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BEC SYSTEMS INTEGRATION



CASESTUDY

VOICE-DIRECTED TECHNOLOGY DRIVES IDB DEUTSCHLAND'S NEW FINISHED GOODS WAREHOUSE

IDB Deutschland GmbH extends its butter formation and packaging operations in their brand new factory. Venturing for the first time into Finished Goods, Voice-Directed Technology ensures IDB get it right from the outset.

THE CHALLENGE

When IDB took the decision to build a new factory 10 miles from their Krefeld site, they knew they had the opportunity to capitalize their business potential. Aiming to maximise efficiency, productivity and data accuracy across all operations, IDB's new project needed to be fit for the future.

The construction of the Neukirchen-Vluyn site provided an excellent opportunity to save significant costs in the handling of Finished Goods. By bringing these activities in-house it would ensure that IDB never relied on a third party Warehouse and Logistics company again. However, with no prior experience in this area, IDB needed experts to guide and advise them along the way.

THE JOURNEY

Determined to find the best way to carry out all pick and replenishment operations to the best of their abilities, IDB consulted specialists in warehouse management and automated data collection. Presented with the latest advancements in data capture, they selected Voice-Directed technology due to its pick efficiency, accuracy and safety aspects.

Particularly suited to fast moving pick environments, Voice-Directed technology promised increases of 10-15% efficiency over simple bar code scanning. Its integration into the host system would provide real-time stock updates and attain data accuracy levels above 99.9%.

The additional occupational health benefits Voice brings made the technology even more appealing to IDB. Due to

the hands-free, eyes-free operation of the Voice terminals, they are ideal for intensive manual handling and vehicle operation. Constructed of breakaway components, the devices are usable in temperatures ranging from -40 to 50°C.

With Voice-Directed technology, IDB would achieve their need for a versatile, easy to use solution that required minimal training.



THE DISCOVERY

As the preferred suppliers of real-time integration into Movex (M3), IDB chose BEC (Systems Integration) Ltd to supply the Voice solution. BEC had previously designed and implemented the data capture system already in use at Krefeld. This contributed significantly to the selection process as it built on the existing relationship between IDB and BEC.

Proving to be cost-effective, BEC's Voice solution proposed an extension to the current system and ensured that the new picking and warehousing activities fully complimented all IDB's business operations.

THE SOLUTION

The solution implemented by BEC utilises state of the art wearable computers and headsets. Voice functionality is provided for picking transactions and the supporting replenishment activities.

At the start of a shift, users download their personal voice profiles onto the terminals. The real-time integration of the solution enables tasks to be assigned to each operator, as they work.

Simulated speech issued via the headset, directs the operator to the pick location. The user confirms arrival by reading back the check digit on the location barcode. When instructed how many items to pick, the user states the quantity they placed on the pallet.

Where a shortage of stock means the operator cannot complete the task, a simple spoken command will trigger automatic replenishment from the bulk stock location. All this is completed before the operator leaves the pick face, reducing delays and the need for the item to be re-picked later.

BEC's data capture software, SIGMA, communicates the transaction data to Movex in real-time. This enables instant validation of the picked items against the job and results in greater pick accuracy. If there is an error, the system notifies the user immediately and requests a reason for the discrepancy.



Bluetooth headset used with Voice Terminals

THE IMPLEMENTATION

IDB saved considerable time training their workforce to use the Voice-Directed technology. The completion of transactions using simple spoken commands and verbal responses meant trainees did not have to contend with multi function keyboards.

During training, operators created a unique user profile, which enabled the system to identify and understand their spoken responses. Offered the option to use Turkish language packs for some of their employees, IDB opted to use German only. The users were able to train the terminals to accept their preferred language and speech patterns.

Of the implementation, Heike Tiemann, IT Manager at IDB said, *'The Voice system provided by BEC is absolutely perfect. We are saving time, have reduced picking errors and our workforce feels safer using the Voice Terminals.'*

THE RESULTS

The integration of Finished Goods at IDB proved a successful enterprise and ensured IDB's new factory maximised productivity, efficiency and pick accuracy.

BEC's solution integrated seamlessly into Movex and required no modification to the host system. The real-time capability ensures immediate updates and full visibility of all transactions. Extending the SIGMA data capture product to include voice functionality, meant that the new picking and replenishment transactions fully complimented IDB's existing business processes and reduced the cost of implementation.

Heike commented *'...we used to outsource warehousing and distribution to a third party. Now that we have brought these activities in-house, we are making considerable cost savings. The implementation of the Voice system in the Finished Goods warehouse has contributed significantly to this.'*

Using their own workforce to conduct picking and replenishment activities between tasks saved IDB further costs associated with employing new warehouse operatives.

The benefits arising from the Voice-Directed technology itself, centred on the hands-free, eyes free operation of the terminals. As the devices are ideal for intensive manual handling and the operation of moving vehicles, IDB's pick operators can concentrate on their task and remain aware of their environment.

The Terminals also operate successfully in IDB's Cold Storage Environment where temperatures are as low as -25°C.

ABOUT IDB DEUTSCHLAND

IDB Deutschland specialises in the formation of Butter Rosettes primarily for the hospitality industry. These specially shaped frozen butter portions come in any shape ranging from flowers to footballs. Responsible for the packaging and distribution of Kerrygold products throughout Germany, Austria and Poland, IDB ships between 70-120 tonnes a day.

IDB Deutschland has been operating in the dairy and export business for over 75 years and is a subsidiary of the Irish Dairy Board (Ireland).

ABOUT BEC

BEC (Systems Integration) Ltd are specialist providers of Automated Data Capture Solutions.

With access to a range of the latest data collection technologies, BEC advises, designs and delivers solutions that integrate seamlessly into host systems.

Working in the manufacturing, engineering and food & beverage industries, BEC's supply chain solutions improve productivity, efficiency and profitability.

To find out how BEC has helped other customers maximise their business potential, visit www.becsi.co.uk.