Goya Foods Improves Picking Rate with Ivanti Velocity and Speakeasy

Profile: The Goya Foods plant in Prince George, VA, may be one of the smallest sites in the company, but it's also the most innovative. The site serves as the test site for all Goya warehouses, a place where new technologies and processes are proven before rolling out to the company's 13 other plants.

Location: Prince George, VA, USA

Solutions:

- Ivanti Velocity
- Ivanti Speakeasy

Benefits:

- 5-7 PERCENT FASTER Picking
- Increased productivity
- Fast Implementation and user adoption
- Decreased labor costs
- Reduced Costs

Profile

As America's largest Hispanic-owned food company, and a leader in Latin American foods, Goya makes and distributes more than 2,000 different products around the world.

When the company moved to implement a warehouse management system (WMS), it was time to look at other process improvements, with its paper-based picking process high on the list. Luis Ramos, general manager at the Prince George, VA plant, knew that Goya could improve the speed, accuracy and safety of picking if workers could keep their eyes looking ahead instead of down on the pick list.

"When a person changes focus from paper to the product sitting on the cart 3,000 to 4,000 times in a shift, that becomes fatiguing, not to mention the safety concerns if you're operating a forklift" Ramos said.

Speakeasy: Lower Cost, Hight ROI

When Goya Foods chose Manhattan Associates' Warehouse Management System, it also evaluated voice picking solutions. Ramos and Goya were already familiar with Ivanti Wavelink, using Ivanti Wavelink solutions to manage wireless devices and create applications for its bay-door handheld devices.

A positive track record with Ivanti Wavelink gave Goya added confidence in their voice solution, Speakeasy. Plus, Speakeasy seemed exceptionally simple to deploy and manage.

> **"Ivanti Speakeasy answered our concerns with an easy-to-deploy, easy-to-develop and cost-effective solution. Other solutions would cost two or three times as much."**
>
> — *Luis Ramos, Goya Foods USA*

Rather than hiring consultants to develop changes, Goya could make changes on its own – without requiring a technical person – making for a lower total cost of ownership.

"The Speakeasy solution empowered us to make our own changes," Ramos said. "I was amazed by its simplicity."

Speakeasy joins other Ivanti Wavelink solutions at Goya. Since 2004, Wavelink Terminal Emulation has enabled wireless connectivity for handhelds at Goya's bay doors. With Wavelink Studio™, the company develops applications for those handhelds.

Using Ivanti Avalanche™, the company manages 250 wireless devices in use at 14 warehouse locations. The solution allows Goya to deploy new applications on a regular schedule or on the fly, without requiring an IT person to travel to the various sites.

Fast Implementation, User Adoption

Goya rolled out the new WMS and Speakeasy concurrently, first at just the Prince George location. If it proved successful at the 5,000-case-per-day location, then the company would have greater confidence bringing it to sites with up to 10 times that volume.

With support from a Ivanti Wavelink's engineer for implementation, Goya developed the pick flow, supporting screens and error messages forSpeakeasy. With just an hour or two of training, and with quick reference guides in hand, pickers began pulling items.

Getting workers on board with the change was pretty simple. If they could move more quickly, they could go home sooner, receiving the same pay for less time on the job.

At Goya, pickers carry Motorola™ WT4090 handheld devices with headsets, enabling both barcode scanning and voice. Because Goya runs a day and night shift, it wanted devices that were not tied to individual pickers' voices, which Speakeasy enables.

When they arrive for their shifts, workers pick up any device, select either English or Spanish, and then use the calibration wizard to help the device understand them. Within a minute, they are ready to begin pulling items.

They first scan the task ticket and a voice directs them where to go, and then confirms each step and quantities with voice. Pickers and forklift operators move from location to location with their eyes ahead.

Changes – Without Expensive Consulting

As needed, Goya makes its own changes to screens and scripts. In fact, Ramos, admittedly non-technical, usually handles it himself after spending just a couple of hours of one-time phone training with Ivanti Wavelink.

"I'm not an IT guy, but in 15 minutes I can reformat a screen and then deploy it to the devices," Ramos said. "More complicated things take anywhere from a couple of hours to a day. With other solutions, we'd have to write specs, wait days or longer for a consultant to complete them and we'd pay a lot for it. With Speakeasy, it's much faster to get changes out on the floor."

Picking: 5-7 Percent Faster

By all accounts, the voice solution proved a success at the Prince George testing site, helping meet the goals of greater efficiency, accuracy and safety. On average, pick teams complete their lists five to seven percent faster than before. Now, pick teams go home a little sooner. For pickers who also have day jobs, the chance to go home earlier – and get more sleep – is a major incentive.

With voice commands, pickers and forklift operators move from point to point more safely. The plant hasn't logged a single accident since implementing Speakeasy.

Additionally, the Prince George site notes big boosts in picking accuracy. For any errors caught at bay doors, someone would manually have to go re-pick and pack those items. "We would have 40 to 60 mispicks a night. Now that has gone down considerably to be almost non-existent, which translates to efficiency," Ramos said.

With a simple implementation, and equally simple changes as needed, Speakeasy saves Goya tens of thousands of dollars on IT costs, delivering a higher return on investment.

In the hands-on testing environment at Prince George, Wavelink solutions continue to pass the test. Now, Goya has rolled out the voice solution to a second plant and plans to take it to all 14 locations.

"Each time we have a need, we find Ivanti Wavelink has a solution, and all the different products work well together," Ramos said. "Our experience with their solutions and the company have been outstanding."

Learn More

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