

Case Study: Puerto Rico Supplies Group



Puerto Rico Supplies Group (PRSG) is a leading total channel, total category distributor of major brands imported from all over the world, including food items, consumer packaged goods, and premium spirits. PRSG offers major retailers and small mom-and-pop shops a wide range of products, all housed in and distributed from the company's 250,000 square foot distribution center.

Over the last 20 years, PRSG has experienced tremendous growth in large part due to their focus on perfecting distribution operations which enabled the company to distribute faster and more cost-effectively than their competitors. The PRSG team consolidated their operation from 8 distribution centers spread across the island into a single facility located in the San Juan area. Next, they replaced their paper-based picking process with voice automation from Vocollect.

But on an island where growth only happens when distributors take business away from competitors, PRSG couldn't afford to rest on its laurels. As the company continued to look for ways to further improve operational efficiency and maintain their competitive advantage, it became clear their objective wouldn't be possible without a new voice provider.

The Challenges PRSG Faced

The PRSG team implemented a voice-directed picking workflow with their old voice provider in 2010. After a few years, the PRSG team learned one of the harsh truths about technology vendors. "It's not enough to find a great technology," said Carlos Falcon, Distribution Center Director, PRSG. "It's just as important to find a great partner. Unfortunately, we just didn't have a great partnership with our first voice vendor so we decided to begin searching for a new one."

Falcon and the PRSG team wanted to drive further productivity improvements by implementing a replenishment workflow, but they were unable to get the project started with their previous vendor. Additionally, the hardware they used was approaching the end of its useful life and their contract with their former voice provider required PRSG to shoulder the costly burden of replacing the outdated devices. In 2015, the PRSG team started looking for a way to mitigate the cost of the hardware upgrade and began vetting new voice providers.



**PUERTO RICO
SUPPLIES**
GROUP

"With Voxware, we know we'll be in a better position to operate more efficiently to advance the customer experience and maintain our competitive advantage"

— Carlos Falcon, Distribution Center Director, PRSG



The Voxware Difference

At the top of the PRSG team's must-have list was advanced real-time visibility. "With our old voice provider, we were highly restricted in the kind of analysis and reports we could access," said Falcon. "Most data was not accessible until the next day, by which time it was too late to make corrections. Productivity is our number one metric. It's how we serve our customers and it's a key factor for compensating our pickers." As PRSG narrowed their search, they found that Voxware was the only voice provider that offered easily accessible real-time visibility into distribution operations as a standard feature.

A second key factor in the decision process was Voxware's hardware replacement program. Since Voxware offers both SaaS-based Cloud VMS and on-premise implementation options, PRSG could choose a deployment model that worked best for their operation without a substantial upfront capital investment. The subscription model also includes the most up-to-date version of Zebra hardware, which meant PRSG eliminated the need for an expensive out-of-pocket hardware replacement.

"Having access to the latest hardware addresses one of the key issues we were having with our previous voice provider as we were hesitant to make such a large financial investment only to have to repeat this process in the future," said Falcon. "Having the latest Voxware software and Zebra hardware while controlling our costs is something that we had hoped, but didn't expect, to find during this vetting process."

Better Visibility and Performance Management

In addition to deploying an item selection workflow, Voxware also worked with PRSG to implement a replenishment workflow addressing a key productivity issue with the pickers. "With our replenishment workflow from Voxware, the picker can directly report shorts automatically and assign replenishment for a specific item to move up the priority list when necessary," said Falcon.

For supervisors, Voxware's real-time visibility tool, VoxPilot, has made it possible to address inefficiencies and performance management. "With Voxware, our supervisors can see if an item selector spends 20 or 30 seconds traveling between locations—or if they spend 5 minutes," says Falcon. "Our supervisors can go over and immediately see whether the 5-minute delay is due to team members stopping to chat or if they are experiencing an issue the supervisor can help address."

Not only has PRSG improved efficiency by adding a replenishment workflow, but the company also leveraged VoxPilot to drive even greater productivity improvements. "When we used our old system, the first items into our system were the first ones out," said Falcon. "Thanks to Voxware we can now manage our priorities more effectively to shift items in the queue or batch item selection for similar orders."

VoxPilot makes it easier for supervisors to batch orders, which improves efficiency by reducing travel time. If a major retailer submits a similar order for 100 different locations, a supervisor can batch pick tasks for items repeated across the orders. Additionally, through VoxPilot's integration with PRSG's routing system, PRSG could eliminate manual tasks to reduce routing staff needs by 25%."



Success Highlights

- Increase **on-time orders** and reduce overtime
- Able to **see and address productivity** issues immediately with VoxPilot
- **Replaced aging hardware** with new Zebra devices
- **Better management of priorities** and items in queue
- **Reduce travel time** by batching orders
- **25% reduction** in routing staffing needs
- **Eliminate manual** label printing by hand

Let Voxware help improve your operations. Contact us to get a demo and discuss your challenges. Call **US:** 609-570-6800 or **UK:** 020 3857 1540 or visit **www.voxware.com**