

VNK-Herbs plants mobility throughout operations to streamline processes and improve profitability

CASE STUDY

CUSTOMER PROFILE	
Company	VNK BV Biddinghuizen, Netherlands
Industry	Manufacturing/food products
Symbol solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MC9060 Mobile Computer• P370 Cordless Bar Code Scanner• VRC8946 Vehicle Mount Mobile Computer• LS3408 Laser Bar Code Scanner• WS5100 Wireless Switch• AP300 Access Points
Solution features	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WLAN and WWAN connectivity• Bar code scanning
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved productivity via process automation• Improved inventory visibility and management• Increased visibility into supply chain• Reduced errors



Company overview: VNK-Herbs

VNK (Verenigde Nederlandse Kruidendrogerijen) has been growing, trading, storing and processing herbs since 1951. The company's 25 employees process approximately 22 million pounds (10 million kilograms) of fresh herbs annually, producing over 400 variants for aromatic and medicinal purposes. VNK prides itself on supplying the highest quality herbs on-demand to a well-known customer base, including Euroma, Silvo, Verstegen and Unifine.

The challenge: Increase control and visibility in the warehouse

When VNK began to plan a move to new corporate premises, the company realized the need to improve access to information and the flow of goods across its supply chain. In preparation, VNK began collecting the data required to analyze inventory turnover rates and stock levels. When the task proved to be an extraordinarily time-consuming and painful process, the company realized its current AMF system performed more of an administrative function rather than providing the true logistical support and data required to streamline operations. The company sought a warehouse management solution that would provide the enterprise-class features and functionality the company now required.

The solution: Technology to move products quickly

The company implemented wireless networking and mobile computing to eliminate paper-based processes and enable the real-time collection of, and access to, critical company information throughout business operations. The deployment of a wireless LAN (WLAN) via Symbol's WS5100 Wireless Switch and AP300 Access Points enabled wireless communications. A wide variety of Symbol devices enabled employees in the warehouse aisles, on forklifts and more to access and collect data in real time.

Symbol's MC9060 rugged mobile computer delivers maximum computing power in the warehouse, offering maximum durability, high-performance mobile computing, integrated bar code data capture, and wireless communications both inside and outside the office (via WLAN and WWAN connectivity).

Symbol's P370 cordless bar code scanner and the LS3408 laser bar code scanner are ergonomically designed to reduce user fatigue, while providing the durability required to withstand industrial use. These terminals offer a high degree of flexibility in the warehouse, supporting receiving, put-away, picking, and stocktake applications.

Designed to withstand repeating pounding and heavy vibrations, Symbol's VRC8946 vehicle-mounted terminals allow forklift and other equipment operators to receive the most recent work instructions without leaving their vehicles, enabling real-time receiving, tracking, put-away, picking, and shipping applications.

And the Methec Metrack Warehouse Suite, Production Suite and Reporting Suite provided the functionalities required to streamline and automate business processes — from inventory management to production, picking and packing, and more.

The new system enables the company to scan goods and track all movements from production to shipping. Explained Managing Director Bauke van der Veen, "While we were primarily looking for a solution to control and track all warehouse operations, we also included production and shipping. As a result, we now fully track all incoming herbs, their processing in production, and shipment to customers."

The benefits: Increased productivity, throughput — an instant return on investment

Through enterprise mobility, warehouse operations are now directly connected to the company's ERP application, providing the real-time visibility required to increase productivity throughout the many functions of the company.

VNK began to realize a return in investment right away. During the period of the move, the company was able to process the regular goods flow along with an additional 120 truckloads, all with the existing manpower. With such productivity gains, VNK feels confident that they will be able to process more customer orders, as well as handle seasonal peaks, without having to increase employee count.

Tracking the flow of goods has also given VNK a newfound visibility into stock levels, as Symbol's technology enables the flow of information from the warehouse to their core business systems. Since implementation, they have noticed a reduction in inventory errors — and the associated costs. Furthermore, with this additional control, the company can perform activity-based costing, automatically linking all operations to customer orders in real time.

Phased implementation leads to rapid adoption — and solution success

Managing director Van der Veen attributes the deployment success to their phased implementation plan that involved end users at each stage. The company first rolled out the application for goods registration, followed by picking and production. "We deliberately opted for a phased implementation to be able to gain experience on a small scale. Our users were closely involved in all project stages, from the equipment choice up to the fine-tuning of the rolled-out functionality," he explained. This meant the project was quickly accepted across the company right after completion — and the rapid adoption led to the near instant realization of benefits.

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— Bauke van der Veen, Managing Director, VNK-Herbs

About Symbol Technologies

Symbol Technologies, Inc., The Enterprise Mobility Company™, is a recognized worldwide leader in enterprise mobility, delivering products and solutions that capture, move and manage information in real time to and from the point of business activity. Symbol enterprise mobility solutions integrate advanced data capture products, radio frequency identification technology, mobile computing platforms, wireless infrastructure, mobility software and world-class services programs. Symbol enterprise mobility products and solutions are proven to increase workforce productivity, reduce operating costs, drive operational efficiencies and realize competitive advantages for the world's leading companies. More information is available at www.symbol.com



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