

Vocollect Case Study

Indian Nation Wholesale

Distributors of consumer products to retailers
across Oklahoma and Texas

Voice Results

Objectives

- Improve accuracy
- Improve productivity

Application

- Order Selection

Installation

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

Results

- Productivity increased by 30%
- Employees trained on Vocollect system in hours instead of days
- Eliminated the need for order checkers on each line

ROI

- Payback received in less than 18 months

Deploying Vocollect Voice To Gain a Competitive Edge In Wholesale



Indian Nation Wholesale is a convenience store distributor serving more than 2,500 stores throughout Oklahoma and Texas. The company, which employs 350, has one distribution center, and operates a cross-dock transportation center and a cash-and-carry facility.

The company has 80 individuals picking simultaneously across 18 regions, including refrigerated and frozen, in the distribution center. In such a competitive industry, it is essential to look for every advantage, any edge to solidify its relationship with customers and keep the business moving in a forward direction. Enter Voice-enabling technology from Vocollect.

The Challenge

Driving Profitability By Increasing Productivity

Indian Nation Wholesale sought to increase productivity company-wide, from reducing picking errors to shipping errors to phasing errors. An important related issue, however, was how to measure productivity. Company executives reported that they really had no measurement tools – nothing to provide them with a snapshot of current productivity levels, and certainly nothing to chart progress over time.

Said Dawn Laxson, Vice President of Administration for Indian Nation Wholesale, “We were looking for ways to make us more productive, to lock us in with our customers, because that’s the name of the game today. We were running at about 98% accuracy and we were dedicated to improving that level. The competition out here is really tough, and we need to tie it down and keep our business growing.” After investigating different options including bar coding and pick-to-light, Indian Nation Wholesale determined that the Vocollect Talkman voice system, combining powerful application software with lightweight wearable computers, would help achieve its goals.

“Our productivity has increased by approximately 30% when measuring man hours in our warehouse before and after installation of the Vocollect system. We are picking more items with fewer people.”

Ron Cross
CEO
Indian Nation Wholesale

The Solution

From Paper To Digital: Virtually Overnight

Some companies choose to introduce process change gradually or incrementally. Wanting to stay ahead of its competition with the ultimate goal of superior customer service, Indian Nation Wholesale chose to make a dramatic change from a completely manual, paper system, to the industry-leading Voice Voice solution.

Indian Nation Wholesale implemented the Talkman system in each of its 18 pick regions, involving up to 80 pickers on each shift.

One of the most attractive features of Vocollect's Voice Directed Distribution is its hands-free, eyes-free operation. Because it eliminates all manual data entry, distractions are eliminated. Workers are able to focus on their jobs, resulting in higher accuracy and greater productivity.

"The pick rate for each employee has increased dramatically, since they no longer use paper picking slips, and both of their hands are ready to pick each item when necessary," said Ron Cross, CEO of Indian Nation Wholesale. "Our order pickers no longer worry about losing their place, since the Vocollect system tracks their progress on each order in real time, while maintaining 100 percent accuracy."

The Results

They are singing its praises

Indian Nation Wholesale has been able to achieve a 30% increase in productivity, made possible by improvements in several areas of the warehouse operations.

Dick Dunham, Vice President of Operations, cited one example, "We can move work assignments around with Vocollect. Now, we can actually go into Vocollect and control what's being picked in the warehouse, at what time, and that's important because we have deadlines for trucks that we have to get out for next day delivery.

Because trucks have to be loaded in a certain order, we can now control the order and pace of what's being picked."

Ron Cross added, "We were looking for a way to reduce our warehouse expense, while increasing productivity with fewer employees. We were also looking for ways to improve order accuracy to reduce the expense of returns and reduce the need for invoice adjustments. The Vocollect system solved both problems. We have discontinued order checkers on each line. Order accuracy is now dictated by our stocking crew, by ensuring the right item is in the right slot. The Vocollect system will not allow the order selector to pick the wrong item."

Indian Nation Wholesale is now able to generate productivity reports by employee – how much each is picking and how fast. While it may seem employees would resist this level of scrutiny, Laxson assures otherwise.

"It was an instant success," she said. "They were skeptical going in but they are singing its praises now." She added that new employees are trained and fully functional with the Vocollect system within two hours.



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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