The Sound of Voice Success at Sony of Canada Ltd.

Sponsored by:

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Presented by:

Rick Courtin
Business Process Manager,
Supply Chain Group
Sony of Canada Ltd.

Jay Armant
VP – Product Management
Vocollect

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Key Business Drivers for Voice

GROWING BUSINESS

- Increase throughput
- More output from existing operations
- Improve processes

MARGIN PRESSURE

- Competitive market forces
- Increased costs

GOVERNMENT REGULATION

- Compliance with requirements
- Tracking

MORE VALUE FROM IT INVESTMENT

- Greater outputs without risk
- Extend value

TRACEABILITY

- Support Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) and other standards

SCALABILITY

- Online business
- Line item order fulfillment
- Changing and expanding product mix

ACCURACY

- Providing "perfect orders"
- Shipment accuracy and timeliness of delivery

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Competitive differentiation
- Strategic value of technology to support

TRAINING TIME

- Seasonality
- Streamline on-boarding process
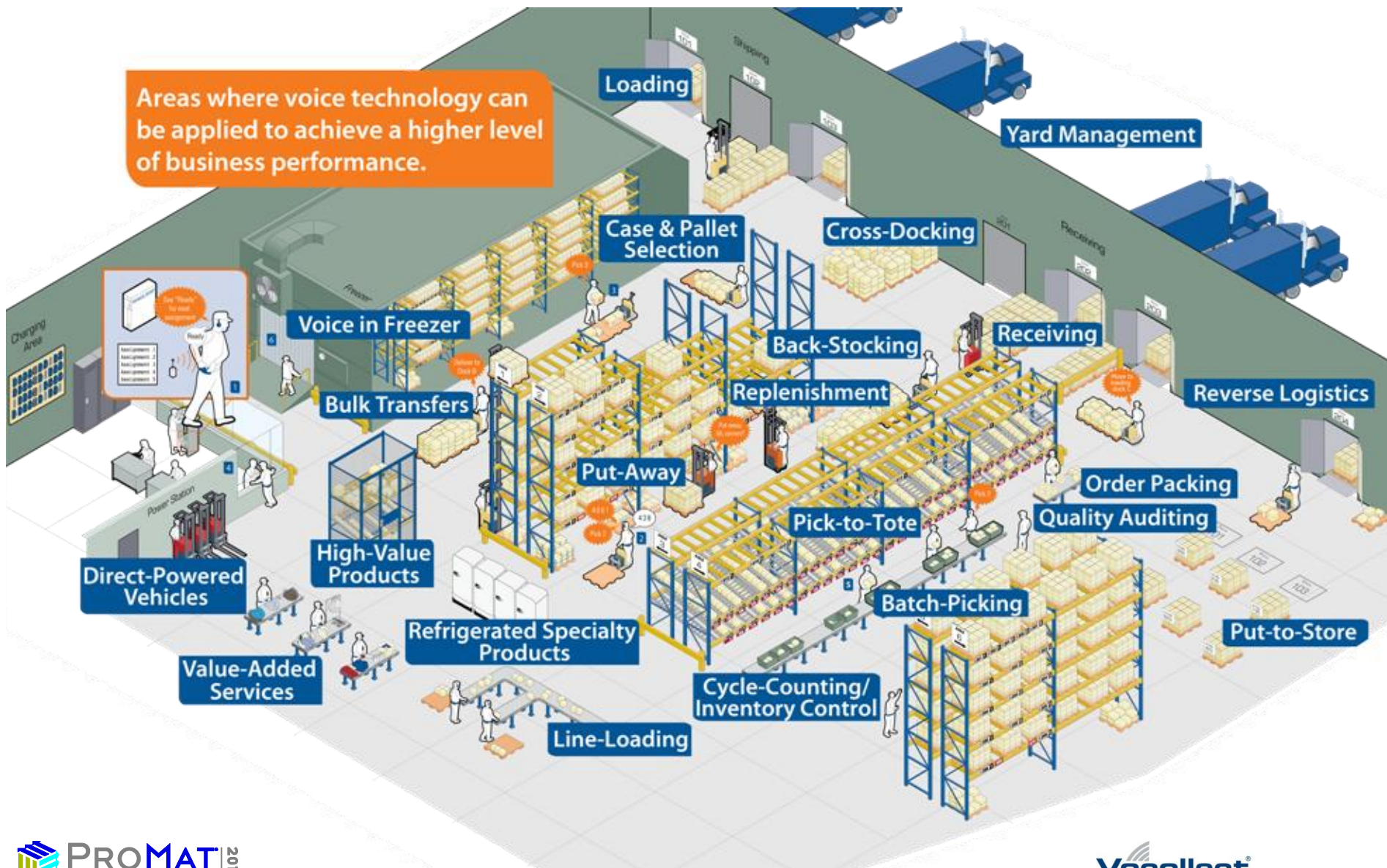- Reduce training time

