

## CASE STUDY

# Peak efficiency during peak season

**Nassau Provisions:** How a warehouse management system and voice-directed work helped mitigate the challenges of elevated demand during a pandemic



## Snapshot

### Company

Nassau Provisions

### Industry

Food Retail

### Number of Employees

130

### Warehouse Size

125,000 sq. ft.

### Infios Competency

Supply Chain Software

### Solution(s)

Warehouse Edge

Screen-to-Voice

Established in 1982, New York-based Nassau Provisions specializes in the distribution of specialty and general groceries throughout the tri-state area and beyond. The company serves supermarkets, restaurants, convenience stores and delicatessens with a vast portfolio of products that rely upon a variety of temperature zones.

### Challenge

Nassau Provisions' peak season encompasses the holiday of Passover, where the organization typically processes up to 15,000 cases of product per day. During peak season, the company stocks and distributes an increased and more intricate range of products. Historically, it had to do so using an outdated manual warehouse system.

Nassau's biggest challenge was the complexity of products around the holiday period, when many vendors create limited-time Passover versions of products that already exist in the warehouse. Nassau Provisions would therefore have two products under one universal product identifier, one of which has a shortened shelf life.

## Complexity

Overcome the challenges caused by manual outdated warehouse processes and the complexity of the businesses' inventory.

## Best practice

Optimize the warehouse with digitalization and automation.

57%

increase in  
output

76%

decrease in  
labor dependency

133%

increase  
in picking  
productivity

They relied heavily on the tacit knowledge of long-standing employees who were using a paper-based system to run the operation smoothly, during a period of very high demand. As the company began to grow it soon realized that processing complex products using an outdated manual system, during peak season was unreliable and a risk to the company's success. They became eager to find and implement new technology and automation in their warehouse.

### Finding the right solution

Before transitioning the business to new technology, Nassau Provisions hired a new Chief Operations Officer. Having previously owned his own Warehouse Management System (WMS) company for 30 years, Allan Maurer was brought in to develop this next phase in the company's evolution. His first task was to select a new WMS. In doing so, Maurer had four requirements for the right partner and solution:

1. meet functional requirements of the operation,
2. have a certain experience level working with the food warehouse industry,
3. be cost effective and
4. be a partner Nassau Provisions felt they could rely on.

A number of companies were taken into consideration, comparing the first-year cost, functionality and experience. Nassau Provisions ultimately selected Infios as a partner on account of an understanding of the customer problem, flexibility, cost and technological competence.

### Centralizing control

Infios worked collaboratively with Nassau Provisions to implement Warehouse Edge in just five months. In January 2019, they began to transition warehouse associates from the comfort of a manual system to the new norm of a digital operation. During the initial training, associates would only use scanners for part of a shift until they fully adjusted to the new system. Associates were learning how to use scanners to manage receiving, put-away, inventory management, order processing, pick/pack, loading and shipping processes.

Once fully operational, Nassau Provisions quickly saw improvements in accuracy, the picking process and distribution. During peak season, the WMS helped formalize a more strategic approach to handling the increase in output and mitigate the challenges of product identifiers. Furthermore, they were able to use the WMS as the foundation to forming a standardized process for beginning-to-end warehouse operations.

After a year of success with Infios's warehouse management system, Nassau Provisions attended Infios's annual conference, Elevate, to explore additional technology solutions. While in attendance, a customer presentation on Infios's voice solution resonated with them. They identified with the customer's work environment and operation. Nassau Provisions decided the logical next step to improve the operation was to add a voice solution; selecting Screen-to-Voice.

Importantly, the Screen-to-Voice solution did not need to reconfigure or change the Infios WMS. Screen-to-Voice keeps the exact format of data interactions that the WMS expects, so administration, reporting and labor management systems are updated as usual.

Shortly after the conference, the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020. Unforeseen demand for groceries intensified and the warehouse's operations were put to the test. Nassau Provisions experienced demand that exceeded peak season levels while also encountering staffing challenges. As a short-term measure, the organization turned to temporary workers to help fill the gap. The Infios Warehouse Management System allowed temporary workers to be efficient on the floor immediately.

Without the new system, time would have been wasted training, learning the layout of the facility, figuring out the best routes, while depending on a paper-based system. The value of a warehouse management system was affirmed, the company felt they were well positioned to handle the increase in demand through the pandemic, reduce training time for temporary workers and increase overall efficiency on the floor.



"Without Infios's warehouse solution, we wouldn't have survived or been as successful during the COVID-19 pandemic."

**Shay Hirji**

Director of IT, Quality & Control, Nassau Provisions

### Results

The hands-free functionality quickly became the nuts and bolts of the operation, with results noticed almost immediately. Screen to voice created a safer work environment for warehouse associates, with less accidents. Associates having both hands available increased accuracy in double pallet picking. Most impressively, in the previous facility of 65,000-square-feet they had 29 associates picking 9,000 cases a night. In the new 125,000-square-foot facility using WMS and voice they had only 13 associates picking upwards of 21,000 cases a night. That equates to an increase of 133%, despite 55% fewer warehouse associates.

WMS and Voice have been key parts in Nassau Provisions' growth and success. Not only is this due to the shift to digitalization and automation, but also the training and support provided by the Infios team; leading them to be faster and more efficient.

Nassau Provisions has realized a number of key benefits since implementing Warehouse Edge and Screen-to-Voice:

- **Significantly increased productivity**
- **Operational stability:** Infios's solutions easily absorb the 30-40% daily volume increases during peak season
- **Reduced training time:** improved by upwards of 50%
- **Reduced staffing requirements:** helping to combat current labor shortages
- **Increased safety:** staff have both hands available on the floor, leading to less accidents

### What's next

Nassau Provisions continues to see benefits from Infios's portfolio of solutions. In today's current climate, where suppliers are frequently out of products for an extended amount of time, Nassau Provisions has begun to use revised replenishment and slotting processes to optimize the value of the warehouse.

Following the successful deployment of two solutions, Nassau Provisions intends to partner with Infios again. Nassau Provisions has begun to research robotics and gamification solutions to keep moving forward with technology improvements for the current operation.



"I have 60 years of experience in the business and I have never seen the kind of response Infios displayed in March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic. Their response was pivotal in the success of Nassau Provisions in the trying days ahead."

"Without Infios, we would never be able to accomplish the work we do today as quickly, accurately, efficiently."

**Allan Maurer**

Chief Operations Officer, Nassau Provisions



"The undertaking itself, was one that I couldn't imagine doing without the stability we have come to rely on with Infios."

**Shay Hirji**

Director of IT, Quality & Control, Nassau Provisions