Meeting demands and exceeding expectations

Sysco Guest Supply: Feeding service excellence with voice

Founded in 1979, Sysco Guest Supply is a global leader in selling, marketing and distributing food and personal care amenities to restaurants, healthcare and educational facilities, lodging establishments and other hospitality services.

Sysco, based in New Jersey, is the largest full-service provider of personal care amenity programs and room accessories, distributing to nearly every major hotel worldwide. They manufacture and distribute branded personal care amenities, equipment and supplies.

They adopted voice across each of their ten distribution centers to help them deliver on their quality customer service promise.

At a glance

Project goals
- Manage demand during peak summer periods
- Train staff without impacting service delivery
- Enhance productivity and efficiency

Solution
- Voice-directed working

Features and benefits
- Improved productivity
- Simplified staff training
- Multi-language support

Challenge

With 35 percent of their business happening in the first week of each month, Sysco needed a way to accommodate the spikes, especially during the summer holiday periods. Managing these peaks, notably fluctuations in workforce and order volumes, was crucial.

The constraints on hotel delivery were compounding these issues. With hotels having little capacity to receive large amenity storage, they had to manage their inventory "just-in-time" style, sending hotels what they needed, when they needed it.

Richard Stewart, Professional Services Lead at Körber:

"Sysco Guest Supply was a little out of the norm in terms of what you would consider a classic voice candidate. They had lots of smaller branch distribution centers, and groups of cross-trained workers who would perform put-away in the morning, picking in the afternoon and cycle-counting during their downtime. Additionally, there was some variety within a single workflow, like picking, for example. The company also had a multilingual workforce at most of their distribution centers around the country."

Solution

After a detailed process investigation, ROI analysis, and successful pilot program, the company chose voice to help make their distribution centers safer, faster and more accurate. Eight processes were updated to voice:

- Order selection
- House truck-picking
- Parcel zone-picking
- Zone-picking
- Item demand/replenishment
- Put-away
- Cycle-counting
- Item consolidation

After initiating the system at their California facility, with our support, Sysco completed the first go-live in five days, with the remaining go-lives completed in four days. Within nine months, voice was live in all ten sites.

Results

Productivity
One year since the first go-live and the results have been remarkable. Selection productivity has increased by between 22 and 24 percent, productivity in put-away by between 26 and 28 percent, and replenishment productivity by up to 80 percent. Total throughput is now up by 28 percent.

Seamless transition
Thanks to the speed and ease of installation, and the minimal staff training requirements, they could continue servicing customers uninterrupted. We provided the flexibility to train one selector at a time while the others continued using RF, making the transition seamless. And with voice's multi-lingual versatility, the technology could be used by anybody, regardless of language or dialect. Today, more than 100 team members use voice to move 13 million cases per year.
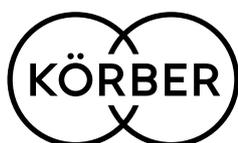
The future

Sysco are now identifying other operational areas and workflows that could benefit from the hands-free, eyes-free technology, to support their long-term goals.

"What I've learned through my past experience is that with a strong technology partner, and an eager and adaptable workforce, there are so many ways to take advantage of what voice has to offer."

Jim Makowski
Director of Distribution, Sysco Guest Supply