



Zebra introduces Voice-Directed Warehousing to Silk Contract Logistics

IMPROVED ORDER DELIVERY TIMES AND ACCURACY WITH MULTI-MODAL PICKING TECHNOLOGY

Silk Contract Logistics operates across a range of sectors including retail, FMCG, light industrial, food and dairy, and provides a tailored approach to all aspects of wharf cartage, warehousing and distribution.

With more than 450 employees and 21 warehouses spread around the country, Silk Contract Logistics seeks to both future proof its business and establish itself as an innovator in the Australian warehousing industry.

Challenge

Recent years have seen considerable investment in new technology as warehousing and logistics companies seek to improve their efficiency. Even small gains in productivity can provide a significant edge over the competition.

“Our overarching priority was pretty simple – ‘How do we do more with less?’,” says Matt Hannah, CIO of Silk Contract Logistics. “With the cost of labour being quite high in Australia we’re always looking at ways to lean on technology to improve efficiency.”

One technology that’s gained increasing popularity in recent years is voice-directed warehousing, a solution that incorporates voice recognition technology in order to improve efficiency and productivity in the warehouse. Originally introduced in the 1990s for warehouse picking, the technology has since matured significantly and can now be used for a full complement of warehouse tasks, including goods receiving, put-away, replenishment, shipping and returns processing. Voice-directed systems can improve productivity and efficiency by allowing

SUMMARY

Customer

Silk Contract Logistics
Australia

Industry

Warehousing and Logistics

Challenge

Incorporate voice-directed warehousing to expand palette of available services, increase efficiency while establishing Silk Contract Logistics as an Australian warehouse innovator.

Solution

- TekSpeech Pro
- WT41N0 wearable computer
- RS507 ring scanner
- QLn420 Mobile printers

Results

- Speech-directed solutions improved efficiencies and safety for warehouse workers.
- Decreased interaction with mobile computer screens and keypads.
- Established Silk Contract Logistics as a leading innovator in the warehousing space.
- Planned wide-scale adoption of voice picking, wearable computers, ring scanners and mobile printers in future.

two-handed operations and a constant eye on the product. Additionally, they allow for improved safety and greater accuracy in task completion.

Solution

SMART WAREHOUSE

Aware that Silk Contract Logistics was looking to expand its offerings for consumers and to also establish itself as a warehouse innovator, Zebra suggested that its voice-directed warehouse technology – TekSpeech Pro – could provide an ideal fit for their needs.

“Zebra and Silk Contract Logistics have been working together for a number of years, but our previous collaborations have been centred on hardware. This was our first time using dedicated Zebra software, so it was a learning experience for everyone involved,” said Hannah.

Silk Contract Logistics opted to use TekSpeech Pro in one of their warehouses in order to serve as a test run for potential wider implementation. While TekSpeech Pro is already well-established in Europe, Silk Contract Logistics is the first company to utilise the system in Australia. The project was intended as a pilot for both companies; Silk Contract Logistics could test the suitability of TekSpeech Pro for their warehousing environment, and Zebra were able to test the implementation process and subsequent fine-

tuning in a new setting.

NEXT GENERATION SPEECH SOLUTION

TekSpeech Pro has some unique features such as natural voice (i.e. requiring no user voice training), dynamic vocabulary and multi-modal workflows, which allows standard warehouse scanning devices to be used by combining listen, speak, read, touch and scan for efficiency optimisation. The solution lends itself to combining functionality from a camera, display pictures, location services and RFID, which also opens up applications in areas outside the warehouse, such as retail and field service. TekSpeech Pro supports Zebra’s legacy windows based mobile computers as well as Zebra’s next generation Android-based all-touch devices.

As part of the wider implementation of the TekSpeech Pro implementation, Silk Contract Logistics also adopted Zebra QLn420 mobile label printers, WT41N0 wearable computers and RS507 ring scanners, for a multi-modal speech-directed solution.

Results

MULTI MODAL SPEECH DIRECTED SOLUTION

The solution is integrated in real time with Silk Contract Logistics’ JDA Red Prairie WMS system and utilises spoken instructions,

“Using TekSpeech Pro in conjunction with the RS507 ring scanners and wearable computers has proven to be a success for Silk Contract Logistics. With the improved functionality it offers and the support for next generation android devices, we can foresee it becoming a significant addition to our business in the near future.”

Matt Hannah,
CIO
Silk Contract
Logistics





enabling additional input modes to simplify and increase task completion speed and accuracy. For example, instead of speaking to verify that the right item was selected, workers can simply scan the barcode on the item with their ring scanner, shaving seconds off of the validation process while still ensuring pick accuracy. With these new pieces of technology working in conjunction with one another, staff have been able to adopt a “hands-free” approach on the warehouse floor.

“TekSpeech Pro is a really powerful technology, and it was impressive to see how it could integrate with our wider systems.”

“We’ve seen a number of great benefits – the fact that it allows our staff to go hands-free means that we’ve had increased accuracy during the picking process. Voice direction reduces the need to look at screens and keypads, keeps your eye on the task and improves the workers safety awareness,” said Hannah.

“Additionally, as we’re a third-party warehouse facility, a lot of our service provision is based on customer requests – so having TekSpeech Pro up and running has enabled us to create a profile which our clients would be interested in using in the future.”

For more information, visit www.zebra.com



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