The Value Proposition of Voice

- Worker performs tasks **more accurately and productively** than with paper or handheld computers

- Very high ROI/fast payback solution based on the significant cost savings it delivers

- Reduced training time, improved safety and higher employee satisfaction

Exploring the Possibilities

About Sony of Canada

- Established 1955, headquartered in Toronto, approximately 800 employees nationwide

- Wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Corp., one of the most comprehensive entertainment companies in the world; portfolio includes electronics, music, movies, games and online businesses

- Proud to say we were the pioneers in bringing voice successfully into the global organization

3D world
Created by Sony

Business Challenges

- Sustain competitive advantage

- High seasonality (peak October-December)

- Changing business model (more online orders, more and smaller orders)

- Need to do more with less

- Maintain highly satisfied customer base through expanding order volume

Distribution Operations

- Two distribution centers (DCs) in Coquitlam (Vancouver), BC and Whitby (Toronto), ON.
- Total warehouse staff → 40
- Warehouse operations staff non-unionized
- Use voice for cluster-picking and cycle-counting
- Currently 12 employees use voice

Life Before WMS and Voice

- Paper was cumbersome

- No locator system for employees to easily determine where product was located

- Brought in RF, which was a major improvement – however, there were still too many steps, too much opportunity for error
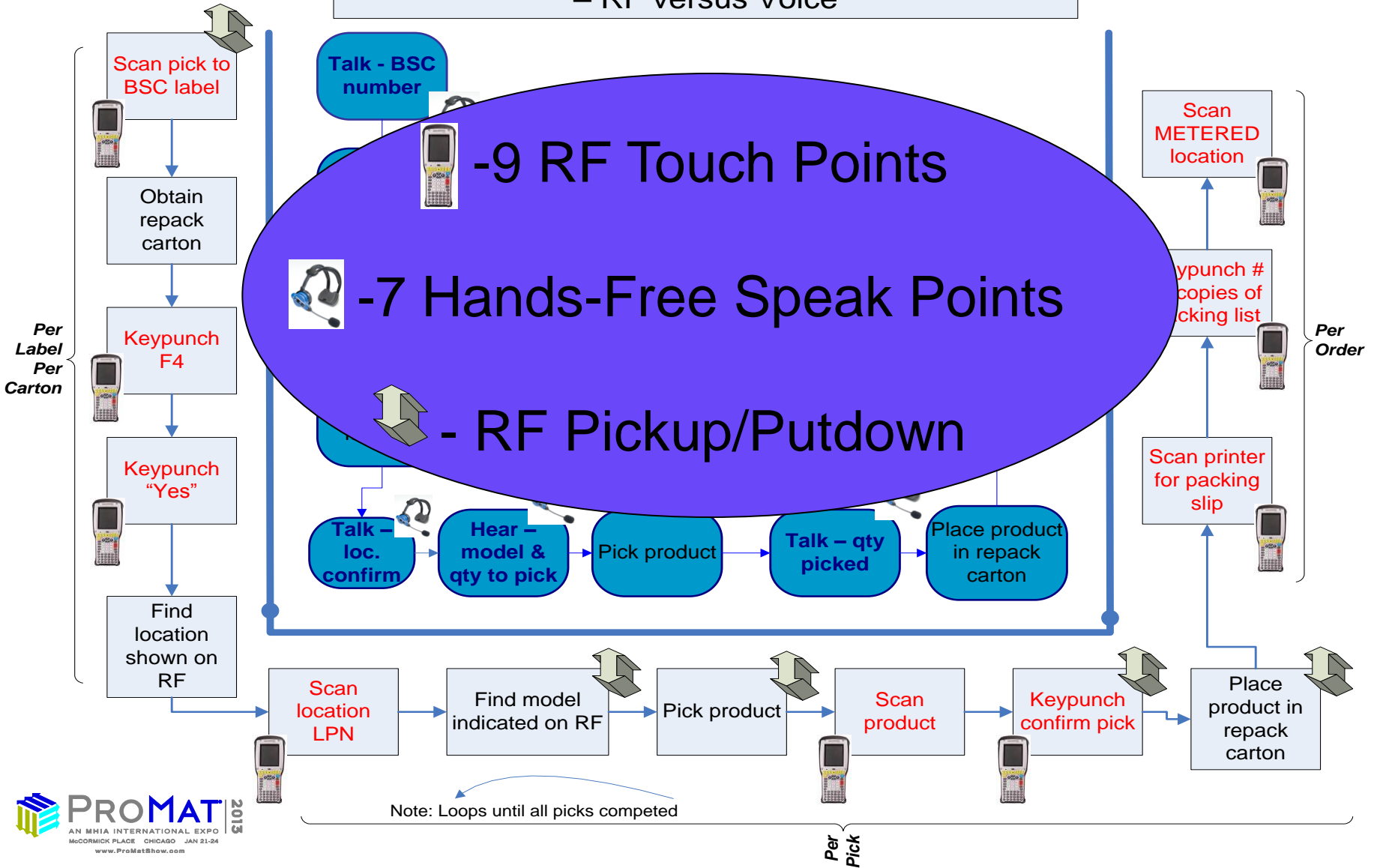
The Path to Voice

