

EPG technology adopted at largest parcel sorting hub in Europe

DPD optimises parcel sorting operations with Lydia Voice

DPD Group, one of the leading parcel service providers in Europe, is relying on the Ehrhardt Partner Group's (EPG) voice picking system LYDIA™ Voice. The innovative voice solution has been adopted at DPD's superhub in Hinckley (England), the largest parcel sorting hub in Europe. The technology is able to optimise sorting and routing processes in the long term, offering greater speed and traceability.

As the market leader in the UK, DPD offers innovative and high-quality solutions for urgent shipments. In the UK, the service provider has over 10,000 vehicles on the road and delivers more than 260 million parcels every year. DPD employs over 15,000 staff across 84 locations. The company's new £100 million superhub in Hinckley, Leicestershire, went into operation in 2021. Up to 72,000 parcels per hour can be sorted at the 33-hectare site, making it one of the largest of its kind in Europe.

In order to meet the very high standards it sets itself, the company needs technology partners that can help improve the speed and efficiency of its sorting and routing processes. Bags were used to carry parcels at the new hub, because they offered greater capacity than the totes used at the existing hubs. The process of scanning, unhooking, twisting and sealing parcel sacks offered potential for streamlining because there were several actions to perform when preparing them for dispatch to the depots. Closing and routing the bags could be cumbersome and lengthy, because the physical tying and closing actions were interspersed with the use of a bulky handheld scanner. This was where the Ehrhardt Partner Group's pick-by-voice technology was able to lend a helping hand, as it enables the closing and routing process to be carried out more quickly and seamlessly. The technology is

voice-assisted, leaving workers' hands and eyes free to concentrate on unhooking, tying and moving the bags. As an ideal companion product, an ergonomic backhand scanner is used to scan all conventional barcodes at top speed.

Voice technology proves its versatility

DPD has been using LYDIA Voice since 2015. The most advanced voice solution on the market is used around the world and features technology that leverages neural networks and deep learning. This helps to ensure that people's voices are reliably recognised irrespective of their dialects and accents. The voice-based process has thus been made much more efficient, since there is no need for employees to repeat themselves when speaking into the device. The technology plays an important role in DPD's hubs. The use of LYDIA Voice allows employees to keep their hands free, helping them to sort through deliveries much quicker.

LYDIA Voice is also used in DPD depots. Once workers have scanned the barcode on the parcel, the voice technology reads out the number of the target container. The scanning technology can trace down to minutes and seconds where and when a parcel was last scanned and by which device, which prevents mis-routes and brings demonstrable security benefits.

Easy to use and no complex training required

DPD managers are particularly appreciative of the fact that users do not need to undertake complex training to start working with LYDIA Voice – a crucial advantage in a sector with high turnovers of staff and major workloads during seasonal peaks. In addition, the company has complete control over the product's voice dialogue. If a word command needs to be amended or replaced, the DPD IT teams can do so without having to get in touch with EPG technicians.

LYDIA Voice can be accessed in more than 50 languages, while voice commands can be adapted to suit prevailing regional accents or dialects to assist the recognition process. Eastern European and South Asian accents, for instance, are commonplace in DPD's UK facilities.

DPD and EPG have gradually deepened their cooperation over the years. Between 2015 and 2020, the number of LYDIA devices in use increased significantly. Initially, the company had 45 devices in operation; in 2020 this figure had risen to some 2,000. The voice solution is now used in five hubs and more than 70 depots across the entire DPD network in the UK.

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EPG is a leading international provider of a comprehensive Supply Chain Execution Suite (EPG ONE™) and employs 700 people at 19 locations worldwide. The Group supplies its more than 1,500 customers with WMS, WCS, WFM, TMS and voice solutions to optimise 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. EPG's comprehensive portfolio of solutions is complemented by logistics consulting, cloud services, managed services, and logistics training courses at the company's own academy.

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