PROCAT

DISTRIBUTION TECHNOLOGIES

CASE STUDY

WILKENS FOODSERVICE

Wilkens Foodservice Saw Errors Evaporate and Labor Efficiencies Rise with PickRight

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entrée by NECS, Inc.
SOFTWARE FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTORS

PICKRIGHT PROCAT

ABOUT WILKENS

Wilkens Foodservice, based in University Park, IL, is a family-owned and operated company.

The distribution business supplies fresh produce, meats, dry and frozen goods, dairy, paper supplies and janitorial equipment to customers throughout Illinois and Indiana. The company also has satellite facilities in Fort Myers, FL, and Las Vegas, NV.

- Established 1976
- 5 full-time pickers
- 10 truck routes

SOLUTIONS IN USE

PROCAT **PICKRIGHT** PROCAT **RECEIVERIGHT**

CHALLENGE

With staff working long overtime hours and owners stepping in to pick up the slack, Wilkens Foodservice was in dire need of a change. Its paper picking system was bogged down with inefficiencies and errors.

"We had six full-time pickers, but still needed two extra staff members to double check our orders," said Keith Murphy, the company's vice president. "We'd typically average 20 picking mistakes a day, with checkers only catching half."

Murphy and his cousin Mike Wilkens, who also runs the company, worked 20-hour days to ensure all mistakes were corrected.

"Most of the mistakes were silly, such as picking 13 items instead of the 15 needed," Murphy said. "Plus, our checkers were our better pickers, but they were only picking when not checking orders."

Paper picking was not only slow and wrought with errors, but the long hours were exhausting for everyone.

SOLUTION

Murphy and Wilkens were first made aware of ProCat's PickRight program at an industry trade show. "ProCat was one of two companies we spoke with," Murphy said. "We went with ProCat because it was a much better solution for our company. We were able to implement the PickRight solution and start solving our challenges in a few weeks, instead of a full year it would have taken with the other option were were considering."

Wilkens Foodservice installed PickRight in April 2019, and Murphy said the transition to the program was both quick and seamless.

PickRight integrated perfectly with Wilkens Foodservice's ERP program NECS entrée, an on-premise solution that offers functionality for inventory management, truck routing, sales management and reporting.

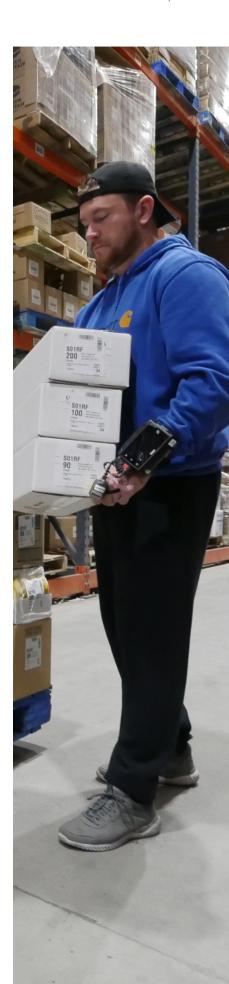> "**"With paper, pickers would have to learn about the different products. This was difficult, as there could be 20 different products with a similar box," Murphy said. "With PickRight's scanning system, pickers don't need to know the product. What used to take up to a month to train now takes a few hours."**
>
> **Keith Murphy, Vice President, Wilkens Foodservice**

"It took about a week to get up and running because we had to load UPCs and barcodes into the NECS entrée system," Murphy said. "For those warehouse systems already using barcodes, implementing PickRight is basically just a flip of a switch."

One of the biggest benefits in switching over from paper to PickRight was the impact on accuracy and productivity. Mispicks have decreased a whopping 95%. Instead of contending with 20 picking mistakes on a daily basis, there may be at most one a day.

"The pickers really saw a difference eight months after PickRight was implemented, when we had a power outage and had to briefly go back to paper picking," Murphy recalled. "They could see how much better the process was with PickRight."

"PickRight allowed us to reduce the number of pickers we had. Even though our order volumes have increased, we have reduced our picking staff by three employees, due to an increase in productivity of 30-50%."

"What's really nice is the program easily identifies who the best employees are," Murphy said. "If there's a mistake, there's now accountability because we can see who is behind it."

Workers enjoy using PickRight because the process is much easier than using paper picking, and they can see their progress.

"Our pick rates have doubled," said Murphy. "Because we are confident that our orders are accurate, we put an incentive plan in place so our pickers can earn more money when they pick faster."

"PickRight helped us cut our hours and provided more of a work/life balance for our employees," Murphy said. "That was one of the main things we wanted to achieve."

With PickRight, the training process also has been simplified and the time bringing new hires up to speed substantially reduced.

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With product labeling, drivers also can be trained quickly.

"PickRight has cut down picking errors, and in this industry, that's huge," Murphy said.

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Keith Murphy, Vice President Wilkens Foodservice

"Stickers help identify product as ours to expedite the return process. The traceability aspect is great."

WILKENS GOES MODULAR WITH RECEIVERIGHT

To build on the success Wilkens experienced with PickRight, they installed ProCat's ReceiveRight in February 2020

"We were having issues with counting and missing items. For example, if we had a miss ship from a vendor, no one knew until the picker went to pick it," Murphy said. "We knew ReceiveRight would correct those issues."

ReceiveRight also helps with special orders that can be easily misplaced.

"We use ReceiveRight put-away labels, as there are some items without bar codes, so we can easily print up stickers," Murphy explained. "It makes the process much more organized, as it scans items on each pallet in order and catches issues with items along the way."

Along with its many successes utilizing PickRight and ReceiveRight, Wilkens Foodservice has been very happy partnering with ProCat.

"Every time I call them, they take care of us," Murphy said.

What Are Modular Solutions?

Modular solutions mean you only buy what you need, when you need. ProCat's modular solutions support end-to-end functions in the warehouse including:

- Picking
- Receiving
- Loading
- Pallet Building
- Cycle Counting
- Put-away and Replenishment

ABOUT PROCAT DISTRIBUTION TECHNOLOGIES

ProCat Distribution Technologies helps small to medium size distribution centers implement barcode scanning technology into their operations. ProCat has developed a suite of 14 modular software solutions that improve accuracy and productivity in every part of a warehouse. PickRight, ProCat's order picking solution, has proven to achieve 99.99% order accuracy and a 90% reduction in customer claims. PickRight is able to interface with any ERP and does not require any changes to your current WMS.

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