

Danish company NORMAL relies on EPG

LYDIA Voice picking wins employee vote at major european retailer

Fast-growing European personal care retailer NORMAL has incorporated EPG's LYDIA™ voice-picking technology into its logistics operations. It was a popular move among the Danish company's warehouse-picking employees, because they selected LYDIA Voice as the clear winner against a competitor when given a free vote by NORMAL's managers.

Winning customers across the globe, Ehrhardt Partner Group's (EPG) LYDIA Voice speeds up and optimises logistics processes because it cuts picking errors, is easy to use, recognises 50+ languages (including local dialects) and requires no voice template training. Best of all, it is completely hands-free and eyes-free, giving manual pickers more freedom to pick quickly and accurately without the constant interruption, and potential distraction, of a hand scanner.

Founded in Denmark in 2013, NORMAL has grown fast; its colourful and distinctive shop layouts featuring personal hygiene products can now be widely seen in six European countries, from the Nordics to the Netherlands and France. The success of the brand and its wide range of stock keeping units (SKUs) demanded an upgrade of its warehouse operations and processes in summer 2018, leading to state-of-the-art new buildings and systems.

"Using voice-picking technology gave us a clear opportunity to grow the business," explains Mette Margrethe Poulsen, Logistics Development Manager at NORMAL.

Clear employee favourite

The 2018 upgrade in warehouse operations included an overhaul of picking processes. While picking numbers were high and workers were maintaining a good pace, quality had suffered a dip, with mis-pick figures creeping up.

A further concern was the hand scanner system in use, which required the picker to always put down the device in order to pick the goods. In those circumstances, it's very easy for a well-intentioned picker to lose focus on the correct storage location, having scanned it correctly, but then to pick from the wrong location.

LYDIA's hands-free ease of use, without training, made it a clear favourite to cut mis-picks. What sealed the deal was the strong vote in its favour by NORMAL warehouse staff. Company culture is taken very seriously. "We want all employees to succeed, to feel like they are a real part of things," explains Mette. "If they don't match up with us, they won't stay, so it's vital to all of us that everyone buys into the same values. We wanted to employ the system that they wanted."

Part of LYDIA's appeal to NORMAL staff was its unique picking vest, in which all electronics are integrated and headphones are not required. Many staff had worked with another voice system before and had found headphones restrictive and uncomfortable. With LYDIA VoiceWear, they were freed from 'the bubble', able to communicate with their fellow employees as they went about their daily tasks. "The LYDIA VoiceWear was hands down the preferred solution from our employees," confirms Mette. "Employees wore the vests and tried out headsets, performing picking tests in a live simulation with each. The employees were given a free vote to pick their favourite. The hardware spoke for itself – it was way more innovative than what we saw from the competitor."

No staff training needed

Another clear advantage for LYDIA over the competition came from its ease of use, requiring no training for new staff. This is an often-underestimated factor, as warehouse staff are subject to high turnover, particularly at seasonal peaks. "You don't have to do voice training, you can just start talking to LYDIA and she will understand you," says Mette. "It is very easy for new users to get started."

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EPG is a leading international provider for a comprehensive Supply Chain Execution Suite (EPG ONE™) and employs 800 people at 22 locations around the world. The company group provides its more than 1,500 customers with WMS, WCS, WFM, TMS and voice solutions to optimize logistics processes – from manual to fully automated logistics environments. EPG solutions cover the entire supply chain: From warehouse and road to ground and cargo handling solutions at airports. With the EPG AES™ Aviation Execution Suite, EPG offers an all-in-one solution for airport logistics and ground handling. Logistics consulting, cloud services, managed services and logistics training courses at the company's own academy round out the comprehensive list of solutions from EPG.

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