Case Study

Objectives

- Technological refresh
- Increased operating flexibility with Android
- The possibility for new implementations in the future
- Extension of the vocal functions to other side processes

Results

- Increasingly reactive installations
- The ability to use the same devices in varying processes

PENNY Italia chooses VOCALIZE®: innovation arrives in 8 DC

When renewing the voice systems in its distribution centers, PENNY Italia decided to depart from the old Speaker Dependent systems to implement VOCALIZE, a native Android technology based on Deep Learning.

The vocal platform VOCALIZE was established in 2018 as a native Android-open system. It uses artificial intelligence-based speech recognition technology to "vocalize" human-machine interactions in logistics, industrial and field-based operations.

PENNY: the brand that revolutionized the discount store In Italy

PENNY's Italian division was established in the summer of 1994 with the first sales point opening in Cremona as part of the REWE group's international expansion process, for which the discount channel is particularly strategic.
Thanks to the success of the "assortment of quality, brands and low prices" formula, today PENNY garners 440 stores throughout the peninsula, served by 8 distribution centers and over 4,800 collaborators.

/ THE CHALLENGE
Voice technology evolves under the flag of flexibility

PENNY Italia was one of the first Italian companies to introduce voice technology in its distribution centers. After more than 15 years of picking driven by Speaker Dependent type systems along with a track record of hardware device renewal already on its shoulders, the company reaffirmed its long-standing partnership with KFI and decided that the time had come to migrate to new-generation voice technology based on Android and Deep Learning. With the introduction of VOCALIZE in its 8 distribution centers, PENNY aims to avoid voice training sessions for new operators, gain flexibility in the operational phase, and additionally expand the use of voice technology to new business processes.

/ THE SOLUTION
With VOCALIZE, the system renews itself in a transparent manner

KFI and PENNY have initiated the migration to voice implants in a way that minimizes the impact of the new system on business infrastructure and the operator's work routines.

This was made possible by special connectors which were specifically developed by KFI to simulate the operational modes of the Legacy voice solution. By reproducing the dialogues currently in use, VOCALIZE allows operators to interact whilst maintaining the usual interface, allowing for traditional workflow.

This approach, over the course of just 5 months, enabled PENNY to upgrade seven plants without any declines in productivity, rendering all employees operational in a very short time. Subsequently, KFI and PENNY launched an eighth distribution center dedicated to the management of fresh produce, introducing 55 new licenses and raising the total number of voice kits to over 350 units.

"During the turnover phase of the two systems, operators were competing for the first available VOCALIZE kits. This is undoubtedly an indication that the Legacy system had begun to show the typical signs of aging (slowness in interactions, difficulty in recognition, etc.) and that VOCALIZE immediately brought back the overall performance to a significantly higher level".

Marco Ruffinoni
From 2003 Chief Information
Officer of PENNY Italia.

/ THE RESULTS
IT specialists and operators acquired by VOCALIZE open doors to new implementations

The new technology has garnered a positive impression since its first tests. Business information specialists immediately saw significant benefits, which were also confirmed by operators in the field.

"I remember that during the starting phase, operators at the DC in Desenzano asked us to increase the devices undergoing testing from one to ten: this was because they immediately noticed that the system was faster"

comments Moreno Giraldo, ERP and WMS Specialist at PENNY, who went on to highlight that

"The Speaker Independent voice recognition function was decisive in the success of this project. Now no one does voice training anymore, and the screen with the text commands helps operators should they ever face any uncertainties; these innovations have certainly led to new benefits."

From the IT point of view, integration with the WMS system did not require structural changes from the previous solution, as reiterated by Antonio Moretti, ERP and WMS Specialist at PENNY.

"The VOCALIZE solution interested me immediately, so much so that I proposed it as a possible evolution from the voice technology already in use. Moreover, thanks to the flexibility introduced by the new hardware and software, it is now possible to implement voice technology in new activities, such as the digitalization of logical checklists, which is a project already in the analysis phase."

KFI

With innovation as a constant driver for continuous improvement, since 1991 KFI has been supporting Supply Chain companies in the implementation of technologies and solutions, driving them to Industry 4.0.

KFI's mission is to bridge the gap between modern field technologies and business logics through the integration with the main management systems, placing its expertise and services at the disposal of companies, of any size.