



AT A GLANCE

Profile:

Established in 1955, Sony of Canada, Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation, one of the largest entertainment companies in the world.

Business Goals:

- Sustain competitive advantage
- Handle high seasonality
- Support changing business models (more online orders, more and smaller orders)
- Maintain highly satisfied customer base (stores/individual consumers)

Products:

- Vocollect VoiceDirect™ Enterprise Connector
- Vocollect SR-20 Wired Headsets and SRX Wireless Headsets
- Vocollect T5 Mobile Devices
- Vocollect VoiceClient™ and VoiceConsole™ Software

Results:

- 30% improvement in throughput
- 15% improvement in accuracy
- Technical voice training in one hour/ operational training in one week, reduced from 2-3 months with RF
- Reduced temporary labor by five workers

Sony of Canada, Ltd.

THE SOUND OF VOICE SUCCESS AT SONY OF CANADA

Established in 1955 and headquartered in Metropolitan Toronto, Sony of Canada, Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation, one of the largest entertainment companies in the world. Sony's portfolio includes electronics, music, movies, games and online businesses.

Every day Sony factories around the world ship approximately 1,500 products to Sony of Canada, which in turn processes 18,000 orders per month. In addition to outbound receiving and outbound shipping, the Sony of Canada Supply Chain Group is responsible for inventory and demand planning, sales order management, transportation operations and logistics operations.

Of its 1,000 employee base, approximately 50 employees work in the two distribution centers (DCs) in Whitby, Ontario (Metro Toronto) and Coquitlam (Vancouver), British Columbia. These DCs house approximately 2,200 SKUs and operate five days a week, with two daily shifts at Whitby and three at Coquitlam.

“We are quite proud of the fact that we pioneered the introduction of voice into the Sony organization and that we have become a benchmark for other Sony operations to see how Vocollect voice is helping us meet our business objectives and maintain high levels of customer satisfaction.”

— **Rick Courtin**, Business Process Manager, Supply Chain Group, Sony of Canada, Ltd.

The Challenge: Too Many Steps, Too Much Margin for Error

Sony of Canada's rapidly changing business model of increasing online orders and more and smaller orders, coupled with growth, quickly exposed the weaknesses in the paper-based and RF systems used for distribution. Paper was cumbersome and it provided no locator system to help employees find products quickly and easily. While RF scanning was quicker and faster than paper, picking with RF consisted of too many steps and too many errors. People still had to input into the handheld unit, view the screen, put down and pick up the device, and the system was often slow to respond.

an upcoming WMS upgrade would be an excellent way to achieve maximum payback in process improvements across the distribution operations.

"With our old paper-based system and its inherent inefficiencies, physical inventory took us four business days. Moving to RF reduced the inventory process to just a day and a half. But with Vocollect voice, now we spend only half a day completing physical inventories," says Rick Courtin, Business Process Manager for Sony of Canada.

Initially Vocollect voice was piloted for cluster-picking for parcel shipments because of its process fit and the high number of picks. After a simple and short training process (as little as one hour),

quantities. Orders are batched, a bulk pick of product is then brought forward to a staging area where the individual orders are picked, packed and shipped through the use of Vocollect voice.

The efficiencies gained through this process greatly enhance the company's timeliness in supporting its growing e-commerce business.

The Results

Since using Vocollect voice, Sony of Canada has realized improvements of 30% in throughput and 15% in accuracy, as well as improvements in safety, with the hands-free/eyes-free feature of the voice system. It only takes an hour or so for technical training on the voice system, and about a week for the full operational training – in the past, it would take employees two to three months to complete RF scanning and operational training. Improved efficiencies have allowed the company to reduce its temporary headcount by five workers.

Voice also has allowed Sony of Canada to better manage the seasonality of the business, with the peak order time being September through December. The voice system provides workers with the ability to nimbly move from one assignment to the next with no downtime, even during peak periods.

"While it seemed a bit daunting at first, we soon learned how easy and fluid it is to work with Vocollect voice," said Courtin. "After seeing how well voice helps them work successfully, our people would never want to go back to paper or handheld scanning devices."

The company also has plans to expand Vocollect voice to full pallet picks, put-away, and Less than Trailer Load (LTL) picking.

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The Solution

At the recommendation of RedPrairie, Sony of Canada's warehouse management system (WMS) provider and technology partner, the company decided to investigate the potential of Honeywell Vocollect™ voice. Based on observing voice in action at another Honeywell customer site and consultation from RedPrairie, the company could see that the integration of Vocollect voice into

workers were up and running. Since that time, voice was expanded to the cycle-counting workflow.

The ability to accurately and quickly fulfill orders, to manage seasonal volume hikes, to help the company sustain a thriving Internet business with large numbers of smaller orders, and to do more with less all are benefits the voice solution has brought.

Sony of Canada uses a consolidated picking methodology, cluster-picking, for processing less than master carton

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