

Voice benefits that are clearly seen

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Richard Cooke
Supply Chain Manager
Belron

By the Numbers

20

% increase in productivity

99.95

% accuracy rate

1.5

million motorists served
annually in the UK

Quick Facts

Objectives

- Streamline operation with hands-free work
- Support Belron's growth
- Deliver excellent service in support of Belron's commitment to fast, competent, and efficient auto glass repairs
- Reduce operating cost

Applications

- Voxware VMS Order Picking
- Integration with multiple warehouse management systems
 - Sterling Commerce WMS 8.5
 - Oracle WMS
 - QRASS WMS
- Configurable work assignment manager uses Belron business rules to translate order lines into assignments for voice-directed operation
- Solution intelligently accounts for unique product handling requirements based on curvature of windscreen glass
- HX3 voice-only wearables from Honeywell

Business Value

- Major productivity improvements from hands-free work
- Less travel time by rules-based assignment generation
- Reduced operating cost
- Ability to support strong corporate growth and spikes in demand

Belron is the world's largest dedicated vehicle glass repair and replacement company. Operating under various brand names, such as AutoGlass in the UK, CarGlass in Europe, and SafeLite AutoGlass in the US, the company offers 24/7 service to customers and has grown rapidly – and continues to grow.

One of Belron's core values is to strive for excellence in everything they do to delight customers, and maximise operating efficiency. That kind of thinking drove the decision to implement Voxware voice technology in the Laddaw distribution centre, the largest European distribution centre operated by the Belron Group.

Prior to Voxware, order selectors worked with RF scanners, which had to be repeatedly holstered in order to handle the windscreens shipped from the Laddaw facility. Daily order selection is a highly tuned process in which pick sequence is extremely important. Because windscreens have varying curvatures, they must be picked in the correct order for packing into specialised containers, called supainers.

Time and accuracy are both of the essence. Laddaw distributes to some 18 local distribution centres in the UK, and also to many independent glass fitters. Products are picked only after ordered by a customer, so accurate and rapid delivery is a key factor in supporting Belron's customer experience commitment.

Multiple Benefits from Voxware

The focus of the Voxware VMS implementation was therefore on speed and quality of the order selection process. The solution utilises the standard Voxware VMS Order Picking software

product, with configurable extensions that translate order data from Belron's Oracle system, based on business rules supplied by Belron, into properly sequenced pick tasks for selectors to perform.

"After deploying Voxware VMS, we saw a tremendous jump in productivity," said Richard Cooke, Supply Chain Manager at Belron and an architect of the new solution who oversaw the project. "Our staff were finally able to operate completely hands-free, so they were no longer burdened with having to put down and pick up the scanning gun – yet accuracy was just as good."

"We like Voxware's approach to configuring interfaces, because it enables us to use Voxware VMS with different WMS applications, including Oracle and Sterling Commerce, used by our different companies. Prior to codifying these business rules, it was largely a manual process to determine the best sequence for picking – and if a selector picked products in the wrong order then they would not fit properly into the supainer, which necessitated a lot of re-work."

"We are impressed with the configurability and flexibility of Voxware VMS. With the Voxware VMS solution, pick paths are shorter, products are handled in the correct order, and our cost to process the same volume of work is lower because it all gets done faster."

Belron are intensely focused on customer service, and the company is keenly aware that customers who need help need it promptly and correctly. The Voxware VMS implementation takes these same values and applies it to the distribution operation, ensuring that customers receive the goods they need on time – and doing so in a way that maximises efficiency yet minimises cost.