

COMPANY: CEFRINOR
INDUSTRY: COLD STORAGE AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION

VOICE POWERED RESULTS:

OBJECTIVE

Increase productivity and improve accuracy by workers in cold storage through Voice-Directed Distribution, which helps improve efficiency and limit fatigue.

RESULTS

- ▄ **Increased worker productivity by 25% after only four months.**
- ▄ **Lighter-weight, “hands-free” equipment easier to operate, particularly in freezer environments, compared to previous system.**
- ▄ **Less “downtime” due to maintenance issues.**



Voice-Directed Distribution Helps Brazilian Food Storage and Distribution Company ‘Package’ Greater Productivity

Cefrinor is a cold storage and food distribution center in Salvador, a coastal city located mid-way along Brazil’s coast. With some 1.8 million cubic feet of capacity and more than 150 employees operating on three shifts, Cefrinor is a major storage and distribution center of frozen and refrigerated products for more than 30 customers, including companies like Sadia, Wal-Mart, KIBON (ice cream division of UNILEVER), and Pillsbury. Accuracy and throughput rule the day (and night) at Cefrinor: there is no room for error, and no tolerance for problems that contribute to loss of productivity. Recently Cefrinor implemented the Vocollect Voice-Directed™ work system to help it improve productivity and accuracy, and drive greater profitability.

“It’s the productivity that is paying for the investment. With Vocollect, there is no bar code scanning, which makes the picking process faster, without losing accuracy.”

Roberto Fantoni
Director Superintendent
Cefrinor

THE CHALLENGE

Move from Error-Prone Paper Pick Lists to Voice

Working from a paper pick list in cold storage presented a tremendous obstacle for employees who are not accustomed to working in cold temperatures. In fact, the average temperature in Brazil ranges from about 60° F in winter to 100s° F in summer. The temperate climate means a significant adjustment for employees, who must cope with temperatures in the cold storage areas that range from 32° F to -13° F.

Complicating matters is the fact that the packaging and labeling make it difficult for employees to discern one product, or variation on a product, from another. Packaging for ice cream, for example, is virtually identical, with only a few lines on the package label differentiating vanilla from chocolate flavor.

Roberto Fantoni, director superintendent, explained why he jumped at the opportunity to implement Vocollect's Voice-Directed Distribution at Cefrinor. "Our workers made a lot of errors," he said, "and gave us a very low level of accuracy. Fatigue was the factor. Reading from inside the cold storage, where we don't have the best of lighting, is very difficult."

THE SOLUTION

Voice Boosts Productivity

Seeking a way to increase productivity company-wide, Fantoni stopped by Vocollect's exhibit at a trade show in the U.S. "I noticed Vocollect and saw an opportunity to have a big increase in company productivity," he said.

SEAL, a Vocollect-certified partner in Brazil, designed and implemented the solution using Voice Direct™ software to integrate the Talkmans with Cefrinor's in-house WMS.

"Cefrinor needs to make sure their refrigerated products will arrive to their customers on time and at the right quantity, so when you have a critical operation like that, delay in making a decision can cost you money and worse, your customer's trust. You need to have high productivity and high accuracy. The Vocollect solution not only helped the client achieve these goals, but it also allows Cefrinor to have the

information about their operation on-line and at their fingertips" mentioned Wagner Bernardes, Director at SEAL. At the time, Cefrinor was migrating from its paper-based warehouse management system to a new system that utilized RF technology. He was satisfied with the accuracy that the new system provided, but worker productivity was not at the level he expected. He also cited maintenance problems with the equipment and noted that it was cumbersome to work with.

"The RF data collector is much heavier than the Vocollect Talkman headsets," said Fantoni, "while the Talkman is worn on a belt and is attached to the workers. The data collector was carried in the hand, so it was heavier and more difficult to operate," he continued.

Why Vocollect? "It's the productivity that is paying for the investment," said Fantoni. "With Vocollect, there is no bar code scanning, which makes the picking process faster, without losing accuracy," he concluded.

Fantoni described the training benefits as the Vocollect system was implemented in his team's native language, Portuguese. "We had to train our workers to speak loudly and clearly. Now they are working well with the equipment." Fantoni explained that the Vocollect system is programmed to speak to our workers in Portuguese.

He added that training went smoothly overall, although employees were initially reluctant because they had to learn a new system. "That was only in the beginning," said Fantoni, "now there's no problem training our team. They are productive on day one, within just a couple of hours."

THE RESULTS

Productivity Increased by 25% in Just Four Months

"At the Cefrinor Group, any investment needs to offer a certain level of ROI to be approved," said Fantoni. "The Vocollect voice project achieved the ROI demanded by the investors and was approved first as a pilot. But now, with verified results intact, we are expanding the project with a number of terminals."

He explained that, although the Vocollect system was implemented in late 2005, after just four months, the Vocollect project reached their ROI goal originally required from the Board to approve the investment.

"The increasing level of productivity is proving that we made the correct choice with Voice-Directed Distribution," said Fantoni. "I am very happy with the results. For that reason, we are investing in additional Vocollect units to increase the number in operation. I am doubling the equipment in my operation right now."

What's ahead for Cefrinor and sister company Cefri located in São Paulo? Fantoni not only plans on expanding Vocollect at Cefrinor in Salvador, but also implementing it at Cefri in São Paulo.

"I am planning on putting the same system in at Cefri," said Fantoni. "We are not a huge company; we have limitations on our capital investment. But we are going to step up our capacity as our investment will allow, and Vocollect will be a big part of that."

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Director Superintendent
Cefrinor



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