

Results that Speak Volumes

After deploying Voxware VMS, our error rate was massively reduced, and we were getting more throughput because there were almost no errors to research.

Mike Levaggi
Supply Chain Director
HarperCollins

By the Numbers

3

million books
per week

8

% productivity
improvement

99.98

% accuracy rate

60

% reduction in
training time to
standard proficiency

Quick Facts

Objectives

- Reduce picking errors
- Improve productivity
- Support shipping of up to 3 million books per week
- Improve customer service
- Better staff resource utilisation
- Reduce training time

Solution

- Each picking
- Batch picking
- Replenishment
- Transfer
- Motorola WT4090 terminal

Business Value

- Accuracy increased to 99.98%
- Training time reduced by 60%
- Productivity gains of 8%
- Staff time more effectively used

HarperCollins is at the forefront of creative innovation in publishing. They were the first trade publisher to digitise its content and create a global digital warehouse to protect the rights of its authors, meet consumer demand and generate additional business opportunities.

Their UK supply chain strategy is not only leading-edge, but also a source of additional business income. HarperCollins operate a modern 750,000 square foot facility near Glasgow, Scotland. From here the company distributes not only its own titles to hundreds of outlets in the UK and worldwide – but also acts as a distributor for the books of some 14 other publishing houses.

“By leveraging our distribution capabilities, we enable our customers to concentrate on their areas of competence in the publishing industry,” notes Mike Levaggi, Supply Chain Director at HarperCollins. “It’s a win-win situation for all concerned, but we at HarperCollins do need to keep on our toes and provide excellent service.”

Levaggi and his team devised a strategy to take their service levels even higher through the introduction of Voxware’s voice software product, Voxware VMS. Workers interact with the Voxware system via Motorola WT4090 devices, which are voice-enabled and certified by Voxware to achieve nearly flawless speech recognition.

“We can ship as many as 3 million books in a single week,” says Levaggi. “A major part of our work involves batch-picking thousands of books, which are then introduced into a sortation system. Before implementing Voxware VMS we relied on paper pick sheets, and although our output standards were high, we had to spend too much time resolving batch picking errors before we could

be confident that we had assembled the correct titles.”

“After deploying Voxware VMS, our error rate was massively reduced, and we are getting more throughput because there are almost no errors to research. This has enabled us to deploy our staff more efficiently and has led us to raise our KPIs for picking. Our workers have come to rely on the Voxware system, and I can safely say that nobody would want to return to paper picking.”

New Voice Applications Beyond Picking

After the successful implementation of voice to the batch-picking area, Levaggi and his team extended the use of voice to support replenishment and bulk moving operations. This was accomplished through the configuration of new voice workflows within the Voxware VMS software.

“We saw an opportunity to extend voice into other areas, and thereby achieve a greater benefit,” noted Anne Steel, Supply Chain Development Manager. “We are very pleased with the adaptability of Voxware VMS, and the flexibility it gives us in tailoring the voice technology to our operation. “We were able to make adjustments quickly and with little disruption.”

“Both HarperCollins and Voxware approached the voice project as an integrated and unified team. The results have been fantastic and are a credit to everyone who worked on the deployment.”