

COMPANY: YAKKA PTY. LTD.
INDUSTRY: APPAREL RETAILER

VOICE-POWERED RESULTS:

OBJECTIVES

- ▄ Drive sales growth and maintain high customer satisfaction levels amid explosive growth and consolidation of four DCs into one.

RESULTS

- ▄ Increased worker productivity and order efficiency by 20+%, achieving up to 170-200+ units per hour, per order selector.
- ▄ Achieved order accuracy of up to 99.98%.
- ▄ Cut worker training time in half.

ROI

- ▄ Met all financial goals and benchmarks, with ROI on target.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- ▄ Evaluate Vocollect Voice® for use in expanded DC operations.



“Wearing the Vocollect headset has some great advantages for picking apparel. Both hands are free, which is highly beneficial given our order selectors need to fold each garment before putting them in parcels. We’re picking at least 170-200+ units per hour per worker, and we could not achieve this level of efficiency without Voice-Directed Distribution™.”

Mark Eversteyn

Warehouse and Distribution Manager
Yakka Pty. Ltd.

Yakka Brings New Meaning to ‘Rough and Ready’ with Vocollect Voice

Yakka is a name synonymous with toughness, and it’s apropos for this Australian-based manufacturer of apparel that stands up to just about everything the wearer can dish out. With a market share estimated at 40%, Yakka has been a dominant player for 80 years – in the market for rugged, long-lasting work wear, with products ranging from pants and shirts to boots and shoes.

With some 6,000 active accounts in Australia and New Zealand and more than 20,000 “ship to” addresses, Yakka is also a major player in retail sales. And, just as vital as its reputation for a quality product, Yakka’s success has been built on two other important factors: product availability and prompt, efficient service.

That’s why, when Yakka was selecting a voice-directed application for its new distribution center (DC), it chose Vocollect. With Vocollect Voice – Vocollect’s system of hardware, software and voice dialogs – supporting its DC operations, Yakka’s reputation is secure and tougher than ever – always ready to serve its customers’ needs.

The Challenge **Maintain Service in the Face of Explosive Growth**

In recent years, with the introduction of new product lines and dramatic growth in the number of SKUs, Yakka faced the challenge of how to manage its explosive growth while ensuring that its customers, some of whom have been with the company for decades, still received the same high level of service.

Yakka recognized that one opportunity for improving the customer experience was in the distribution side of the business. To that end, the company consolidated its four DCs into a single, state-of-the-art, centrally located DC in Somerton, Victoria, about 30 minutes north of Melbourne. The new DC covers an area of about 69,800 square feet (22,000 square meters), with the capacity to hold 2,000,000 product units.

Securing the necessary space was only part of the answer, however. Working with Dematic, Yakka understood that to sustain the kind of customer service and satisfaction on which its reputation had been built, it needed to enhance its warehouse management system (WMS).

Running three shifts every day with 55 workers, Yakka was already employing WMS technology, including radio frequency (RF) scanning. But it proved limiting in helping Yakka sustain its exploding growth. So, when the time came to consolidate operations in its new DC, it was also time to consider upgrading its supply chain functionality.

The Solution **Voice Turns DC Into Lean Supply Chain Machine**

Pas Tomasiello, manager of direct and wholesale distribution logistics for Dematic, recommended that Yakka consider voice and explained his rationale. "Yakka had a couple of DCs literally bursting at the seams," said Tomasiello, "and they were duplicating administrative and supervisory costs. Along with consolidating operations into a single DC, we knew that Vocollect's Voice-Directed Distribution would help Yakka achieve a true state-of-the-art facility within its supply chain."

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Pas Tomasiello

Manager, Direct and Wholesale Distribution Logistics
Dematic

Mark Eversteyn, Yakka's warehouse and distribution general manager, states a trip made by their management team to a warehouse operation in Sydney, at Dematic's suggestion was the catalyst for the move to voice. The organization was using Vocollect Voice, Vocollect's system of software, hardware and dialogs that facilitates a direct and personal communication between team members and the host system. "From that day forward, voice was an easy sell because it was clear what sort of an impact it would have, particularly in an operation like ours," commented Eversteyn.

Tomasiello explained how the voice solution was sold and implemented by Dematic. "From start to finish, the implementation occurred within several months," said Tomasiello. "Voice-Directed Distribution is supported through Dematic's PickDirector® platform that interfaces with Yakka's warehousing and information management system, called WIMS, along with managing and controlling a smart conveyor system that incorporates automatic induction, zone routing, automatic labeling and dispatch sortation. This is a real-time connection and, because of the easy interface, Yakka didn't need to spend millions upgrading its WMS."

The Results **Voice Is 'Wow Factor' With Prospective Customers**

According to Eversteyn, the impact of voice has been significant. "Since we have consolidated our operations into one large DC, we're saving dollars by significantly reducing labor costs," he said.

"With the previous approach, our workers always had to have their eyes on the RF terminal screens, which affected productivity and safety," said Eversteyn. "Wearing the Vocollect headset has some great advantages for picking apparel. Both hands are free, which is highly beneficial given our order selectors need to fold each garment before putting them in parcels. We're picking at least 170-200+ units per hour per worker, and we could not achieve this level of efficiency without Voice-Directed Distribution."

"There is also an impact on accuracy," noted Eversteyn. "With voice, there are few picking mistakes. If an error is made, it's easy to determine how it occurred via system reports. The operators feel more ownership of the job they are doing. Out of about 20,000+ units picked per day, our accuracy rate is at 99.98%."

Eversteyn also noted that training workers to use voice is simple. "Before, it would take anywhere from three to six hours to train someone and leave them to work independently. Now, it takes one to two hours."

He commented that Voice-Directed Distribution has not only helped Yakka serve its current customers, but also is a factor in the company's marketing strategy as it elicits new customers.

"Yakka often impresses prospective customers with tours of our DC observing the order selection process. The fact that our voice operation is used as a showpiece provides a significant competitive edge. On many levels, Vocollect Voice has more than met our expectations."



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