



Körber Supply Chain

5 Biggest Mistakes Made in Voice Implementations



With any technology implementation there are a list of things that will make or break a project. After completing hundreds of voice implementations, we have seen a few common mistakes that tend to hold back voice implementations – or bring them to an abrupt end. Read on to find out the five most common mistakes that are made when implementing voice, and what you can do to make sure you don't make them.

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1. Choosing a voice solution based on price rather than functionality

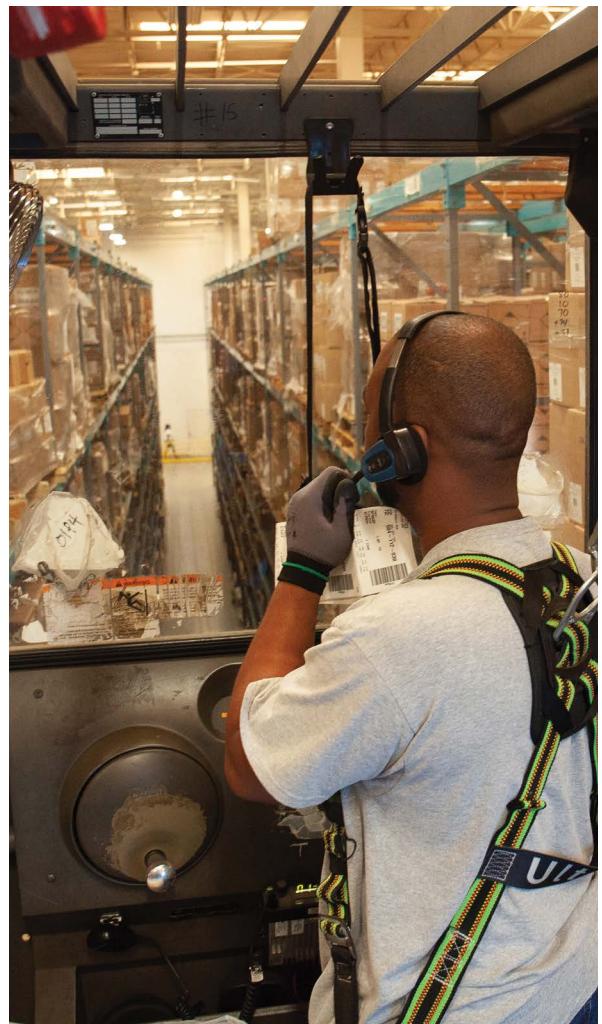
There are a variety of voice providers, all providing their own versions of voice-directed software and claiming the same results. So all voice is the same – right? And if all voice is the same, you should just go with the cheapest option.

Unfortunately, all voice solutions are not created the same, and choosing based on price will often leave you short on some of the functionality and results you are looking for. Some solutions may struggle to recognize your workers voice if there is a forklift going by, or if they have a strong accent. Others may sell a base solution that isn't modifiable, meaning you are stuck with the stock version they sell everyone, regardless of the needs of your warehouse.

While these solutions may cost less in the beginning, they often show their flaws when you are counting on them the most, like during your peak seasons. The price tag may be enticing, but the long term results and functionality should not be ignored.

How to avoid it:

Do research on the technology behind the voice offering to make sure what you're getting is the right fit for your specific warehouse. Make sure you ask about the flexibility of the solution, as well as making sure that the solution is device agnostic should you want to upgrade or change platforms in the future.



2. Failing to create a change management plan

The human side of any technology implementation is incredibly important, but since voice tends to directly impact those who work on the warehouse floor, their participation will be key. Failing to recognize this can lead to employee resistance, union roadblocks, training inefficiencies, and ultimately, a delayed ROI.

How to avoid it:

Involve your workers in the process, and go into the implementation with a plan on how to communicate the value of voice. Often times, the workers objections stem from a desire to avoid change rather than a dislike of the new technology, so show them why they should be excited for the change as well.

