

CASE STUDY



27% increase in productivity in ASICS' European Distribution Center

INDUSTRY

Consumer Goods
Retail

PROGLOVE SOLUTION

Wearable Scanner MARK 2

ASICS relies on ProGlove for:

- packing stations
- returns
- order picking
- High racks in combination with forklift

NUMBERS

ProGlove customer since

2020

In Germany more than

250

logistics employees

>60

Use of MARK scanners in Germany and France

75,000 m²

warehouse space

RESULTS

- Reduced error rate in picking
- 15% - 20% improvement in employee performance of 15 to 20
- Increase in employee satisfaction and retention
- 27% Improvement in overall process efficiency

About ASICS

ASICS is a global athletic footwear and apparel brand founded in 1949 in Japan. The company name is an acronym of "Anima Sana In Corpore Sano" (A healthy mind in a healthy body). The company's mission is to "Create Quality Lifestyles through Intelligent Sports Technology". ASICS is one of the top ten sportswear manufacturers with global sales of around 3.1 billion euros (2021). The company operates 1,900 stores worldwide and employs about 8,900 people.

Summary

More than ever, the retail industry needs speed and flexibility to ensure smooth multichannel delivery to customers. To meet the needs of an ever-changing market environment, ASICS is testing and embracing innovative technologies in its European Distribution Center (EDC) in Germany, and its Southern European Distribution Center in France. Every shipment that leaves the distribution center must be correct and on time, every single time. Therefore, scanning must be fast and accurate. ASICS has been able to optimize its picking and returns processing by making logistics faster, easier, and more accurate with ProGlove wearable scanners.

Challenge at ASICS

Customer satisfaction, and the company's brand promise hinge on the ability to deliver on-time and in-full (OTIF), every single time. Consistency has been a challenge as ASICS has had to deal with rising labor costs, turnover, increasing demand, and supply chain issues. In this multichannel environment, distribution centers support both ASICS stores (B2B) and online orders (B2C). ASICS previously used conventional barcode scanners, which were heavy and were not designed ergonomically. They also required awkward movements for repetitive tasks, which slowed the process and increased the possibility of injury.

Complete visibility into and control of the scanner fleet was a key concern as ASICS also needed to avoid downtime and expenses caused by broken, uncharged, or lost devices. Therefore, the company needed a solution that could provide reliable data on the location, condition, and battery status of all the scanners.

Improving quality

ASICS operates according to the Japanese Kaizen principle of continuous improvement. Thus, they focus heavily on the quality of operations, including the distribution centers. There, the focus is on continuously monitoring the processes in order to continually improve. They looked to technological innovation to increase their visibility into warehouse operations.

CASE STUDY

Attracting and retaining employees

ASICS, like so many retail companies, also has difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified personnel. They have learned that the working environment is an issue central to worker satisfaction. That's why the company was very interested in finding an ergonomic solution for its many scanning processes. A safer working environment which requires less exertion to complete the assigned tasks is much more pleasant and attractive, and positively influences word of mouth.

"To meet the major challenges of the new retail and e-commerce landscape and live up to our principle of continuous improvement, we are always looking for innovative solutions that improve our efficiency and make us even more attractive as an employer. With ProGlove, we have succeeded in doing both. The work ergonomics of our employees have improved significantly and we have been able to increase our process efficiency in the packing process by an incredible 27%."

MICHAEL GRYSZKO-PRATTES,
Director of Distribution, ASICS Europe B.V.

ProGlove in use at ASICS

Hands-free scanning complements robotics

Needing an innovative solution to barcode scanning, ASICSS looked to state-of-the-art technology to increase both speed and efficiency. It's important to understand that their picking process consists of low runners (items that do not have to be picked often), and high runners which are picked frequently during the day and must be shipped quickly.

The picking of low runners is therefore fully automated with robots. However, the situation is different for high runners. They have to be picked frequently during the day and shipped quickly. This requires a higher speed than the robots can provide and so is accomplished by the employees because they are much more agile. ProGlove's lightweight, wearable scanners are completely hands free, allowing workers to scan goods or packages much faster and more ergonomically.

CASE STUDY

Increasing the pick rate

The "units picked per hour" (UPH) factor is the metric of speed. It measures how many items an employee picks per hour. With ProGlove's MARK scanners, ASICS was able to increase its UPH rate by 27%. This not only reduced pure scanning time, it also helped improve overall process efficiency.

Mastering the high demands of e-commerce orders and returns

Online B2C order processing and returns are even more demanding than the B2B process for supporting the retail stores. For a distribution center like the ASICS EDC, this means huge volumes of returns every day with enormous scanning requirements. Each returned package must be opened, the goods inspected and - if the return is in order and received within the required period - put back into storage and the proper information sent so the customer's account can be updated. In order for this to happen error-free, the scanners must capture data accurately and reliably.

ProGlove supports ASICS in making the time-consuming processing of returns faster and more efficient. Employees are able to work hands free, easily picking up the packages and the tools to unpack them, while seamlessly operating the terminals. This would be impossible with the limitations of a handheld barcode scanner

Differentiation in the competition for labor

High turnover and the shortage of skilled workers are major problems for ASICS and it raises the important question: How can we retain our employees and attract new ones? Innovative tools like ProGlove's scanners make work easier, contribute to higher employee satisfaction and improve performance by 15-20%. Additionally, employees know when a warehouse has adopted superior technology, and it feeds word of mouth, which is an incredibly strong influencer. This is how employee-centric technology gives ASICS a decisive edge as an employer.

Analytics and process optimization

To keep up with increasing demand, ASICS needed to take a close look at labor-intensive picking and packing. For these analytics, the ProGlove MARK scanners and the ProGlove Gateway provide fundamental data that goes well beyond just barcode content. Now, the company can combine all data from the ProGlove devices and conduct meaningful process analyses. The gateway can also be used to add, change, or remove functions as required. In this way, ASICS brings together data from the scanners, robotics, and the WMS for analytical evaluation. This creates the basis for optimizing every process step including warehouse design.

Benefits

A 27% increase in overall productivity

Yield and ROI depend on real-time inventory management. By using ProGlove scanners, ASICS was able to improve the quality and efficiency of its warehouse processes and achieve a 27% improvement in overall productivity.

Minimizing errors

The availability and reliability of scan data is of paramount importance to ASICS. The company was able to drastically reduce its scanning errors. More accurate scans combined with more barcodes scanned per shift thus lead to less rescans and less workflow interruptions.

Integration with the inventory management system

ProGlove's innovative barcode scanner and technology allowed ASICS to capture not only product information, but also data from the shop floor, such as product location. All this is integrated within the WMS and synchronized with picking lists. This integration has enabled ASICS to meet the challenges of the new retail and e-commerce landscape, making processes such as forecasting and inventory management much more accurate.

