

COMPANY: EASYDIS
INDUSTRY: RETAIL THIRD PARTY DISTRIBUTION

VOICE-POWERED RESULTS:

OBJECTIVES

- /// **Improve quality of service**
- /// **Boost warehouse productivity**

RESULTS

- /// **Pick by line productivity increased by 6%**
- /// **Picking rate increased by 8%**
- /// **Improved work conditions and individual salaries increased due to performance improvement**
- /// **Enhanced image among customers and prospects**



Easydis invests in Voice-Directed Distribution™ to improve quality of service and win new customers

Employing 4,000 people at 35 warehouses, Easydis is a French third party logistics company that became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Casino supermarket group five years ago.

In addition to its dedicated warehouses for Casino operations, covering perishables and dry grocery products, Easydis is today expanding its activities to serve other customers. Two warehouses in Aix-en-Provence in southeastern France, supply Casino supermarkets and hypermarkets in the region. Both facilities recently deployed Vocollect Voice-Directed Distribution.

"We boosted productivity in voice-directed activities by a full 25% in just three years. Moreover, our workers were quickly won over, as they perceived immediate improvements in their work conditions."

Didier Marion,
Project Manager, Easydis

THE CHALLENGE:

Improve quality of service while boosting productivity

In late August 2002, Easydis launched a pilot project to assess the benefits of using Voice-Directed Distribution to meet Casino's productivity and quality improvement targets. The challenge was tough: Casino was aiming for 99.8% quality performance, requiring a 2% improvement over three years.

With the previous system, workers had to rely on paper lists to prepare orders. Human errors inevitably occurred, which affected on productivity and prevented accurate tracking.

Trials using mechanised or automated picking lines had already been carried out at other warehouses, but these techniques could not attain the required quality objectives.

THE SOLUTION:

Integrate Voice-Directed Distribution into the warehouse management system (WMS)

The pilot implementation was installed at Easydis' Centralised cold-storage Warehouse in Lyon, which stores goods before distribution to other warehouses in the region. This 8,000-sq-metre facility, staffed by 20 workers, did not have a direct impact on supermarket supplies, making it easier to measure the flows for this initial trial phase.

In conjunction with Hardis, an IT service company specializing in warehouse logistics, an economics study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the order selection process at Easydis with Voice-Directed Distribution marketed by Psion Teklogix, Vocollect's European value-added reseller with a strong presence in France. Also assessed as part of the three-month study were radio coverage and software updates, including the Reflex warehouse management application developed by Hardis.

RESULTS:

Workers rejected old methods and productivity soared!

Productivity gains were perceived almost instantly, going from 150 to 240 cases per hour. In February 2003, Voice-Directed Distribution was deployed at Easydis' Aix 1 site, which employs around 70 order selectors. The system was an immediate success, thanks largely to the ease of use with Vocollect offerings, which provide "hands-free, eyes-free" capability, thus improving safety and overall productivity.

"We had initially allowed for a maximum of 10 hours' training time," says Didier Marion. "But to our great surprise, it took just three hours for our associates to become fully operational."

In late 2003, Easydis implemented a new trial project covering all of its business segments and focusing on pick-by-line process at its warehouses.

The target was to increase productivity by 6%, especially for fresh goods, which require careful handling.

This was a tougher challenge, but the initial results obtained in April 2004 were conclusive. Building on this success, in 2005 Easydis pursued its efforts by extending deployment of the Reflex application to its eight other warehouses around France and installing some 250 Talkman® wearable computers.

"In our profession, Voice-Directed Work™ is synonymous with quality. We have invested in a technology that matches our ambitions."

Gilles Lebreux,
Chairman and CEO, Easydis



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