Vocollect Case Study

Ingram Book Group
Setting the Standard

Voice Results

🔖 Objectives

- Achieve better warehouse management
- Achieve near perfect order accuracy
- Improve productivity
- Improve customer satisfaction

🔖 Application

- Order Selection

🔖 Installation

- Vocollect Talkman® T2 mobile computing devices
- Vocollect SR Series™ Headsets

🔖 Results

- Increased productivity and throughput by 25% within six months
- Reduced training time by 50%

🔖 ROI

- Payback achieved in less than 6 months

Ingram Book 'Talks' Its Way To Supply Chain Savings with Manhattan Associates and Vocollect

Ingram Book Company, an Ingram Content Group company, is the largest book wholesale distributor in the world, offering immediate access to more than two million titles. Through their speed, breadth of titles, and operational excellence, Ingram Book is the preferred wholesale provider for more than 71,000 retail and library customers globally.

As the world's largest wholesale distributor of books and audio books to booksellers, librarians and specialty retailers, great customer service is the cornerstone of Ingram's success. Since 1964, the company has provided the book industry with innovations that make doing business easier and more cost-effective.

Ingram was able to move from scanners to voice with confidence in knowing that Manhattan Associates had already developed a fully integrated, real time, direct interface to Vocollect Voice for its i-Series warehouse management system. The entire solution was purchased from Manhattan Associates which, as a Vocollect Total Solution Provider, also implemented and supports it.

The Challenge
Increase Productivity Without Sacrificing Quality

Ingram Book Group ships to retailers as well as directly to consumers on behalf of online booksellers. The company stocks 1.4 million different titles (SKUs) in four distribution centers (DCs); order sizes can vary dramatically – from one unit up to 50,000 units. Ingram's complex network of inventory, consumers, distribution channels and facility coordination creates a unique set of supply chain challenges.

Explains Drew Bordas, director of warehouse systems for Ingram Book Group, "With regard to our supply chain, we're experiencing what everyone else is. We're all trying to cut costs out of operations and get distribution faster, more efficient and productive. Warehouse management systems are now commonplace – all of a sudden, that isn't a competitive edge anymore. Now our executives ask, 'What can we do to leverage the warehouse management system?' For us, the answer came in a 'building-block' fashion. First, we achieved a great warehouse management system with Manhattan Associates' solutions; then, we implemented Vocollect Voice as the next cost-cutting strategy."

> "Paper, keyboards, and RF scanners don't generally fit with the physical nature of a DC worker's job. That's why we replaced them with Vocollect Voice."

Drew Bordas
Director of Warehouse Systems
Ingram Book Group

The Solution
Manhattan Associates and Vocollect – Leaders Among the Providers

Ingram has a keen understanding of the business opportunities and bottom-line benefits available through strategic supply chain management and has implemented a number of Manhattan Associates' solutions in its DCs. Most recently, Ingram introduced Vocollect Voice to guide its more than 70 order selectors to take the most efficient route around the DC.

"Paper, keyboards and RF scanners don't generally fit with the physical nature of a DC worker's job," said Bordas. "That's why we replaced these with voice. With solutions from Manhattan Associates and the implementation of Vocollect Voice, we have achieved our goal to increase productivity by 25% – while improving quality service to our customers. We're filling orders to booksellers faster."

Ingram used a phased approach to implementation and training so that incremental improvements could be made without interrupting service to customers. This was particularly important for the LaVergne facility – Ingram's largest DC – which had the most to gain from voice in terms of order selection productivity, yet the greatest potential for interruption from the implementation process.

"Order selection is crucial for us," said Bordas. "This is such a large payroll department and there is so much walking and time involved in it. We knew voice would enable us to gain widespread financial impact. Yet, we weren't willing to just a flip a switch to voice, so we ramped up slowly. But we had a seamless implementation and transition. The time Manhattan Associates invested and its ability to gradually deploy Vocollect Voice allowed us to implement the solutions without service interruption to our customers."

The Results
Achieved Near-Perfect Order Accuracy

Within the constraints of having to co-mingle as many as 25 products in a single slot, Ingram's workers are now directed by voice to the pick location, where they are told what book to select – and they then confirm the selection by speaking digits from the product code. With its innovative, 'selection by description' solution in place, Ingram has far exceeded its goal to increase productivity. The initial project return on investment was based on a 10% improvement. A 13.2% improvement was budgeted for 2007 and Ingram is currently at 25% improvement.

This dramatic increase in productivity has been achieved while improving service to Ingram's customers. In fact, Ingram is filling orders to booksellers faster, enabling publishers to more efficiently reach a wider, increasingly diverse customer base. And Ingram's already excellent order accuracy remained consistent as it increased productivity.

Vocollect Voice has also provided important safety benefits, as workers are less distracted with equipment and paperwork. An additional bonus is its ability to provide simple, step-by-step instructions for the ultimate on-the-job training experience so new workers learn independently and are productive on their very first day. As such, training time has been cut in half.

"Our order selectors have historically been seen as entry-level," said Bordas. "But for the first time ever, we've had people from other departments who want to work in order selection. This is due to Vocollect Voice – it's cutting-edge and our employees think it's cool. In fact, when we take people on tours, you'd think we had 'Star Wars' out there. It's amazing to see the reactions. Worker satisfaction has skyrocketed."

Vocollect®
a business unit of **Intermec®**

Vocollect North America:
info@vocollect.com
+1 412 829 8145

Vocollect EMEA:
voc_emea@vocoollect.com
+44 (0) 1628 55 2900

Vocollect APAC:
apac@vocollect.com
+852 3915 7000

Vocollect Latin America:
latin_america@vocollect.com
+1 412 349 2675

Vocollect Japan:
japan@vocollect.com
+813 3769 5601

Vocollect Singapore:
singapore@vocollect.com
+65 6248 4928

About Vocollect

Vocollect, a business unit of Intermec, is the number one provider of voice solutions for mobile workers worldwide, helping customers achieve a higher level of business performance through voice. Every day Vocollect enables over 300,000 workers worldwide to distribute more than $3.5 billion dollars' worth of goods from distribution centers and warehouses to customer locations. A global team of over 2,000 supply chain reseller and channel partner experts supports Vocollect Voice offerings in 60 countries and in over 35 languages. Vocollect's VoiceWorld Suite integrates with all major WMS and ERP systems, including SAP, and supports the industry's leading mobile device solutions.

For more information, visit www.vocollect.com