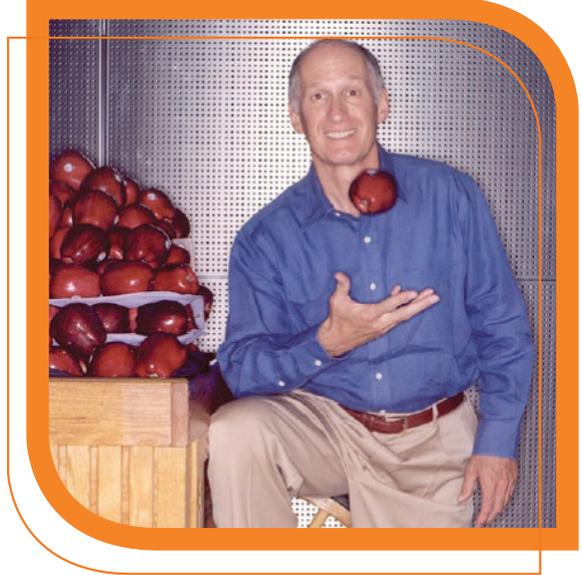


Vocollect Case Study

Four Seasons Produce

Growing Ideas - Producing Excellence



Voice Results

Objectives

- Improve inventory accuracy
- Increase order fill rates
- Transform paper-based operation
- Increase customer service levels

Application

- Order selection

Installation

- Seamless integration with Priya® Smart Warehouse Software® WMS
- Vocollect Voice
- Vocollect SR Series Headsets™
- Vocollect Talkman® T2 Mobile Computing Devices

Results

- Selector productivity increased 35%
- Mis-picks and product shorts reduced by 63%
- Achieved 99.88% shipping accuracy
- Labor expenses reduced by 64%

ROI

- Payback in less than 12 months

At Four Seasons Produce, There's More to "Fresh Picked" Than Meets the Eye

In 1976, Four Seasons Produce, Inc. was born. As sales continued to grow, the company outgrew its first home in 1986, and moved into a 25,000 square-foot building. In 2004, it moved again into its current facility, a 262,000 square-foot distribution center including nearly 193,000 square feet of refrigerated space with 176-foot long storage aisles storing 6,700 pallets of product at various temperatures. Keeping at the vanguard of state-of-the-art technologies and logistical systems continues to push the company into the future, and the future is bright.

It's always "growing season" at Four Seasons Produce, a top Pennsylvania based distributor that provides quality produce, including organics, in bulk and custom packaging for domestic and export markets. Four Seasons Produce serves independent grocers, chains and the food service industry. There can be no compromise on quality, nothing less than the absolute freshest fruits and vegetables will do. It's simply a matter of reputation, which is why Four Seasons installed Priya Smart Warehouse Software and Vocollect Voice.

The Challenge Drive Up DC Volume

Four Seasons' fast paced expansion came at a price. Over the years, the company added additional warehouses to support growth. Eventually, they had five facilities - four storage and repacking locations and one for shipping. "Product for daily orders had to be pulled from multiple buildings, transferred to a central shipping warehouse, slotted, selected, and loaded onto trucks." Says Nelson Longenecker, Vice President of Organizational Development at Four Seasons Produce. "We ran into traffic delays and other problems, and were constantly under tremendous time pressure."

To make matters worse, Four Seasons ran its distributed warehouse operation using manual processes. This meant staff tracked inventory manually by keying in every quantity received, transferred, and shipped and applying labels to every box for shipping. "With so many manual transactions taking place, we suffered from significant errors and were always one step behind the product," says Longenecker. "It wasn't uncommon to lose track of whole pallets, which affected service levels and ate into profits."

"Most people say you should drive up volumes in order to be able to afford to automate; but the opposite is true. Once you integrate technology with your business, you can really drive up volume."

Nelson Longenecker
Vice President,
Organizational
Development
Four Seasons Produce

While these inefficiencies are a concern in any business, they're particularly troubling in produce where entire inventories turn every four or five days, and products are received and shipped within 24 hours of receipt.

Temperature and time sensitivity must be designed into the shipping and receiving process to ensure high quality and consistently fresh produce adding another level of complexity to this mission critical operation.

The Solution

No Margin for Error

Realizing technology was the only sure route to continued growth, Four Seasons management decided to consolidate into one automated distribution center. To achieve this, they turned to strategic partners Vocollect, for its Talkman® voice recognition hardware and Motek for its Smart Warehouse Software™ product, Priya.

Motek's Priya is a Microsoft Windows®-based warehouse management system. This all-inclusive product comes with labor standards and voice recognition built in. At Four Seasons, Priya drives the Vocollect Talkman wearable computers and headsets to provide paperless "hands/eyes free" order selection. Extremely lightweight, comfortable and durable, the Talkman computers relay picking information from Priya, which is then converted into speech and transmitted to selectors through voice-recognition headsets.

With their hands free, selectors can perform work faster and more accurately. Training for the solution is simple - even for employees unfamiliar with computers the transition to Voice-Directed picking takes place in minutes, rather than hours or days.

The relationship between Vocollect and Motek is critical because the distribution environment at Four Seasons Produce is especially challenging. With fruit and vegetable products so temperature and time sensitive, there is no margin for error.

Priya and Talkman dynamically direct product 'just-in-time' into correct pick slots or reserve locations, to be packed and shipped to customers throughout the Middle Atlantic and Northeast states, as well as Bermuda.

The Results

Dramatic Improvements in Service Levels and Sales

Four Seasons' strategic partnership with Motek and Vocollect has resulted in dramatic benefits. In their state-of-the-art 262,000 sq. foot facility running Priya with voice picking, Four Seasons leads the industry in terms of selector productivity, reduced mis-picks, ship fill levels and inventory accuracy.

"Our service levels and sales have both grown dramatically since implementing the warehouse management system," reports Longenecker.

Since implementing the new system, Four Seasons has experienced a 35% increase in selector productivity. Other key metrics include a 63% reduction in mis-picks and shorted product; a 99.88% shipping accuracy rate; a 99.60% ship fill rate and a 64% reduction in labor hours which was all realized within the first 12 months.

The overall solution supports Four Seasons' mission - to create profitable solutions through an enriching personal and business experience for their Customers, Associates and Suppliers.

Four Seasons' state-of-the-art technology provides the ability to give real time response to meet their customers' product and delivery specifications, resulting in a confident commitment to delivery windows, while ensuring a safe and expedient delivery.



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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