

Voice in action in premium food business

eismann banks on Lydia® Voice to optimise e-commerce shipping

Food home delivery – what some food-sector start-ups see as the latest trend has actually been a successful business model for eismann for more than 40 years. The Mettmann, Germany based company is well-known for its premium frozen food and the “eismänner” (ice men) deliver customers’ food orders directly to their doors. However, the company is not only focused on this traditional home delivery model, but also has a growing online business. To drive the expansion of its e-commerce activities and picking at the end-customer stage, eismann has secured the support of EPG and its pick by voice solution: Lydia® Voice not only facilitates multi-order picking in three temperature-controlled storage areas simultaneously, but also optimises the shipping of sensitive goods. Thanks to the leading voice-controlled picking solution, eismann and premium meat specialist Don Carne benefit from optimised delivery costs and swifter order fulfilment.

eismann’s online shop is home to a wide range of mouthwatering food. Ice cream, vegetables, fish and seafood or meat and poultry – the 700 + products have one thing in common: They all meet the highest standards in terms of quality and taste. And this is exactly what eismann has set its focus on: providing high-quality, healthy products sourced from the best farms, breeders and fishing areas.

eismann and EPG with its Lydia® Voice solution have established a relationship built on trust over many years, with eismann having utilised the Pick by Voice technology since 2012. Back then, the frozen food delivery service had opted to switch to topsystem’s Lydia® Voice since the solution could be fully integrated in the SAP warehouse management system, meaning no middleware or additional subsystem was required. For home deliveries performed by the “eismänner” – independent sales reps and their employees – the main challenge lies in

supplying the branches with the ordered goods in the required quantity and on time so that they are ready for delivery. For its e-commerce business, however, the focus is on picking at the end-customer stage.

Lydia® Voice allocates orders by temperature zone

The expensive and often sensitive products in the frozen (-24°C), ultra-fresh (0-4°C) and dry food (12 bis 18 °C) ranges offered by eismann and premium meat specialist Don Carne are stored at a logistics site in Niederkrüchten run by service provider WILMS Tiefkühl-Service GmbH, where Lydia® Voice is fully implemented in SAP. "Using the wave picking process, the system combines several individual customers into a single wave, meaning employees do not have to pick each order individually. These waves are determined based on the shipping firm responsible for delivery in each case, among other factors," explains Carl Wanders, Head of Demand and Supply Planning at eismann. This approach subsequently saves time at the transfer stage as employees no longer need to sort packages by shipping firm.

Lydia® Voice automatically assigns the waves to an employee. As soon as the employee logs in, the system tells them how many boxes they have to pack in total. This is a key aspect as customers can receive more than one box, which is important when calculating available capacity on the order picking trolley. Leveraging all the relevant information from the SAP system, the Lydia® Voice system informs pickers where a certain product is stored, how many items of said product they need to remove from the shelf, and which box they need to place it into. The picker verifies each step either by saying a code or scanning the item.

Customer orders can include items from more than one temperature zone. Frozen, dry and ultra-fresh products are stored in completely separate areas in Niederkrüchten. To ensure employees do not have to waste time walking through all three temperature zones, Lydia® splits the order up into the various items and then assigns them to respective temperature zones. The system then assigns each picker – along with the order picking trolley – to a specific temperature zone:

frozen, ultra-fresh or dry food. This means that an order can be processed in three places at once if necessary.

After being picked in the various storage areas, the items in the wave are then brought back together in the shipping department. As soon as the employee scans a box, the system displays the customer name on a monitor, while also indicating whether additional items are part of the order. This is an important piece of information, as the employee can then directly select the right-sized shipping box. As soon as the order is complete, the employee then requests a shipping label online, prints it out and sends the finished package to the outgoing goods department.

Lydia® ControlCenter ensures transparent warehouse processes

eismann also uses topsystem's Lydia® ControlCenter to manage and plan its warehouse processes. The ControlCenter helps the warehouse manager to keep an eye on all important processes. For example, the solution provides a transparent overview of processing status with regard to the individual sorting criteria. The warehouse manager can then swiftly intervene in the event of discrepancies and ensure that the goods picked from the different temperature zones arrive in the shipping department at the same time.

Reduced shipping costs

The benefits of this special shipping solution are clear to see, says Carl Wanders: "We save time, shipping costs and packaging by consolidating all items in one package." Lydia® Voice is currently the leading voice system, which provides additional benefits. Splitting up the orders leads to a significant increase in speed and efficiency in order picking. The tried-and-tested "hands-free/eyes-free" concept ensures that employees are able to concentrate fully on their main task as their eyes are completely focused on the items they pick. Each picked item is subject to verbal confirmation and verification, which effectively ruling out the possibility of mistakes being made. We've received virtually no complaints

regarding shipping errors,” confirms Carl Wanders. “The error rate in the picking process is also very low.” The Voxter® mobile voice computer is also suitable for use in frozen areas at temperatures as low as –30°C. Apart from being turned on and off by a switch, the devices are completely voice-operated. This is particularly beneficial for pickers wearing thick gloves due to the low temperatures. Carl Wanders speaks very positively about the collaboration with the voice provider: “We have regular meetings to keep optimising the solution. The communication between eismann and the EPG is also excellent. We’d be happy to initiate another project at any time.”

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Photos: 6
Picture 1 to Picture 6 © topsystem

Captions: Pictures 1 and 2: Lydia® Voice automatically assigns an employee to a picking wave.
Pictures 3 and 4: Leveraging all the relevant information from the SAP system, the Lydia® Voice system informs pickers where a certain product is stored, how many items of said product they need to remove from the shelf, and which box they need to place it into.
Picture 5: As soon as the employee scans a box, the system displays the customer name on a monitor, while also indicating whether additional items are part of the order.
Picture 6: Carl Wanders, Head of Demand and Supply Planning at eismann

