AT A GLANCE

Profile:
Sysco Guest Supply is the largest full-service provider of personal care amenity programs and room accessories to the lodging industry.

Business Goals:
- Keep pace with extreme peak volumes
- Manage just-in-time inventory strategy
- Accommodate hotels’ lack of storage capability
- Deploy quickly with minimal disruption to operations

Products:
- Vocollect VoiceLink™ Enterprise Connector
- Vocollect SR-20 Headsets
- Vocollect A500 Mobile Devices
- Vocollect VoiceCatalyst™ and VoiceConsole™ Software

Results:
- Total throughput increased 28%
- Selection increased by 22–24%
- Put-Away increased by 26–28%
- Future plans to voice-enable route trucks

Sysco Guest Supply
VOCOLLECT VOICE DELIVERS THE GOODS

Founded in 1979, Sysco Guest Supply is owned by Sysco Corporation, the global leader in selling, marketing and distributing food products to restaurants, healthcare and educational facilities, lodging establishments, and other customers that prepare meals away from home. Headquartered in Monmouth Junction, New Jersey, Sysco Guest Supply is the largest full-service provider of personal care amenity programs and room accessories to the lodging industry. The company services virtually every large hotel worldwide.

And today, Sysco Guest Supply uses Honeywell Vocollect™ voice to help deliver on its promise to deliver good things to its customers.

“We distribute a tremendous amount of personal care amenity products and room accessories to hotels and other lodging institutions all over the world. With support from our technology partner Vitech Business Group and Honeywell, using Vocollect voice for multiple workflows in 10 distribution centers has helped us achieve significant productivity improvements and successfully address our business challenge of extreme peak volume periods throughout the year.”

— Jim Makowski, Director of Distribution, Sysco Guest Supply
The Challenge: Just-in-Time Deliveries to Hotels amid Peak Volume Demands

The company’s key strategic business challenge is dealing with extreme peak volumes the first week of every month and during summer holidays. In the distribution side of the business, dealing with these peak times – particularly a fluctuating order velocity and the need for correct orders – is pivotal. But this is compounded by other needs.

Typically, hotels have virtually no floor space to accommodate storing amenities; they rely on Sysco Guest Supply to manage their inventory in a just-in-time fashion and send them what they need, when they need it. And, like so many other companies, there is an ever-present need to do more with less.

All of this has made Vocollect voice a natural fit.

The Solution: No Reservations, Vocollect Voice ‘Fits the Bill’

Based on industry trade information, Director of Distribution Jim Makowski started to see voice as the right technology to help him meet the enormous task of worldwide just-in-time deliveries. His technology partner Vitech Business Group recommended that he consider Vocollect voice. After a short pilot netted tremendous initial results, Makowski made the decision to move to Vocollect voice, and move fast. So fast, in fact, that in a one-year period he launched it into 10 distribution centers (DCs).

Says Makowski, “After the design, configuration and testing phases, our first deployment took five days. I drove the other deployments myself, and they typically took only four days to become fully operational. We successfully completed all 10 Vocollect voice installations within nine months. This is a real testament to the ease of deployment and the power of a great partnership with Vitech and Honeywell.”

Today a total of about 130 workers across 10 North American DCs use Vocollect voice for multiple workflows. The company moves about 13 million cases per year through Vocollect voice.

“For a mid-size company, each of our regional distribution centers selects and ships extraordinary amounts of inventory. This volume generates a significant amount of replenishments. We developed and designed a process called ‘item demand’.

Through our warehouse management system (WMS) and Vocollect voice, we aggregate quantities to be selected and shipped that day, so that we can prioritize the replenishments in that manner.

“Vocollect voice has adapted well with our multicultural workforce, and employees have really embraced voice as a way to do their jobs more efficiently.”

— Jim Makowski, Director of Distribution, Sysco Guest Supply

Vocollect A500 and SR Headset
Additionally, we over-fill our forward pick locations (if necessary) to satisfy the demand for the day. This ensures that we are selecting everything from the home floor-level locations, while requiring only one replenishment per day.

Vocollect voice indicates whether the worker is performing an item demand or general replenishment move as follows: ‘Item demand – go to location number XX’ or ‘replenishment – go to location number XY’. The worker validates the location number check digit and product identifier, and is then given the quantity to select from the reserve location,” explains Makowski.

**The Results: The Sweet Sound of Success**

Sysco Guest Supply has managed an overall 28 percent improvement in throughput. Selection has improved by 22–24 percent and put-away has improved by 26–28 percent.

Continues Makowski, “In comparison to our handheld implementations eight years ago, implementing voice has been relatively seamless. Through this process, I have learned that the more distribution workflows you are able to voice-enable, the more efficient you become. Vocollect voice has adapted well with our multicultural workforce, and employees have really embraced voice as a way to do their jobs more efficiently.”