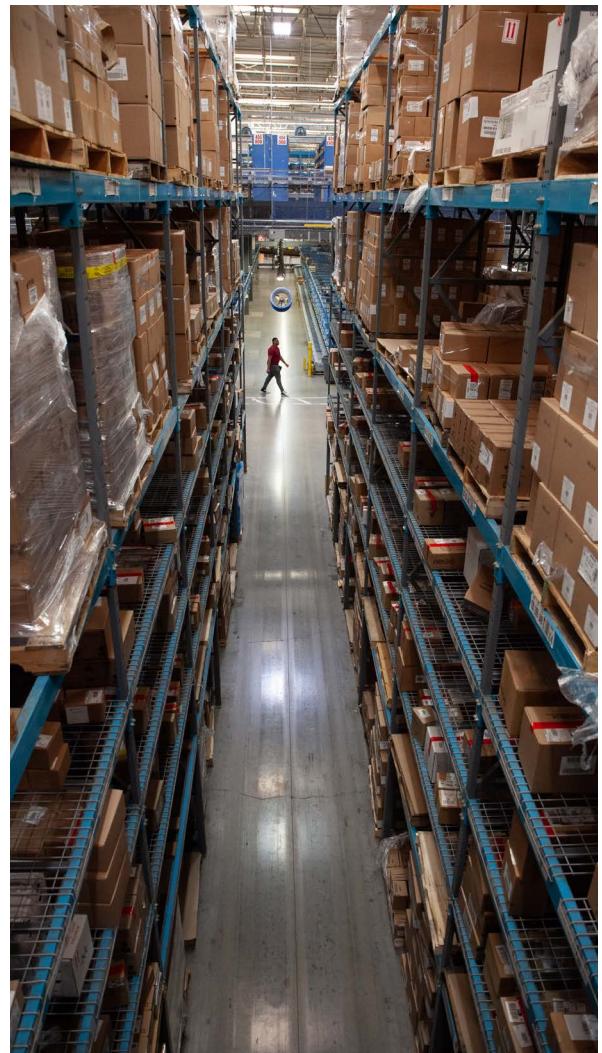
3. Not considering the migration ability of voice

In mistake number one, the differences between voice solutions was clarified. While most of the differences focus on functionality, there is one major difference that tends to impact voice investments 5-10 years after they have been installed – adaptability.

The right voice solution is adaptable, scalable, and is set up for long term use, which means it may outlive your other business systems. If you choose the wrong voice system, or one that is specific to a certain ERP or WMS, you may find yourself with a voice system that can no longer integrate with your supply chain software, and your investment will be lost.

How to avoid it:

Ask your potential voice provider about the adaptability of their solution, and their experience working with different systems. They should be able to tell you if you can migrate your voice solution into another system down the road, and what that process should entail.



4. Inability to measure success

The inability to measure success is a mistake that tends to cripple projects entirely, and often change voice from a profitable project into a loss. For the most part, this happens to companies that have heard about voice, read about the improvements it can create, and decide to implement voice without doing the work to make sure it is a good fit for the operation.

Having a solid understanding of current metrics and problems that voice will solve are the key to justifying the investment, and without clear targets (like a 25% increase in productivity or 80% reduction in errors), there is no way to build a clear ROI in advance.

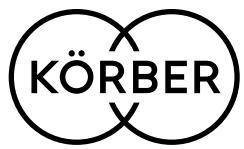
As a result, when the company is pressed to justify the original purchase, expand voice into new locations or workflows, or even motivate employees, there is no sufficient proof that voice made any difference. This often leads management to believe the project was a waste of time and money, regardless of the untraceable savings that may have occurred.

How to avoid it:

Before you start the implementation, take note of key statistics in your warehouse. Below are some recommendations for statistics that often experience the biggest change after a voice implementation:

- Productivity
- Accuracy
- Training time
- Turnover
- Cost of damaged products
- Overtime
- Headcount





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5. Failing to get buy in from upper management

Many companies see voice as a warehouse solution, and assume that decisions should only involve warehouse personnel. While involving warehouse personnel is incredibly important, getting upper management's approval will make or break the project.

Since they tend to have large decision making power, failing to include them in the implementation planning can lead to confusion, miscommunication, and ultimately having the project called off.

How to avoid it:

Taking on a voice project is a decision that will impact your entire company, from Finance, to IT, to Operations. Finance will ultimately be responsible for the cost of the implementation, IT resources will be needed to prepare your internal infrastructure, and operations will be impacted by any change in technology. Make sure you talk through your plans for voice with the heads of each of these departments, and make sure everyone is on board. If you encounter reservations or uncertainty, the perfect time to address it is before the implementation. If you wait until the implementation has begun, you may experience costly hold-ups, or see the entire project fall apart.

Conclusion

Choosing to implement voice technology into your warehouse is a decision that has the power to take your warehouse to peak efficiency, but only if the implementation is done correctly. Choosing the correct partner and preparing for the process will be incredibly impactful in ensuring your success. By taking the steps listed above you will ensure that your voice project begins on the right track, and ends with improved productivity, accuracy, training time, and more.

Could Körber's versatile voice solutions be the right fit for your operation?

Contact us to find out: <https://www.koerber-supplychain.com/supply-chain-solutions/supply-chain-voice-solutions>