

Greater efficiency and lower error rates thanks to pick by voice

Uvex Group using LYDIA Voice for order picking in three central warehouses

Over ten years ago, Uvex Sports, the sports eyewear and helmets manufacturer, made the switch from paper-based order picking to LYDIA™ Voice. This led to a 30 percent gain in efficiency, which encouraged other Uvex Group subsidiaries to follow suit. Today, the Ehrhardt Partner Group's pick-by-voice solution is also successfully being used by eyewear manufacturer Filtral and the sports brand Alpina Sports. In total, around 50,000 items are picked by Uvex Group employees every day in three central warehouses with the aid of voice control and either a headset or the LYDIA™ VoiceWear order picking vest. This has considerably accelerated throughput times and lowered error rates.

Uvex's gold-coloured ski helmets received a lot of attention at this year's Winter Olympics in Beijing. The Fürth-based family company showed that it is a class above when it comes to equipping professional athletes. But even behind the scenes, in the central warehouses of its subsidiaries, the highest standards are in place. Uvex strives for maximum efficiency in order picking. This comes as no surprise, given the huge amounts of orders the company handles on a daily basis. At Filtral, the manufacturer of sunglasses and reading aids, roughly 1,900 orders and up to 18,000 items leave the warehouse every day during seasonal peaks. Uvex Sports' 12,500m² central warehouse is not far behind, with 17,000 items. At Alpina Sports in Laimering near Munich, up to 16,000 items are picked each day.

Voice-assisted order picking accelerates throughput times

Uvex adopted the LYDIA Voice order picking solution at all three of its warehouses, with the aim of achieving maximum process efficiency. Employees now receive their instructions by voice command using either a headset or the patented LYDIA™ VoiceWear order picking vest in which the microphone and speaker components are integrated directly into the vest. Thanks to the hands-free, eyes-free concept, employees are able to

work with greater focus, as they no longer have to keep switching between products and paper lists. This helps lower error rates while also reducing the number of steps in the picking process.

The immediate posting of picking positions in SAP and the fact that employees can start working with the system straight away are additional advantages of order picking with LYDIA Voice, which Uvex Sports' central warehouse in Fürth-Stadeln was the first to benefit from. In 2010, the pick-by-voice solution was introduced at the warehouse, with a 30 percent gain in efficiency being recorded after just one year. The throughput time for an order also fell on average by 20 to 25 percent. This enabled the company to double its warehouse capacities without having to hire any additional staff.

Even greater efficiency thanks to multi-order picking

Uvex Sports was able to further optimise its processes over the years. The introduction of multi-order picking enabled employees to process multiple customer orders, which significantly reduced the distances they needed to cover in the warehouse. The results convinced fellow Uvex subsidiary Filtral to follow suit, with the manufacturer of reading aids and sunglasses also deciding to adopt LYDIA Voice technology in 2018. In the same year, Alpina Sports also made the switch and implemented EPG's innovative voice solution.

Long-standing cooperation with EPG

"We are very pleased with the results we've seen from introducing LYDIA Voice across all our companies," says Christian Kund, Uvex Group Information Manager SAP. "We also really value the trusting collaboration and pragmatic approach adopted by EPG."

Uvex Group has benefited from all LYDIA Voice software releases over the years. LYDIA Voice 8 is currently being used at all three warehouses. This is the first version that works on the basis of neural networks and deep learning methods. It also does not require any voice training and offers optimum voice recognition thanks to the VOXTER voice computer. "Employees can thus start working productively with the system right away. This saves a great deal of time, particularly during seasonal peaks when we have to

strengthen our workforce by hiring temporary staff,” Kund adds. Uvex is therefore able to react more flexibly to changing requirements, a particularly crucial success factor in these uncertain times.

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