **The Solution**

### Manhattan Associates®/Vocollect drive fast flexibility

When Ewing had a major technology upgrade to Manhattan Associate's warehouse management system (WMS), its distribution leadership wanted to explore additional technology options for the picking process. Manhattan recommended Vocollect Voice®. Ewing management wanted to go beyond voice just for case-picking – it wanted to use voice for its pick-from-reserve workflow. However, it was hard to build a business case for that application.

Manhattan recommended Vocollect VoiceExpress, an enterprise connector integration option that enables Vocollect partners to configure the solution without WMS changes or significant IT staff time.

"With Vocollect VoiceExpress, we were up and running in two weeks; a traditional modification to our WMS would have taken much longer. This provided us with strong flexibility for all aspects of our order selection process," said Tony Saurer, Ewing Supply Chain Manager.

#### **The Results**

### Workers "learn it, love it, live it" with Vocollect Voice

"The Manhattan/Vocollect solution has transformed our DC operations," said Tony Saurer, Ewing Supply Chain Manager. "We have gained a wide range of efficiencies that helped us optimize our labor pool and eliminate overtime."

The company has realized a 20 percent and higher improvement in both order accuracy and productivity over scanning through Vocollect.



"In the early days of our company, it took 12 associates working 12 hours a day, six days a week, to service 100 of our branches. With the solution from Manhattan and Vocollect, the same workers can service all 200 stores working only five days a week. And they typically finish the day's order selection efforts in seven hours, allowing us to allocate labor to other workflows," said Terry Williams, Ewing's Vice President of Customer Experience. "This allows for higher fill rates that will help improve our customers' profitability."

In addition, voice has eliminated a number of unnecessary extra steps required with scanning; now workers simply speak the license plate number. Before, they might have to scan 20-30 individual fertilizer labels. With VoiceExpress they can multi-pick, reading off the first and last label and doing a database query for the in-between labels – turning 20-30 item transactions into only one.

"With Vocollect Voice, everyone's smiling – our management, our employees, our branch managers and our contractors. Our Vocollect Voice users certainly have adopted a "learn it, love it, live it" philosophy about the new system – they would never want to go back to handhelds again," said Saurer.

## Voice Results

### Objectives

- Optimize picking process with bulky, non-standard-shaped products
- Expand voice to pick-from-reserve section without incurring costly customization fees and extensive IT time
- Increase productivity and order accuracy
- Utilize technology in multiple facets of building with a single device and single training effort

### Application

- Picking (case/each/pallet/tote)
- Pick-from-reserve

### Installation

- Vocollect Talkman® A500 mobile devices
- SRX wireless headsets
- VoiceDirect® by Manhattan Associates
- Vocollect VoiceExpress
- Manhattan Associates WMS

### Results

- Minimum 20% accuracy improvement over scanning
- 20% productivity improvement over scanning
- Vocollect VoiceExpress allowed rapid, cost-effective transition to voice for pick-from-reserve without standard customization
- Overtime eliminated
- Moved from 12 associates working 12 hours a day, six days a week, servicing 100 branches to same people working eight hours a day, five days a week servicing 200 branches
- Picking process now requires only seven hours of eight-hour shift – remaining shift hour is applied to other distribution tasks
- VoiceExpress enables multi-picks, turning 20-item transaction into one
- Training time reduced from one to two days to one hour
- Improved worker safety

### Future Plans

- Put-Away
- Replenishment



## About Vocollect by Honeywell

Vocollect by Honeywell is the leading provider of innovative voice technology solutions that help companies with mobile workers run a better business. Together with a global team of over 2,000 Vocollect Certified Professionals, Vocollect enables companies to save more than \$20 billion annually through further optimization of operations, delivering the industry's premier worker experience in challenging industrial environments to nearly one million mobile workers who move in excess of \$5 billion of products every day.

Vocollect integrates with all major WMS and ERP systems and supports the industry's leading handheld computing devices. Visit us at [www.vocollect.com](http://www.vocollect.com).

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