

Voice for Picking & More at NBG Home

NBG Home provides a wide range of quality, on-trend home decor and accessories, lighting, wall décor, soft home goods and more, delivering affordable home furnishings to customers worldwide with over 1500 employees in five global management offices and multiple distribution centers. One of the largest home décor manufacturing and importers in the world, NBG Home prides itself on unparalleled quality, style and highly efficient distribution. The phenomenal rise of the eCommerce portion of the business, in conjunction with acquisitions to the family of brands for NBG Home, has helped drive the need to embrace new omnichannel technology for operations.

Streamlining the Process with Voice

Dwayne Napper, Director of Distribution for NBG Home, brings a strong WMS systems background and expertise in operations optimization, led the implementation of the Sage Advanced Warehousing application. "I was familiar with voice technology and initially looked at voice to bridge the gap and streamline the process of moving to the new system", says Napper. "We wanted a solution that did not require a server and could be deployed incrementally within the DC. Avoiding server-based technology that could be a single-point-of-failure was very important to us," adds Napper. The AccuSpeechMobile voice solution does not require a server, so deploying it on mobile scanners was ideal for the project.

Workflow Automation

Automating workflows was another important benefit. "We liked the fact that we could program it, and we could take steps out of the process," comments Napper. "From an operator standpoint, streamlining a ten-step process into a two-step process is a big win for us, which improves productivity and accuracy as well," he adds.



Double Digit Productivity Improvements

Motorola scanners with voice are now deployed every step of the way from picking, inventory, stock movement, directed put-a-way, stock change and receiving. Adding voice smoothed the transition to the new warehousing application and provided double digit improvements in productivity for many processes. This continues to be an important part of optimizing operations as the business has shifted to a larger portion of eCommerce sales and more retailers are looking to NBG Home to hold the inventory and deliver it directly to the consumer. Order volume has increased, as well as order frequency, and voice automation has helped ensure picking for eCommerce is optimized.

Voice Helps with Personnel Turnover

The operational complexity has increased as business from major retailers has shifted to smaller batches with LTL or parcel shipping. Handling the increased volume and complexity with the same personnel has been a business requirement. In this competitive market executing last mile delivery efficiently is critical. Another area where voice automation for DC processes has brought benefits for NBG Home is with the transient workforce. Workforce staffing has been a challenge in this market where DC

workers are in such high demand. "The definition of a 'long timer' has changed," says Napper, "it's much shorter than I've ever seen." He continues, "Voice has helped us with training for the workforce, especially in the eCommerce area. We have programmed the processes with voice to remove as many extraneous steps as possible, which helps new people ramp up to rate faster."

Deploying voice was also smoother than anticipated. "I was pleasantly surprised," says Keith Bigger, Inventory/QC Manager, NBG Home, "I thought there was going to be more pushback from our associates, but the team was very open to the solution and embraced using it."

A Very Positive Experience

"Voice is very much a product that can help you," says Napper. "First, you have to know your business and the challenges you face, the cultural diversity of the people that work for you and the surrounding workforce. Once you know the environment and challenges, you can choose how to use voice to alleviate as many of these challenges as possible, the key is knowing your people and your systems, and what you need to make that work together. We generate

thousands of transactions a week in our eCommerce business and it's extremely rare to have a ship error," says Napper; "AccuSpeechMobile's voice solution was ideal for these processes."

Working with AccuSpeechMobile has been a very positive experience. "The best of any I've had with vendors," says Napper. "They have always been there when we needed help," adds Bigger. "The times when I had issues and communicated with AccuSpeechMobile, they were very responsive, very accommodating and did everything they could to help us out in times of need."

Extensibility

NBG Home has trained the in-house team with the AccuSpeechMobile voice solution and can add voice to any process that they feel would benefit from voice automation. All major workflows are automated with voice now, and in the future Napper envisions voice improving processes beyond the warehouse floor. "Processes that are repeatable and can benefit from streamlining and reducing manual entries, such as bill of lading creation, are under consideration for voice automation," says Napper. "I'm always looking for the next thing out there," Napper continues, "Voice has been a good fit for NBG Home, delivering benefits now and offering extensibility for the future." ●



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