



The 2009 Implementation Awards

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In each issue of Speech Technology magazine, we consistently highlight the successes that companies of all shapes, sizes, and vertical markets have had with their speech implementations. Return on investment, cost savings, and other hard financial numbers make for compelling reading, but often other less obvious results—such as heightened worker productivity, improved customer service, streamlined operations, and competitive advantage—outweigh the line items on a spreadsheet. The four companies presented on the following pages have achieved extraordinary results on all fronts as a result of their use of speech technologies. They come from the healthcare, financial services, insurance, and warehousing industries, and the solutions they have employed cover an even wider berth: voice security, voice picking, speech analytics, and dictation/transcription.



Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc.

Customer: Coca-Cola Enterprises
Vendor: Datria Systems
Product: Voice Pick

Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) boasts 35,000 workers in 390 warehouses across North America—each with a sales and delivery volume ranging from 1 million cases to 35 million cases per year. The \$21 billion-a-year company in the past 18 months increased the number of products it handles by 30 percent,

thanks to a partnership with V8 and Coke's 2007 purchase of Glacéau, maker of Vitaminwater. That increased pressure on everyone, especially CCE's warehouse workers, who are responsible for shipping 10,000 loads of soda, bottled water, iced tea, and fruit juices to 80 percent of the North American population each day.

Given the size and scope of its operations, warehouse management and accuracy are of the highest importance. It is, therefore, surprising that up until a few years ago, the company wasn't using a speech solution to run picking in its warehouses.

"At the end of the day, we were starting to see accuracy suffer because we just couldn't organize

the warehouse in a manner that was easily accessible for warehouse pickers,” says Mike Jacks, CCE’s senior manager of logistics and transportation systems.

CCE resolved to replace its paper-based picking and went with speech technology and Colorado’s Datria Systems, which provided CCE’s pickers with a holstered Cisco phone and headset that reads audio pick lists via Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and off-the-shelf

IP telephony.

The first CCE warehouse with Datria’s voice picking solution went live on June 15, 2007. During the remainder of 2007, 25 sites went live, with an additional 75 sites deploying the technology in 2008.

Now, CCE pickers at those sites spend their entire shifts on continuous VoIP phone calls that tell them what to pick, when to pick, and where to pick—something that allowed CCE to avoid \$2 million in costs by using Cisco VoIP phones instead of more expensive mobile computing devices.

“Typically where you spend \$1,200 to \$1,500 on a mini computer to load the hardware, we’ve loaded the software on a server, and it’s just a phone call,” Jacks says. “The warehouse picker can pick up a \$300 Voice over IP phone and call the system as opposed to using [a more expensive mobile device].”

According to James Greenwell, president and CEO of Datria, his company—unlike many other speech providers—doesn’t focus on embedding technology within mobile devices. “It’s not about the device,” he says. “It’s about leveraging the fact that you’ve got a multimillion-record database in mainframes and server farms.”

With the deployment, CCE has also increased picking accuracy in its warehouses, which has allowed it to reassign hundreds of order checkers responsible for inspecting each pallet before it is shipped.

“Our goal was to hit 99.8 percent picking accuracy with the project, and we are seeing that,” Jacks says.

But despite this stunning success, the Datria deployment—which Jacks calls “groundbreaking—was not without its share of hurdles. Chief among them was building a model that could be repeated at all of CCE’s warehouses.

“We build a deployment bundle, and all of the people have roles, and all of the people have assignments,” Jacks says. “That allows us to build a kind of cookie-cutter approach, and we can go from site to site very quickly.”

Once this challenge was met, Jacks says, the company was able to smoothly and quickly deploy Datria’s technology: “From start to finish, we can bring a site up in eight weeks. And really the last half of our deployments was almost business as usual. People really didn’t see the bump.”

In looking to the future, Jacks hopes to leverage the existing enterprise application and integrate Datria’s speech technology throughout the remaining facilities.

“We can use it for other functions,” Jacks says, noting that CCE is currently in the process of using it for password reset. “We really feel that anything that you can do in SAP, we would like to be able to have the opportunity to voice-enable,” he adds.