

COMPANY: CJ LANG & SON
INDUSTRY: RETAIL STORE DISTRIBUTION

VOICE-POWERED RESULTS:

OBJECTIVES

- /// Improve accuracy and boost productivity in CJ Lang's Retail Distribution Centre.

RESULTS

- /// All warehouse operations now use voice technology.
- /// Picking errors virtually eliminated – accuracy levels of 99.99% achieved.
- /// Picking productivity increased by around 10%.
- /// Real-time stock-taking introduced.



CJ Lang Speaks Up For Better Accuracy in the Warehouse

Founded in 1919, CJ Lang & Son is Scotland's largest independent retailing and distribution company. From its dedicated Retail Distribution Centre (RDC), the company services over 400 independent supermarkets, including all Scotland's SPAR stores, NAAFI and VG stores and 82 CJ Lang stores.

The company's Cash & Carry depots service 7,500 customers a week, providing food deliveries to leisure outlets, industrial, healthcare and education catering establishments throughout Scotland. CJ Lang's success is a reflection of its commitment to excellence, an enlightened approach to new technology and a dedication to being the best supplier of food, drink and associated products in Scotland.

"Our paper-based system was preventing us from achieving the accuracy and service goals we aspired to. BCP's Voice WMS has led to dramatic improvements in warehouse productivity and customer service."

Graham Murdoch
IT Director
CJ Lang & Son

The Challenge **Modernizing an Outdated Paper-Based Operation**

To retain its position as Scotland's premier wholesaler, CJ Lang is continually looking for innovative ways to service its customers as efficiently as possible. In 2002, it recognized that its paper-based operations were becoming outdated and no longer offered the flexibility required to grow the business.

Additionally, CJ Lang needed a solution to cover the whole range of warehouse activities at its RDC's ambient warehouse. The company therefore investigated alternatives to improve accuracy and customer service.

The Solution **A Seamless Transition From Paper to Voice**

Business Computer Projects (BCP), a specialist supply chain systems house was chosen to supply the solution. CJ Lang installed BCP's Accord® voice WMS to control all aspects of operation in its Dundee RDC. BCP's voice-directed WMS, including the specialist voice tasks, uses the proven technology and advanced voice recognition of Vocollect Voice®, supplied by BCP's partner VoiteQ.

Based on its previous experience, CJ Lang was confident that BCP understood its business and the two companies worked together closely throughout the design and development phase of the project to ensure the system would meet CJ Lang's particular needs.

The implementation was undertaken in phases, starting with the installation of a radio frequency (RF) network. Voice was then introduced into goods receiving where, combined with

barcode scanning; it's used to enter delivery data directly onto the WMS. This ensures any discrepancies are identified and addressed immediately and all data are accurate from the start.

Once products leave goods receiving, all warehouse operations are directed and controlled by voice and the WMS is updated in real time, providing full visibility and an accurate audit trail into all aspects of the process. Order picking was one of the most critical stages of implementation. Voice commands direct workers to the product's location and provide the quantity to be selected.

The real-time voice interaction ensures replenishment of pick faces as soon as they drop below a minimum level, instructing forklift truck drivers to get a full pallet from storage. Additionally, perpetual inventory is voice-enabled.

The Results **Voice Takes Center Stage at CJ Lang**

Today, 40 Vocollect Talkman® mobile computers are used by 80 workers in CJ Lang's ambient warehouse, transforming it from a paper-based operation to one entirely reliant on Vocollect Voice.

The biggest benefit has been in picking accuracy. Errors have been virtually eradicated and accuracy levels are now 99.99%. Time spent collecting or delivering the next job has been eliminated, re-picks have fallen and stock-checking is more efficient.

As a result, picking productivity has improved by around 10% with some pickers consistently exceeding that. Stationery and administration savings have also been significant as the use of paper lists and tasks such as printing and distributing have been removed.

There has been a reduction of five man days' effort per week in warehouse administration, allowing CJ Lang to redeploy staff more productively, resulting in considerable cost savings.

Finally, safety has improved because eliminating paper has led to a tidier warehouse and as workers are now operating hands-free, eyes-free, they have more awareness of their environment. The project has been so successful that CJ Lang hopes to extend voice functionality to its frozen and chilled warehouses.

"The Voice system is now integral to our warehouse operations; it has exceeded our expectations in all areas."

Graham Murdoch
IT Director
CJ Lang & Son



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