

# Ethical Products | Powered by VAI



## The Company

Ethical Products, Inc. manufactures, designs, and imports some of the coolest pet products that can be found on the market today. A privately owned company that was established in 1952, they have over 1,500 SKUs and their products can be found in nearly every retail outlet in the United States. In addition to their 130,000 square feet facility in Bloomfield, New Jersey, the company also has a sales and sourcing office located in Hong Kong. Ethical Products is focused on providing products for dogs and cats. The company markets products under the SPOT brand, which includes dog and cat toys.

### Industry

Wholesale Distribution, Durable Goods, Pet Products

### Requirements

Mobile WMS, Inventory Forecasting, Zebra Printer

## The Solution

Ethical Products uses VAI S2K software in practically every facet of the business, from order entry, sales maintenance, customer service, inventory replenishment, inventory forecasting, new item planning, as well as heavy implementation and usage to help run their warehouse and automated pick-pack system.

The company has long desired to embrace technology but considering the expense of the warehouse's equipment—including RF scanners—choosing a full warehouse management solution would have been cost prohibitive. When the company was introduced to VAI's Mobile WMS app, they saw a straightforward, adaptable, and customizable solution.

"When we started looking for devices, we didn't want to spend thousands of dollars per unit because we tried to make this an economical device for ourselves," Ethical Products' Warehouse Manager, Aaron Tedesco, stated. Following discussions with VAI, they developed an Android-based system utilizing the Samsung Galaxy S4, a reasonably priced phone. It is utilized via the phone's wireless rather than being configured as a phone. One piece of extra gear is a Comtech sled that pairs with the Samsung via Bluetooth. It has a hard plastic shell that bolts onto

the powered sled. The phone is equipped with a basic protective cell phone case. A side button on the device activates it after it is inserted into the sled with scanner buttons and Bluetooth to connect to the phone.

Tedesco used the VAI Mobile warehouse app to demonstrate the picking procedure once he was inside the warehouse. To begin with, a device must be chosen, and each user has a unique login. To start the selection process, picking is selected, and the station ID for the Flow Rack is the default product move. An order is established once the picking is finished. After that, the order that is going to be picked is displayed when the picker scans the barcode. Any messages that pickers may need to have accessible can be added by them.

Tedesco stated, "You hit next once you've established that information is correct." The location of the bin and the object are noted. Tedesco uses a typical crown order picker to show what was done with the machine before starting the case picking procedure. To convert the machine's voltage to a conventional 120 current, Ethical Products purchased a power inverter. To eliminate the need for the operator to leave the machine for any reason, Tedesco said, "We have a Zebra direct thermal



*The Solution continued:*

printer that is connected to our wireless network." The

pickers at Ethical Products start the case picking procedure as

soon as the gadget is placed in a secure bag.

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## The Results

Said Frank Lucente, VP of Operations at Ethical Products, "Personally, I have noticed a remarkable difference in our ability to process orders that we didn't have before. I feel it, I see it. There were times when I'd see orders going out into the warehouse and I'd think we're going to be working a lot of overtime and we're probably going to have to work on the weekends to keep up with this. But in the last 12 to 14 months, I don't think about it anymore."

Many of Ethical Products' customers are small, single-operated retail

outlets, and for them, the ability to get products quickly and correctly is vitally important for their business. They don't have the luxury of waiting days and weeks to get product. According to Jonathan Zelinger, President at Ethical Products, the VAI solution has enabled them to turn orders around in 24 hours or less at a 99.6% fill rate, with very little backorders.

Said Jonathan Zelinger, President at Ethical Products, "The pet space is a great space to operate in. Americans have an eternal love affair with the pets and we're very proud to be part of that and to be associated with pet ownership and pet parenting." With huge growth forecast for the company, Ethical

Products is currently looking at several different acquisitions as well as entering other different product lines. Concluded Zelinger, "We could not have done this without the support of VAI, and the software and the hardware that they furnished for us. They've been a great partner for all these years, and we look forward to growing our business with the support of VAI in the future."

Since the launch, Ethical Products has been using VAI's ERP software to:

- Process orders quickly and correctly for customers
- Forecast significant growth
- Turn orders within 24 hrs. or same day, at a 99.6% fill rate

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**"The software and hardware that we implemented from VAI has enabled us to turn our orders around in 24 hours or less at a 99.6% fill rate with very little backorders"**

- Jonathan Zelinger, President at Ethical Products