TaylorMade Drives Warehouse Productivity with Voice-Enabled Picking

Profile: Manufactures and sells golf equipment, footwear, apparel, and accessories under the TaylorMade, Adams, and Ashworth brands.

Location: Carlsbad, California

Industry: Manufacturing

Website: taylormadegolf.com

Solutions:
- Ivanti® Speakeasy
- Ivanti® Terminal Emulation
- Ivanti® Avalanche

Benefits:
- Increased employee productivity; average number of transactions per hour is 184, up from 41
- Increased picking accuracy; average error rate is about 1%, down from 40% to 50%
- Reduced repetitive-strain injuries

Thirty years ago, TaylorMade disrupted the golf industry with a revolutionary new driver made of stainless steel. Today, TaylorMade still makes the #1 driver and is a favorite of golfers.

Profitability Pressures

The golf industry has faced strong headwinds in recent years, and TaylorMade was looking for new ways to drive profitability. Order picking is a time-consuming and costly activity in any warehouse in any industry, and the ability to pick orders efficiently has a big impact on customer satisfaction.

"We were looking for ways to increase picking productivity," says Jeff Peterson, project manager for operations at TaylorMade. Peterson, along with Brett Trotter, shipping operations supervisor, decided to take another look at voice-enabled picking.

TaylorMade considered using voice recognition for picking in the past, but high cost and implementation difficulties were insurmountable hurdles. But with cost pressures mounting, Trotter and Peterson took a fresh look at voice-enablement solutions. "The best thing for us was seeing what was out there," says Peterson. "We visited warehouses that implemented different systems where we could try it out."

Many of the products they encountered required significant effort before delivering value, but then, with the help of its consultant, RESOURCE Supply Chain Solutions, TaylorMade discovered Ivanti Speakeasy, powered by Wavelink.

"After a thorough evaluation process, we recommended Ivanti Speakeasy based the ease of implementation, flexibility, scalability and overall lifecycle investment," says Carlos Vega, president of RESOURCE Supply Chain Solutions.

Trusted Connectivity for Telnet Clients

Our Session Persistence Server has been keeping Terminal Emulation users connected and productive for three decades, on more than 10 million devices, across multiple mobile operating systems.

Voice Automation Made Easy

"Speakeasy is a newer, fresher, and better way to do voice picking without having to change your backend systems," says Peterson. "One of the main reasons we chose was implementation time. With Speakeasy, we didn't have to overhaul our warehouse management system."

In addition, TaylorMade uses Ivanti Terminal Emulation, so workers can access the warehouse management system directly from their mobile devices. Ivanti Avalanche is used manage the mobile devices in the warehouse, keeping them at peak productivity.

Pick Faster, More Accurately

TaylorMade added voice to its order picking process in about two weeks. As a client-side solution, Speakeasy didn't require changes to applications or the addition of middleware. That allowed the pickers to begin using Speakeasy a few months before the busy season started. The difference was immediate.

Before, a team of 20 to 25 pickers averaged 41 transactions per hour. They had to squint at small screens and squeeze the triggers on their RF scanners. They had to set down the RF scanner every time they picked up a product. Constant physical activity was a drag on the productivity.

Now, workers have wearable mobile computers from Zebra. Speakeasy tells the pickers what products to pick, where they're located, and what to scan using verbal prompts. The workers confirm their tasks by speaking commands and reading codes on locations or products

throughout the warehouse. They keep their eyes and hands on the orders they are picking.

With Speakeasy, TaylorMade needs fewer people to pick orders because they're more productive. "Eight months later, we have 14 to 16 pickers, and they average 184 transactions per hour," says Trotter.

Voice picking also increased accuracy. "With Speakeasy, our error rate when picking orders is now about 1%, compared to 40% to 50% before," says Trotter.

A Comfortable Fit

With the reduction in data entry because of voice automation, and the more ergonomic form factor of a wearable computer, the injury rate has also gone down. "Voice picking has taken the pressure off the potential for repetitive strain injuries to employees," says Trotter.

Tee up Success

Speakeasy is so intuitive that workers were able to get right to work. Even temporary workers are productive quickly, which is especially critical during the peak season. "Newcomers who don't know the layout of our pick line or the warehouse know what to do within five to 10 minutes," says Trotter.

Speakeasy's voice recognition technology doesn't require any training, even with unique accents or dialects. "We have a lot of bilingual employees, and Speakeasy is able to pick up on their accents," says Trotter. "That's very powerful."

Voice-enabling picking enabled TaylorMade to drive worker productivity so that retail shelves are well stocked and online orders are processed quickly. And that drives customer satisfaction and corporate profitability.

"With speakeasy, our error rate when picking orders is now about 1%, compared to 40% to 50% before."

— Brett Trotter, Shipping Operations Supervisor

About RESOURCE Supply Chain Solutions

RESOURCE Supply Chain Solutions is a brand-agnostic supply chain consulting and integration firm that delivers improvements across operations by engineering, sourcing and implementing creative solutions to achieve operational excellence. Learn more at www.resource-scs.com.

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