

Guardian Business Solutions provides a seamless conversion to Android Voice Directed Picking Apps for Midwest Industries for the Blind.



The Customer

MidWest Enterprises for the Blind, Inc. are a full-service assembly, warehousing and distribution facility that provides quality products and services to their customers. Their expertise lies in light assembly, packaging and warehousing, and distribution services.

MWEB is dedicated to meeting their customers expectations in a timely, professional, and cost effective manner, while maintaining high standards of quality.

Mission Statement: To provide employment opportunities for blind and visually impaired people to maximize their potential for independent living and assist in achieving economic self-support.

The Challenge

The company's 39,000 square foot building at 2207 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan serves customers nation wide. MWEB employs 30 people, 25 of whom are legally blind. Historically, MWEB used a pick to voice system, originally installed in 2004, which was slow, cumbersome, antiquated, prone to error and nearing 'end of life' - no support. The equipment and the operating system required was extremely expensive—if available at all.

Currently, with intense competition, MWEB is under pressure to reduce operating costs and preserve profit margins. In this scenario, making order picking a cost-effective activity assumes a large role in the economical growth of a company.

With concepts such as next-day and same-day deliveries becoming more and more common for major manufacturers and e-tailers, the speed and efficiency of order picking has assumed extremely high significance at MWEB. Every second can mean the difference between a promised delivery on time, or not.

This process could not be interrupted.

The Solution

Together with the MWEB Team, Guardian Business Solution's decided to use *Mobilize-IT*—their latest smartphone app technology that runs on mobile android devices and provides advanced features at a lower purchase cost per worker than Windows based systems.

Easy to use touch screens, bar code scanning or voice recognition allow workers to quickly and easily access and collect data whether or not they are connected to the enterprise systems. Locally stored data, allows the app to be used on or off the network. When the application is connect to the networking, it automatically syncs providing you with real time data.

Guardian Business Solution's technical team provided a method to replicate MWEB's Production ERP System to an Assessment System for testing the new application on a daily basis. Actual production pick lists could be replicated on the assessment system allowing MWEB personnel to measure performance and accuracy between the old Pick to Voice application to the new *Mobilize-IT* application simultaneously.

This approach assured that every type of picking activity could be tested and analyzed thoroughly.

The Results

Over the weekend, the Guardian team mapped all the production picking data over, checked the results and set everyone up with access to the new *Mobilize-IT* application . It was go time!

When Monday came around warehouse personnel were able log into the new application to start picking immediately—seamlessly executing their picking process—no down time.

Success!! Production and shipping were able to get packages out on time. The detailed planning, testing and execution had paid off.

Summary

The experience that Guardian brought to the table through their many years of ERP implementations and solutions, gave the MWEB team comfort that the job would be done on-time with the accuracy they needed to assure their business would not be shut down or crippled during a very critical time. MWEB remains a satisfied customer of Guardian Business Solutions, Inc.