40% quality improvement for Aliaxis with voice directed picking and ePOD systems

aliaxis

Aliaxis is a global leader in the production and distribution of advanced plastic piping systems, selling a range of plumbing and drainage pipes worldwide. As a complex business with multiple product lines, the company's warehouse stocks hundreds of different SKUs offered under different brands and yet all processes were manually administered. Aliaxis needed a technology solution to increase warehouse productivity, decrease order fulfilment times and become more customer service orientated.

Business Issue

Aliaxis was using a paper-based system with manual paper pick lists, despatch notes and labels for order picking, order consolidation, fulfilment and ePod processes. The lack of automation inside the warehouse, yard and during the delivery process was causing errors, which negatively impacted on customer service levels.

"BEC came highly recommended and although we were evaluating another voice solutions provider, they understood our requirements and took the time to understand our very specific operational processes," says Tom Hamlyn, Logistics Director at Aliaxis.

Solution

BEC's technical team worked closely with Aliaxis to develop two solutions – BEC eSmart® Voice, a bespoke, voice directed warehouse management solution based on Honeywell Vocollect Talkman devices and BEC eSmart® ePod, an electronic proof of delivery (ePod) software solution.

Aliaxis' software was developed in partnership with warehouse operatives, to ensure it was designed to complement existing shop floor processes and eradicate bottlenecks. The entire solution integrates seamlessly with Aliaxis' Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP system, which is critical to business and overall operational processes.

The voice solution is used inside the warehouse to improve order picking, consolidation and fulfilment rates.

Each product within the warehouse now has a unique location identifier, allowing the operatives to follow instructions received through the wireless headsets in order to pick items accurately.

"It was extremely beneficial to find a single end-to-end solution supplier. The implementation ran smoothly and BEC delivered everything they said they would from day one. The end result is a stable, robust solution that we can forget about on a day-to-day basis and which continues to deliver great results. Performance and profitability are much improved and we hope to roll-out the solution to our Scottish division as soon as possible."

Tom Hamlyn

Logistics Director

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Honeywell Talkman devices with wireless headsets are also used outside of the warehouse facility for picking larger products stored externally and for scanning completed orders onto delivery vehicles.

The eSmart® ePod software works with Honeywell mobile devices and is used for in-cab tracking and order delivery, including signature capture. Together, BEC's eSmart® Voice and eSmart® ePod run the entire warehouse workflow, with intuitive mobile dashboards for easy reporting and management.

Results

Aliaxis has seen many business benefits since implementing BEC's solutions, with customer service levels, pick rates and delivery accuracy all improved.

"BEC gave us the confidence we needed to take the next step and remove all the inefficient, manual processes utilised within our facility. They were clearly highly experienced in developing, designing and deploying both scanning, ePod and voice data capture solutions. BEC took time to understand the solution we required and deliver everything we asked for and more," says Tom Hamlyn.

Overall the new voice system has significantly improved day-to-day productivity and picking accuracy. Operatives can work more efficiently with both hands free and stock accuracy levels are higher. The voice solution can also work with a huge range of languages, dialects and accents, making training for all staff quicker and easier.

Customer delivery rates have risen by 40% and the new dashboards offer improved operational visibility for customers and give management a daily snapshot of warehouse workloads. Warehouse shift managers can monitor productivity by viewing driver routes, fulfilment information and each worker's picking history.

In summary:
BEC's Added Value

- ▶ Replaced manual processes with real-time data capture
- ▶ Customer service levels, pick rates and delivery accuracy all improved
- ▶ Software was customised to suit Aliaxis' business processes
- ▶ End to end supply chain solution from a single supplier.

The ePod solution allows Aliaxis to capture accurate goods receipt data, with signature, location and a time-stamp for each delivery made. All consignments and deliveries are now right first time, helping to substantially lower costs and eliminate any need for expensive repeat deliveries.

"It was extremely beneficial to find a single end-to-end solution supplier able to deliver both systems. The implementation ran extremely smoothly and BEC delivered everything they said they would from day one. The end result is a highly stable, robust solution that we can just forget about on a day-to-day basis and which continues to deliver great results. Our performance and profitability are much improved and we hope to roll-out the solution to our Scottish division as soon as possible," concludes Tom Hamlyn.