Armstrong Produce **increases efficiencies** while reducing costs through WMS

WMS means ROI

Measurable differences for Armstrong Produce using the WMS*

Efficiency improvements
- 38% increase in day shift order selection
- 41% increase in night shift order selection
- 19% increase in operational efficiency

Order selection savings
- $137,592 each year

Paperwork savings
- $3,120 per year in paper and toner

Reduction in errors
- 75% fewer errors

ROI
- Within 3 years the WMS had already paid for itself

About Armstrong Produce

History

Armstrong Produce started as a small, family-run wholesale business. The company has grown into Hawaii's leading produce wholesaler and distributor.

Customers

Every day, Armstrong Produce supplies fresh produce to a wide range of customers throughout the islands, from local chefs to big box retailers.

Facilities

Warehouses and distribution centers are located in Honolulu, Kona and Kahului.

Objectives

Welcome to the busiest produce company in paradise.

It's another hectic day at Armstrong Produce in Hawaii. Before it's over, there will be over 600 orders to handle and every last pound has to be accounted for, including full traceability.

To make it even more challenging, shipments are coming in by air and boat from around the globe, and warehouses on three different islands need to reconcile it all.

With this many variables in play, every second counts. The day and night crews need to keep the inventory moving and coordinated with dispatchers, drivers and customer service.

But that's life at Armstrong Produce, where every order is critical. And that's why they rely on the Warehouse Management System (WMS) from Produce Pro Software.

Armstrong Produce needed a system that would:
- Improve order picking productivity on all shifts
- Minimize shipping errors
- Increase operational efficiency and reduce overlap between shifts
- Streamline the order checking process
- Ensure traceability down to the pallet and case level
- Instantly access all lot information, including who a lot was sold to, if it was broken, who it was shipped to and when it was sold
- Improve reconciliation

* Totals provided courtesy of Armstrong Produce

"We wanted a **better** system."

Back in 2011, Armstrong Produce used "paper pick tickets" for every order. That required handwriting lot numbers and using line-by-line shipping information for each item. It was a significant amount of manual work and it was prone to errors.

Armstrong Produce wanted more efficiency and accuracy in their operations, and they had a clear list of objectives.

"We wanted a better system," declared Jingjing Verzosa, Systems Director at Armstrong Produce. "We needed to increase our picking productivity, minimize shipping errors, streamline order checking and ensure traceability for all our customers."

"We believe in "farm-to-fork" produce traceability. And we comply with the PTI (Produce Traceability Initiative) guidelines and the COOL (Country of Origin Labeling) Law. So we needed a system to help us address those demands."

The system that could handle all of those needs for Armstrong Produce was the WMS from Produce Pro.

"Experiencing the day-to-day."

Tailoring and implementing the right system for a company as complex as Armstrong Produce demands a high level of commitment. That's precisely what Produce Pro delivered.

"We spent hours on site with each shift," added Dave Ivey, WMS Manager at Produce Pro. "It was essential to see their work in motion and experience the day-to-day processes."

Once Produce Pro pinpointed the individual needs and nuances of Armstrong Produce, the next steps were to develop an accurate project plan and tailor the WMS solution accordingly.

Produce Pro also provided the one-on-one training to make sure employees on both shifts were comfortable with the WMS.

"Everybody at our company uses the WMS."

One person who experiences the WMS difference every day is Les Watanabe, Assistant Director of Operations at Armstrong Produce. But even he had a few "a-ha" moments.

"For me, the biggest surprise was the scope of the WMS and how it affected so many different parts of the company positively," Mr. Watanabe commented.

"For example, now we have drivers that are not waiting around for orders to be ready…and when our customers have questions, we can answer them in seconds."

"Today, we use the WMS to ensure location integrity, inventory integrity, order making efficiency and accuracy, invoicing, loading and dispatching. It makes a difference every day."

