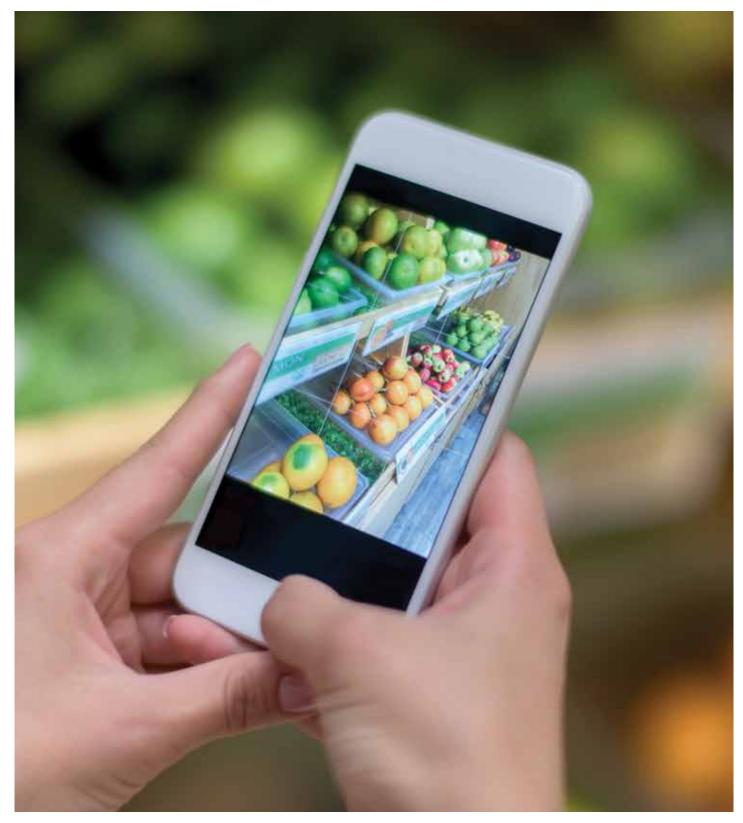VAI White Paper

5 Key Technology Solutions That Your Food Distribution Business Should Adopt to be Successful in 2019

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Cloud computing is allowing businesses of all sizes to compete with larger enterprises by giving them access to the advanced technology they require to improve efficiencies, reduce costs, and grow. In addition, technology can help companies meet the challenges of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) by providing full traceability and providing comprehensive reports for auditors. As we advance into the New Year, here are the top technology solutions that your Wholesale Distribution business should adopt to be successful in 2019.

Mobile Order Entry / Route Sales

With the rapid expansion of mobile devices, enterprises everywhere are being dramatically impacted by the new wave of mobile technology. Mobile solutions turn ordinary smartphones into powerful business tools that can help you improve efficiencies, enhance customer service, and increase sales. Applications that are seeing tremendous traction in the food industry is Mobile Order Entry and Route Sales. This rise in mobile device usage means that mobile apps have become a key sales tool for companies of all sizes. Giving your sales team immediate access to account and product information can make the difference between getting the sale or not. In addition, these apps can be given to your customers making it simpler for them to place orders directly with your company. Quick easy access to ordering can result in increased order frequency, customer loyalty, and an improved bottom-line for your business. For companies that sell off the truck, Mobile Route Sales applications allows route sales representatives to take orders in the field and fulfill those orders from the inventory on their truck.

Suggested Purchasing

Automated purchasing systems are a key tool in helping businesses reduce inventory and increase sales. They are imperative in maintaining customer service levels and retaining your customers. Advanced purchasing tools can forecast demand and predict long-range trends, as well as seasonality for each item. These solutions can optimally push order quantities up to get prepaid freight, or to hit vendor minimums, or to cube out a full container, if desired - all while honoring pack sizes. Additionally, it can consider multiple warehouses and check for overstocked items and facilitate stock transfers before buyers place orders to the vendor. Companies that utilize automated forecasting and purchasing tools will also have a strategic advantage in lower costs and increased profits.

Route / Warehouse Management

For companies with their own truck fleet, getting vehicles loaded and on their way can be a very complicated task. Managing routes and stops, inventory allocations, vehicle capacity limits, stacking restrictions, and more must be performed under tight time constraints. Route Management applications help managers organize routes and ensures that warehouse pickers have the right information, maximizing efficiency and insuring product safety and tracking. Automating your warehouse can provide a wide range of benefits ranging from space savings, lower building costs, improved productivity, more efficient material flow, less people, and safer operations, to reductions in inventory, reduced operational costs, better ROI, and lower lifecycle costs.

Business Intelligence

In today's highly competitive market it is imperative that you constantly evaluate the success of the activities in which your business engages in. Analytics software can provide your organization with both high-level monitoring that focuses on the overall performance of the enterprise, and also low-level monitoring that focuses on departmental metrics. Modern ERP systems are generating massive amounts of data and it has become critical that companies leverage business intelligence tools to help them easily identify anomalies that could turn into significant business issues, and identify trends that could lead to business opportunities. Access to accurate enterprise information has never been more vital to grow revenue, protect margins, and improve profitability.

CRM / Marketing Automation

Too many times organizations focus their efforts on cutting costs and forget about sales growth, and one of the top ways a company can achieve revenue growth is to align and automate their sales and marketing efforts. Today, advanced email marketing tools can help your business nurture leads and engage existing customers. With powerful automation tools you can continue to engage subscribers depending on how they have responded to your previous messages by sending a series of specific action-based emails. Whether you are thanking a customer for their business, informing them of a promotional offer, sending a birthday message, or reminding them about an important deadline— Marketing Tools allow you to reach out to your subscribers at every opportunity for longer and more meaningful connection. Interacting with your audience regularly can build trust and brand recognition. With automated workflows, you can give your subscribers the information they want during each stage of the sales funnel. You can create a workflow that will automatically separate and send emails to your subscribers based on their response to your previous campaigns, scores, shopping cart activity, web page visits, and much more. Using automation, marketers can save time by setting up the email platform to send messages when customers take specific actions. With advanced marketing automation, you can nurture prospects and customers with highly personalized, useful content that helps convert prospects to customers and turn customers into delighted customers.

About VAI

VAI is a leading independent mid-market ERP software developer renowned for its flexible solutions and ability to automate critical business functions for the distribution, manufacturing, retail, and service sectors. VAI's software solutions are backed by a wealth of experience and a reputation for excellence that countless companies rely on. With specific ERP solutions for Hard Goods, Food, and Pharmaceutical companies, VAI has helped some of the most recognized companies address key industry requirements and deliver bottom-line results. VAI continues to innovate with new solutions that leverage analytics, business intelligence, mobility, and cloud technology to help customers make more informed business decisions and empower their mobile workforce. VAI is headquartered in Ronkonkoma, NY, with branch offices located in Florida, Illinois, and California.

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