Picking the Proper Pour

High-end wine, cheese, chocolates and craft beer fill the racks and refrigerators of FDL’s sprawling New Jersey complex. With more than 700,000 square feet of storage space and a fleet of nearly 100 refrigerated trucks, FDL offers ‘pier to premises’ temperature-controlled warehouse and delivery service. FDL stores about 1.8 million cases of wine representing 70,000 SKUs serving more than 150 distributors in the region.

Recognizing an opportunity to increase throughput, improve efficiency and maximize accuracy, this third-party logistics (3PL) service provider sought a change from their traditional method of paper picking. In early 2017, after evaluating several vendors, FDL selected Voxware Voice Management Suite for order picking.

At the time of the deployment, FDL did not have a full-time IT staff in place. This required Voxware and Argos, FDL’s Warehouse Management Software (WMS) system provider to work closely to ensure a smooth implementation.

Once deployed, workers underwent a process to train the voice profile and learn how to interact with the system. In 2017, the training process could take up to a half of a day for each employee and subsequent new hires. With advancements in technology and the availability of VoxTempo®, Voxware’s Natural Language Voice Recognition engine, training is now reduced to minutes.

Analytics Drive Everything

The FDL warehouse operates on a 24/5 shift with power shifts occurring 12:00pm – 2:00am and 12:00am – 2:00pm. Because a large part of their business caters to restaurants and bars, FDL oftentimes sees weekly spikes of 30% more deliveries on Monday’s and Tuesday’s when it’s most convenient for those businesses to receive shipments.

FDL relies on VoxPilot®, Voxware’s enterprise analytics solution to help manage orders and workers and adjust as needed during peak periods.

“Technology is a key differentiator in our business model. Voxware continuously delivers new innovations supporting our technology strategy and delivering on our commitment to operational excellence.”

— Mark Duffy, President and CEO of FDL
For the warehouse supervisors, everything is available right at their fingertips. “With everything in real-time, the supervisors can flip between screens to properly staff and adjust as needed,” said Chief Operating Officer George Crosby. “If locations are dropping, if workers are on lunch, if production is lagging, we are able to see it. It’s a single pane of glass for the managers and supervisors.”

According to Crosby, “One of the unique benefits of Voxware’s technology is that it is configured to our environment,” he said. “To meet order commitments, we pick by zone since we preload by zone. We want to get our furthest deliveries out first and the data in VoxPilot helps us meet those delivery times to avoid any late deliveries.”

When FDL relied on the outdated paper picking process, compensating workers was another challenge. With VoxPilot in place, FDL was able to effectively establish and track desired productivity levels. VoxPilot allowed FDL to successfully implement a performance-based incentive pay program for employees.

“With the metrics we track, we are now able to look at hourly flows, cases, units and orders and have created an instance of a bonus program,” said Crosby. “We couldn’t have done that without Voxware.”

**Beyond Picking**

FDL has also been able to rely on the software for delivering new operational advantages.

“From a traceability standpoint, it’s beneficial for me to be able to go back and pull up any transaction in the Voxware system,” said Ian Torley, Director of Customer Service for FDL. “If a customer calls me with any type of issue, I can access the information right away and resolve the situation quickly.”

Another unexpected benefit FDL has discovered working with Voxware relates to training and coaching. “If a worker is habitually making a particular error, that information becomes apparent in the system. This indicates how to coach that worker,” said Torley.

Will Acevedo, IT manager at FDL, has prior experience working with an alternative voice technology. For him, the advantages of using Voxware were immediately apparent.

“Compared to other voice technology I have worked with in the past, Voxware is much more advanced,” said Acevedo. “Additionally, it is continuously evolving, and that’s something I like because it grows with us. The ability to integrate with our WMS and streamline our operations by removing manual processes gives a big boost to our operations and is a really good fit for a 3PL operation,” he added.

**Like a Fine Wine**

For Voxware and FDL, the relationship only gets better with time. As FDL expands capacity and continues its growth, they look at Voxware as a key partner to their success.

“Technology is a key differentiator in our business model,” said Mark Duffy, President and CEO of FDL. “Voxware continuously delivers new innovations supporting our technology strategy and delivering on our commitment to operational excellence.”

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**Success Highlights**

- Stores about 1.8 million cases of wine representing 70,000 SKUs serving more than 150 distributors in the region.
- Increased throughput, improved efficiency and maximized accuracy.
- VoxPilot® helps manage orders and workers and adjust as needed during peak periods.
- Utilized Voxware technology to create a performance-based incentive pay program for employees.

**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](http://www.voxware.com)