

Charlie's Produce: Path to PTI

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Charlie's Produce is a full service produce company, supplying restaurants, grocery stores, institutions, wholesalers and the marine industry with a full range of conventional, organic and specialty produce, floral items and a huge assortment of fresh-cut, and custom-cut produce.

With \$450 million in annual sales, Charlie's recently set out to reengineer its Warehouse Management System (WMS) to be able to do PTI required electronic data capture, achieve operational efficiencies, improve the accuracy of voice pick codes and better manage its perpetual inventory.

The project required a disciplined approach with a thoughtful discovery phase of identifying challenges and issues to be addressed, and a solid commitment to implementing the changes necessary to accomplish project objectives.

"With our investment in hardware and software, we were able to reduce errors in mispicks and shorts which translates to \$500,000 in savings every year," said Casey Precourt, WMS/Traceability Project Manager at Charlie's Produce. "We also increased our pick rates and production by five cases per hour adding another \$200,000 a year to our return on our investment."

By implementing the new WMS system, Charlie's has also seen reduction in headcount (\$60,000 per year), transformed the operation with paperless document processing for pick sheets and increased receiving production by eight percent on inbound cases without adding receivers or forklift drivers.

"The successful and timely implementation of PTI is a top priority for Charlie's," said Precourt. "We are working with our suppliers to communicate PTI milestone requirements so that together we can improve traceability and food safety for our businesses as well as for our customers."

The following summarizes the progress Charlie's Produce has made in implementing PTI:

Milestones 1-3

- Established GS1 Company Prefix
- Assigned more than 1000 GTINs

Milestones 4-5

- Labeling 25 percent of cases
- Established Lot # as the production line # with Julian pack date

Milestone 6

- With inbound data capture, scanning pallet ID and GS1-128 barcode
- Pilot underway to enhance reading and storing information on inbound cases with PTI contact in IT and administrative departments

Milestone 7 (Planned for rollout in 2013)

- Using voice pick without scanning
- Automatic capture of GTIN with Lot #