

Managing Ecommerce Hypergrowth with Descartes OzLink™ Mobile Warehouse



Blue Sky Distribution, a distributor of grocery and tobacco products serving New Mexico and the Western U.S., implemented the Descartes OzLink™ Mobile Warehouse solution to automate and streamline its ecommerce fulfillment process in response to explosive customer demand. Fully integrated with NetSuite, the Descartes solution increased fulfillment efficiency and accuracy, improved inventory control, and provided actionable data to inform forecasting and commission-driven retention programs.

“Our legacy system couldn’t provide the data points or order processing efficiency we required to deliver superior customer service. By integrating Descartes OzLink with NetSuite, we’ve not only streamlined our fulfillment process, we’ve added a new level of visibility. We can rely on the integrity of the data to ensure inventory and order accuracy while capitalizing on insights to formulate ‘tomorrow’s plan’.”

Robert Poole
CEO & President
Blue Sky Distribution

Company Profile

Blue Sky Distribution
Grocery and tobacco distributor

Solutions

Descartes OzLink™ Mobile Warehouse

About the Client

Based in Albuquerque, NM, Blue Sky Distribution is a family-owned-and-operated grocery and tobacco distributor, providing a wide range of nearly 3,000 products—food and beverage, tobacco, accessories, convenience items, and more—to businesses and consumers across New Mexico and the Western U.S.

Quick Overview

Challenge

Manual Processes Impede
Order Fulfillment

Solution

Managing Demand with
Optimized Order Fulfillment

Results

- 100% Order Accuracy
- Improved Inventory Control
- 80% Increased Efficiency
- Enhanced Retention Efforts

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Challenge: Manual Processes Impede Order Fulfillment

With warehouses in Albuquerque, NM and Las Vegas, NV and its own fleet of 10 delivery trucks, Blue Sky distributes grocery and tobacco products to primarily B2B customers across NM and the western states, including working closely with tribal communities to supply tribal outlets. The distributor's outdated manual order fulfillment practices were unable to keep pace with escalating order volume during peak seasons, e.g., spiking beverage sales every summer. In addition, Blue Sky lacked visibility into the warehouse, hindering inventory control, returns management, and accurate forecasting. Blue Sky wanted to modernize and automate its fulfillment processes to increase efficiency, visibility, and fill rates, while enhancing the customer and employee experience.

Solution: Managing Demand with Optimized Order Fulfillment

Struggling to keep pace with the rapidly rising volume of ecommerce orders using manual order fulfillment practices, Blue Sky "leveraged technology to get the most out of the warehouse," according to Robert Poole, Blue Sky's CEO and President. In concert with a new ecommerce website, the grocery and tobacco distributor deployed the Descartes OzLink Mobile Warehouse system in June 2021 to automate order fulfillment for nearly 3,000 products, seamlessly managing surges in demand while delivering a superior customer experience.

With a mobile and barcode-enabled workflow and NetSuite integration, the Descartes OzLink solution helped Blue Sky streamline and scale its goods receipt and inventory movement processes to reduce unnecessary touchpoints and handle more orders with less effort. Armed with scan guns, the team of 16 warehouse staff can efficiently, accurately, and cost-effectively pick 150 orders per day—without the need to hire additional warehouse labor to manage seasonal spikes and accelerated growth.

In addition to inbound logistics efficiencies, the Descartes solution transformed Blue Sky's returns management process, protecting profit margins and improving inventory control. "As a grocery distributor for customers like Whole Foods, Target, Kroger, and Walgreens, we inevitably process returns of expired product," explained Poole. "The Descartes-NetSuite integration provides a level of inventory visibility that we've never had, helping us to drill down, curtail overselling, and uncover actionable metrics and analytics that help us forecast more accurately."

Poole added, "Choosing the right technology partner in Descartes to help us automate our multichannel distribution processes in our warehouses—and scale the business faster than we could have on our own—has made a significant impact on our bottom line."

Results:



100% Order Accuracy

Seamlessly integrated with NetSuite, Descartes OzLink reduced picking errors through barcode scanning and order validation, ensuring customers consistently receive accurate orders—even during peak season volume spikes.



Improved Inventory Control

With automated mobile scanning for picking orders and managing returns, coupled with access to granular data for category and vendor fill rates, Blue Sky increased visibility into the warehouse and strengthened inventory control.



80% Increased Efficiency

By replacing manual picking and returns management processes with mobile handheld scanners to accelerate the order fulfillment workflow and reduce time-consuming errors, the scalable Descartes solution enabled Blue Sky to easily manage increasing volumes.



Enhanced Retention Efforts

Key Descartes OzLink metrics for picking, receiving, and returns enabled Blue Sky to offer incentive bonuses and commissions to warehouse staff, boosting team morale and mitigating employee churn in the face of nationwide labor challenges.