Jingjing Verzosa added that she notices the difference company-wide. "Our customer service representatives use the WMS windows to check the status of orders. Sales managers rely on it, too. Even buyers use the receiving windows. So, I would say everybody at our company uses the WMS."
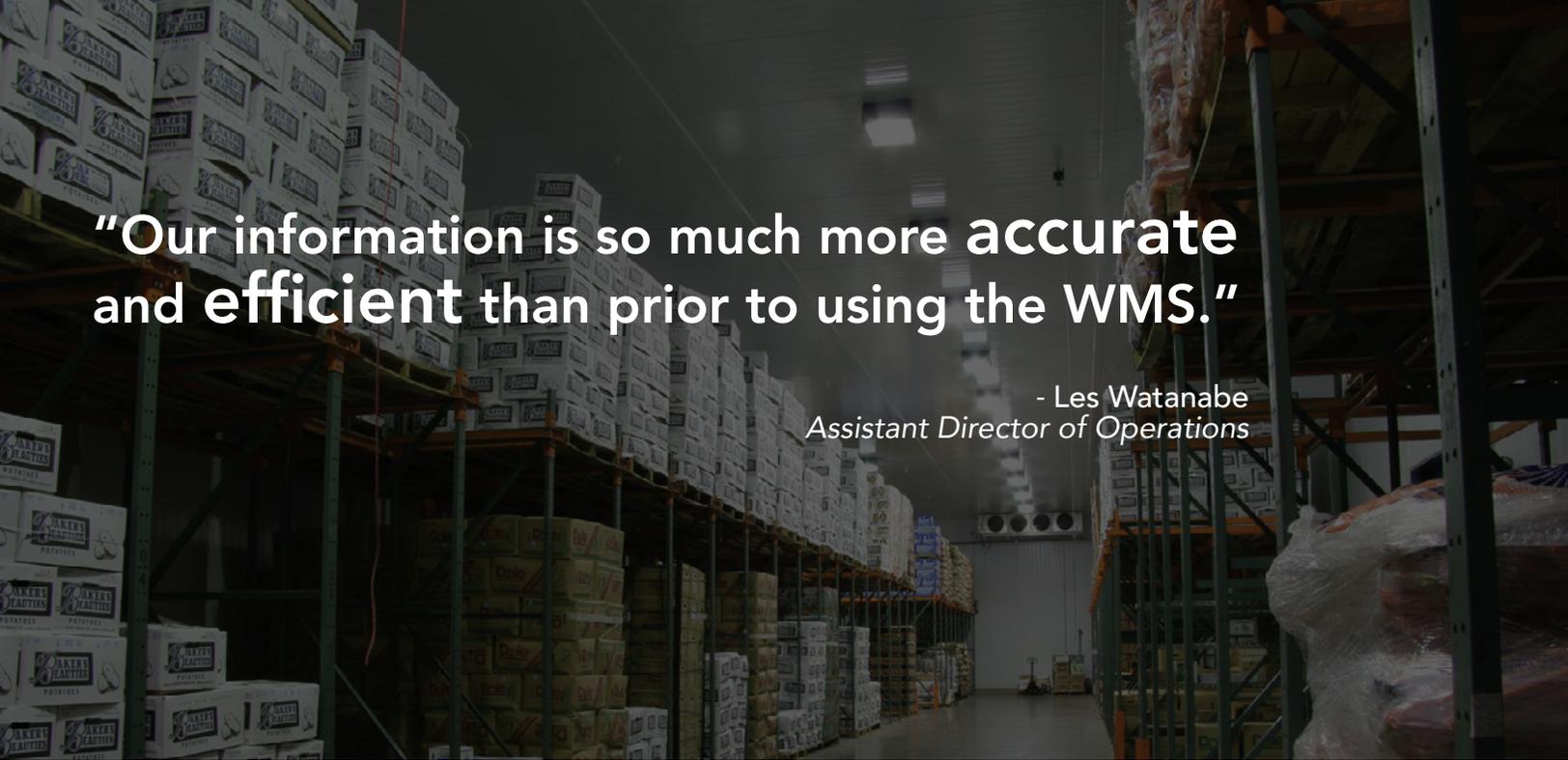
"So much more accurate and efficient."

Another improvement was the ability for Armstrong Produce to maintain better visibility across the operation.

"We process a large number of orders," Mr. Watanabe explained. "We might do 600 orders a day, and they're called in at different times. For us to efficiently assign these orders and get them loaded in a limited amount of space is critical."

"One of our warehouses handles transfer, another one is for sales, and inventory is always moving. The WMS gives us more control of reconciling all our inventory across all of our warehouses. That's really the biggest difference: Our information is so much more accurate and efficient than prior to using the WMS."

"Our information is so much more accurate and efficient than prior to using the WMS."

- Les Watanabe
Assistant Director of Operations

"Even the auditor was impressed."

Maintaining traceability at every step is a cornerstone of Armstrong Produce's business. The critical need for compliance is another reason why Mr. Watanabe appreciates the WMS.

"With the WMS, we can trace product up to the last pound in the box. That's how good it is."

But Mr. Watanabe isn't the only person who noticed. "During a couple of our recent audits, even the auditor was impressed with the system. Rather than having to document everything, he said that the WMS history would suffice."

"We're open 24/7."

There are no slow days at Armstrong Produce, so optimal efficiency matters for every shift. Using the WMS has helped to reduce costly overtime and overlap between shifts.

"We're open 24/7. So we have two shifts: a day and a night shift," said Mr. Watanabe. "Before the WMS, our day crew would show up at 3:00 am in the morning. And the night crew, at times, didn't finish until 5:00 am. With the WMS, if our night crew stays until 1:00 am, they're staying late. These days, they're usually done by midnight."

"Training new employees is also much easier because they don't really have to know all of the codes, unlike before. Now it's as simple as scanning bar codes and numbers, and checking the quality. Some of our newer guys don't even know that "pick tickets" existed. They wouldn't know what to do without the WMS. It's way more productive."

"Produce Pro knows our sense of urgency."

It has been over five years since the WMS was installed for Armstrong Produce and the positive efficiency and savings numbers confirm that it was a wise investment. However, there's another aspect to any system, and that's the level of ongoing support a company provides after installation.

When it comes to support, Ms. Verzosa had a very strong opinion. "Most IT companies have an SLA (Service Level Agreement) of 4 hours. In our world, that's not going to work. But Produce Pro knows our sense of urgency. They appreciate that they need to respond… and they're always there. You can tell that the Produce Pro Team has passion for what they do."

Asked what she would tell other companies that are considering the WMS, Ms. Verzosa didn't hesitate. "I would tell them not to think twice. Get the WMS. It improves more areas than you can imagine."

Improve your efficiency, accuracy and profitability with the WMS.

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