- Technology partner recommended voice
- Customer site visit facilitated by voice provider
- DC was 1 million ft² with 800 staff and 24/7 operation
- This confirmed voice provider's integration as a key component of our WMS version upgrade
- Initially piloted cluster-picking for parcel shipments only, as this was best fit and highest number of picks

The Deployment

- Voice provider's staff brought in for training of users during the project

- Individual voice templates created by users in warehouse environment

- Training on use of voice-enabled mobile devices

- Integration testing with WMS and parcel cluster-picking process

- Live implementation at both DCs simultaneously

- First Sony sales company in the world to implement voice technology

Effective Picking with Voice

Key Cluster Picking Operational Steps
– RF versus Voice

Per Label Per Carton

Scan pick to BSC label

Obtain repack carton

Keypunch F4

Keypunch "Yes"

Find location shown on RF

Talk - BSC number

-9 RF Touch Points

-7 Hands-Free Speak Points

- RF Pickup/Putdown

Talk – loc. confirm

Hear – model & qty to pick

Pick product

Talk – qty picked

Place product in repack carton

Scan METERED location

Keypunch # copies of picking list

Scan printer for packing slip

Per Order

Scan location LPN

Find model indicated on RF

Pick product

Scan product

Keypunch confirm pick

Place product in repack carton

Note: Loops until all picks competed

Per Pick

Results

- 40% improvement in throughput
- 20% accuracy improvement
- Training time (learning the technology and the product line) reduced from 2-3 months with RF to one week with voice [technical voice training only one hour]
- Improved operator efficiency and safety (hands-free/eyes-free)
- Strong ROI (WMS with voice) – 18 months
- Reduced temp labor by 5

Lessons Learned

- The deployment looks daunting until you get started – then you see how easy and fluid it is

- Employees are much more focused in their jobs with less distractions

- Employees would never want to go back to picking with scanning

- Voice isn't just for picking – we have also found it invaluable for cycle-counting

Future Plans

- Champion expansion of voice to other parts of the Sony organization

- At Sony of Canada, expand voice to:
  - Cycle-counting
  - Putaway

For More Information:

Speaker: Rick_Courtin@sony.ca

Home Page: www.sony.ca

Speaker: jarmant@vocollect.com

Home Page: www.vocollect.com

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