

HIGHER EFFICIENCY, FEWER MISTAKES – LYDIA VOICE SPEEDS THE PICKING PACE FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT GENTILE AG

At Gebr. Gentile AG in Switzerland, digitalisation is a top priority, but picking lingered as one of the last paper-based processes. To digitalise their warehouse, the produce logistics specialist recruited LYDIA Voice, the pick-by-voice solution from EPG (Ehrhardt Partner Group) at the end of 2023. In next to no-time, the company has achieved a double-digit percentage increase in efficiency.

"This was one of the best IT projects we have implemented on this scale in the last 10 years," claims Renato Häfliger, Managing Director of Gentile AG. The introduction of LYDIA Voice for picking fruits and vegetables at the logistics centre in Näfels, Switzerland was met with similar praise across the warehouse team. Digitalisation is firmly anchored in the corporate philosophy of Gentile AG. In recent years, the company has digitalised processes in all departments, boosting productivity and profitability.

Gentile AG has been a reliable partner for wholesale fruit and vegetable logistics for decades. From its logistics centre, the company supplies customers throughout German-speaking Switzerland and Ticino up to 7 times per week, sometimes several times per day. These include wholesale, discount, and industrial customers as well as independent stores and franchises across the region. Short order and delivery cycles

characterise Gentile's daily business. The logistics centre in Näfels hosts over 3,000 m² of refrigerated space with diverse temperature zones. These can be individually adjusted for temperature and humidity to ensure optimum storage for sensitive goods. "The products are stored in our warehouse for an average of 0.7 days, i.e. the goods that come in go out again immediately," explains Renato Häfliger. "We process just under 80-100 tons a day. Ideally, the same amount of goods should go out as come in, as this best guarantees the freshness of the products." A total of 200-300 items are dispatched to around 200 customers every day, a number that fluctuates seasonally, for example before Valentine's Day, Easter or Christmas. "On average, this corresponds to 6,000 to 10,000 shipping units per day, which have to be handled by our pickers. This results in around 20-60 picks per order. With paper lists, this process was difficult. The employees never had both hands free and



TASK

- Digitalisation of order picking processes
- IT system that flexibly adapts to day-to-day business
- Short training period for seasonal employees



SOLUTION

- Trial of LYDIA Voice leads to quick decision in favor of the system
- Implementation of LYDIA Voice with Bluetooth headsets and VOXTER for order picking in two-shift operation



OUTCOME

- Double-digit percentage increase in efficiency within weeks
- Faster picking speed and fewer picking errors
- Significantly more output with the same number of employees

"The software is very tolerant of dialect - an absolute plus for us."

Renato Häfliger,
Managing Director Gentile AG

constantly had to look down. Errors crept in and the process was noticeably slower - another reason why we ultimately opted for digitalisation and LYDIA Voice", says Häfliger.

LYDIA VOICE IMPROVES EFFICIENCY BY A DOUBLE-DIGIT PERCENTAGE

At the beginning of 2022, Häfliger began searching for a system to make the last process in the company - order picking - paperless. At the recommendation of a major customer, he tested the LYDIA Voice pick-by-voice system and was quickly convinced: "LYDIA Voice was already easy and intuitive to use during the test - you're ready to go straight away. That was one of the main reasons why the decision to implement was made very quickly. We have a lot of seasonal staff in addition to our permanent employees, so long training periods are not possible."

A total of 20 employees currently works in two shifts with LYDIA Voice. They are equipped with LYDIA's Bluetooth headset and a VOXTER mobile device, which they wear on their belts. With both hands and eyes free, it is easier to pack units for shipping. Gentile has a picking line in the fruit and vegetable warehouse that is restocked daily. Products are stored one after the other to minimise walking distances. There is also little stock. "For this reason, we have shortened the LYDIA voice dialogs so that only the storage location is announced, enabling our employees to work faster," explains Renato Häfliger. "LYDIA Voice is so flexible that this was easy to do."

Many colleagues come from other European countries, such as Poland, the Balkans or southern Europe. With this in mind, LYDIA Voice was designed to be easily used by any order picker



without prior voice template training, regardless of gender, dialect or accent. "Switzerland has a lot of dialects, especially when it comes to numbers", says Renato Häfliger. "We wrote down all the commands for our employees at the start of the project and didn't have to do much training at all. Everyone has learned these commands, which mainly consist of numbers. As a result, we don't have to add additional languages today, as our employees get on really well thanks to the excellent recognition of the voice system." In addition to picking, label printing for the pallets is also controlled via LYDIA Voice.

After just a short time, Gentile is already benefiting from higher picking speeds with LYDIA Voice, significantly more output with the same number of employees and a double-digit percentage increase in efficiency. In addition, incorrect picks have been reduced and quality has increased considerably. The employees benefit from the new technology, too. With hands and eyes free, they can work much more efficiently and comfortably.

Gentile is also satisfied with the implementation and support provided by the project team: "The introduction of LYDIA Voice was very pragmatic. The LYDIA Voice project team was hands-on, and all tests went well. In addition, our employees were able to start working productively with the system immediately, without a long training period. That's how I define a successful digitalisation project", summarises Renato Häfliger.

ABOUT GENTILE

Gentile AG is a trusted partner in the wholesale and logistics of fruit and vegetables. From the logistics center in Näfels to the sales stand in Zurich's Engrosmarkt, the company supplies customers throughout German-speaking Switzerland up to 7 times a week - sometimes several times per day. Customers include supermarkets and discount stores, wholesalers and industrial customers, as well as independent stores and franchisees.

