

BEC's voice picking delivers blooming marvellous customer satisfaction for Flowervision



Supplying florists on a daily basis from Cornwall to Worcester, Flowervision (Bristol) Ltd is an independent wholesaler of high-quality fresh cut flowers, plants and sundries. Part of Flowervision Group and with subsidiaries across the UK, France and Germany, the company gets its products directly from the Dutch Flora Holland flower auction.

Flowervision approached BEC Systems Integration Ltd to automate their order picking and fulfilment processes with voice directed data capture software fully configurable for the needs of the flower industry.

Business Issue

Flowervision prides itself on top quality products and exceptional customer service delivered by experienced and knowledgeable staff who specialise in the flower trade. However, a lack of the right technology in the warehouse meant this vision was not always the reality. Flowervision had been using a paper-based system to fulfil orders and didn't employ barcoding for order picking. Running a busy warehouse selling highly perishable and high value items was causing many problems. Nick Hudson, General Manager at Flowervision, explains: "A lack of automation within our facility for order picking meant we were making errors which led to order mix ups and some of our customers being let down with their orders."

Given that customer service is a priority, Flowervision needed a more accurate way of picking orders and getting them fulfilled more quickly. After a review of voice picking and order management solution providers the company decided to engage BEC for the project.

BEC's future-proof and innovative automated data capture solutions are designed to integrate seamlessly into any host ERP system and automate key warehouse processes.

Since Flowervision's system requirements were not straightforward, BEC completed a detailed evaluation of our business to design a bespoke solution.

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Solution

Flowervision's new voice picking solution is used within the entire warehouse facility, including both refrigerated and cash and carry areas. The solution is used for all of Flowervision's order picking processes and comprises BEC's eSmart® Voice software running on A730 Talkman devices and SRX2 Bluetooth headsets from Honeywell Vocollect.

Each product within the warehouse now has a unique location identifier, allowing operatives to accurately follow the instructions received through the Bluetooth voice headsets to pick and pack the items ordered correctly. Flowervision operates a web shop which is used by the vast majority of customers, including independent retailers and florists within an 80-mile radius. 80% of the products sold are picked and packed overnight, with the rest sold to customers coming into the facility and making a direct, face-to-face purchase. The company's web shop opens at 3pm each day, allowing customers to see what's available in stock within the warehouse plus what has been bought that morning from the flower auction and transported from Holland overnight.

Initial picks are then carried out from held stock and new products from the lorry deliveries are placed in defined product locations within our warehouse and fridges. Once the products are putaway into the correct locations, they can be picked and packed as sales orders overnight, for shipment first thing in the morning.

By developing the software after in-depth exploratory discussions with Flowervision, BEC's technical team were able to understand exactly what was happening 'out on the floor' and put solutions in place to eradicate bottlenecks or other issues. The team also ensured that the eSmart Voice worked seamlessly with Flowervision's Florisoft ERP system, which is critical to their business and overall operational processes.

The use of voice technology was pivotal in the overall success of the solution. Conceptually, voice directed technology is very similar to traditional RF scanning, but the prompts delivered and responses provided are verbally given. Using BEC's voice picking solution based on Honeywell Vocollect Voice technology, Flowervision was able to increase worker productivity by up to 35%, whilst achieving almost 100% order picking accuracy.

Results

Since implementing voice picking with BEC, Flowervision has seen many important business benefits and improved its customer service levels and order fulfilment times.

The new solution has enabled Flowervision to pick all items with an incredibly high level of accuracy and has ensured that orders leaving the premises are always correct.

In summary: BEC's Added Value

- ▶ Replaced manual pick processes with real-time, voice directed solution
- ▶ Customer service levels, pick rates and delivery accuracy all improved
- ▶ Software was customised to suit Flowervision's bespoke business processes
- ▶ Seamless integration with existing ERP solution.

