

## VOICING IT OUT AT AMERICOLD

Voice Technology Helps Americold Warehouse Keep Its Cool.

**“Voice technology has helped Americold effectively manage labor costs by enabling appropriate staffing levels throughout the working day. Our business has also witnessed productivity gains and increased accuracy, which means that time is not wasted having to double check orders or adjusting for missed picks.”**

*David Gardner, Operations Manager, Americold.*

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Case Study

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**Americold is the global leader in temperature-controlled warehousing and logistics to the food industry, offering the most comprehensive warehousing, transportation, and logistics solutions in the world. Headquartered in Atlanta, USA, Americold owns and operates over 185 temperature-controlled warehouses in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, China, Argentina, and Canada. Americold has the largest global cold storage network with a total capacity of over one billion cubic feet.**

**In Australia, Americold's network of cold storage warehouses is an integral part of the national supply chain, connecting food producers, processors, distributors and retailers to the end consumer. For Americold to meet the increasing demand for cold storage and transportation services within Australia, the company's management recognises the need to constantly improve standards, practices and technology.**



*The Honeywell Talkman operates in cold storage temperatures as low as -30° C.*

### **Evolving picking processes to deliver Distribution Centre (DC) productivity**

Americold's picking systems have evolved significantly over the years, with the company constantly reviewing and evolving best practice approaches to delivering a faster and ever-more accurate cold chain solution for their customers.

In the past, Americold's Arndell Park (NSW) cold and frozen storage DC relied on paper-based picking systems. Whilst effective, there are newer, more efficient processes available. Initially, Americold implemented a label-pick solution which delivered higher levels of picking accuracy, and now, Americold's Arndell Park DC implemented a fully automated, advanced Honeywell Vocollect Voice picking system, positioning the facility at the forefront of picking technology.

David Gardner, Operations Manager for Americold, explained: "Over the past twenty years working within cold storage logistics, I've seen picking systems evolve significantly. When I first started working at Americold we used paper. We then went into a label-pick scenario, but now with a fully automated Voice-picking system, operators are able to work hands free."



*The Honeywell Vocollect Voice solution allows hands-free warehouse operations.*

## The right technology for the right environment

Given the challenging operating environments of cold storage DCs, it is vital that equipment and processes are fit for purpose. Not only must the equipment and technology function for extended periods in colder temperatures, it must also accommodate the needs of pickers themselves.

“As Americold operates in chilled environments, users are frequently moving in and out of cold storage areas. Carrying technology, having to take off gloves to key in information, putting equipment down and picking up the product, becomes a real problem. Voice is a hands-free, eyes-free solution where users don’t face these problems,” said Brian Lang.

Honeywell Vocollect Voice technology has also enhanced the overall safety of Americold’s Arndell Park DC, explained David Gardner, “The introduction of Voice allows our operators to work efficiently and safely. The hands-free, eyes-free operational benefits of Voice makes workers much more aware of their environment. It also allows them to anticipate the actions of others for increased safety in the warehouse.”

Director of Real Time Logistics for Dematic. “Most recently Dematic has been working on inventory management systems in Americold’s distribution centres – receiving and putting away stock, picking orders and dispatching them to customers. Following an extensive audit of the best fit solutions for their business. Together with Americold, we decided that a Voice picking system would deliver increased accuracy and productivity for Americold’s Arndell Park DC.”

## Real-time data for accurate decision making

The Honeywell Vocollect Voice picking solution has transformed Americold’s Arndell Park DC into a paperless facility, where operators no longer need to look away from what they are doing or waste time retrieving new pick slips. With the Voice system, when an order is processed, the operator will go to the location and confirm with the check digit that they are at the right location by speaking into a wireless headset. The Voice system will then instruct the operator to pick a certain number of crates or units and ask the worker to confirm they picked the right amount. The system will repeat this process until the order is finished.

“I’ve worked in logistics a long time and in the past have used paper-based picking processes or an RF solution. When I came to Americold I used Voice picking for the first time and it’s dramatically improved my picking productivity because it is automated and hands free. The hands free aspect allows me to concentrate on the environment around me and look at the locations I am picking from. Because the system is fully automated and tells me the locations and number of goods I have to pick, and confirms these, there is no possibility of human error,” said Dean, DC operator for Americold.

The Honeywell Vocollect Voice directed picking solution also facilitates a real-time, two-way data flow between workers on the distribution floor and the WMS. This flow of information makes it easy for managers to generate reports, which provide comprehensive and accurate insights into the operation in real time.

“The Voice picking system is important to me as manager, as it enables me to see real-time data and evaluate my business. Real-time data in the DC allows managers to manipulate staffing levels to respond to customer volume fluctuations throughout the day. It also helps us to better manage our labour by ensuring we are putting staff to work in the areas of the business where they are needed most,” said David Gardner.

## A voice for the future

Through implementing Honeywell Vocollect Voice picking technology within its Arndell Park DC, Americold has gained greater visibility of its processes, as well as productivity improvements. Order fulfilment accuracy has also increased, which assists Americold in achieving higher levels of customer satisfaction.

“Voice technology has helped Americold effectively manage labour costs by enabling appropriate staffing levels throughout the working day. Our business has also witnessed productivity gains and increased accuracy, which means that time is not wasted having to double check orders or adjusting for missed picks,” said David Gardner.

“Over the years Dematic has worked with Americold to help refine its technology and picking processes, constantly assessing how its systems can evolve to deliver better customer outcomes. We look forward to helping Americold grow in the future and solidify its place as a cold storage solutions leader,” said Brian Lang.

**For more information**

[www.honeywellaidc.com](http://www.honeywellaidc.com)

**Honeywell Safety and Productivity Solutions**

Honeywell Australia  
Level 3, 2 Richardson Place, North Ryde,  
Sydney, NSW Phone: + 61 2 9353 7000  
[www.honeywell.com](http://www.honeywell.com)

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