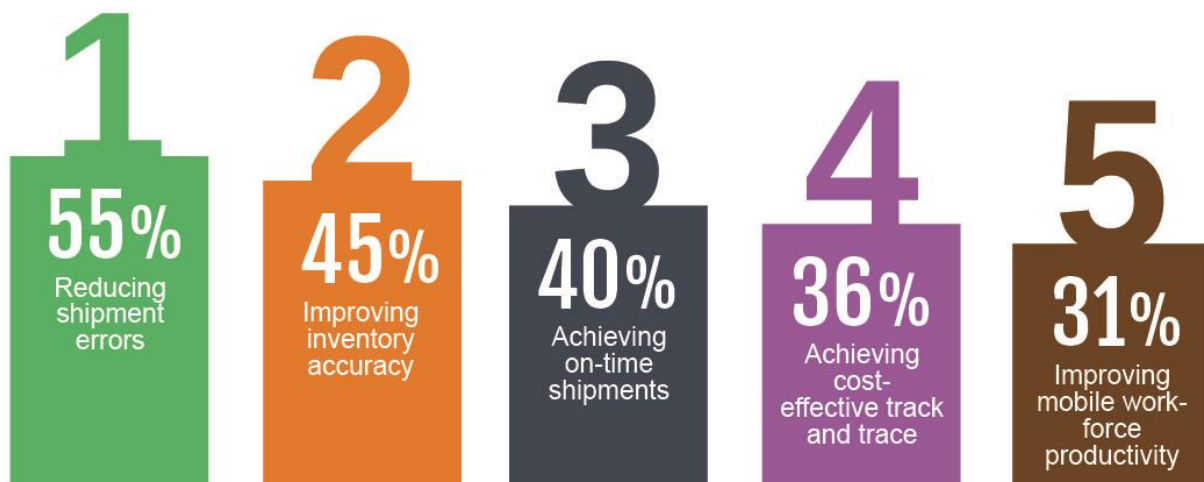


Replacing Complexity with Productivity: A Preview at Zebra's Upcoming Wearable Technology Release

By: Cameron Roche and Allyson Koval, June 2016

A recent VDC Research survey found that 85% of end users are motivated to invest in warehouse wearable initiatives in order to increase employee productivity. This investment is being driven by five significant market pressures (see Figure 1) all pointing to warehouse end-users' desire to squeeze more productivity out of their operations. With these pressures front and center in the minds of end-users, warehousing organizations are turning to wearable technologies, given their unique ability to enable truly hands-free, multi-modal workflows where user and device integrate seamlessly, to enable an improved user experience and greater workflow efficiency.

Figure 1: Leading Market Pressures Driving Investments in Mobile Warehouse Solutions



In the coming years, VDC expects this multi-modal strategy will see greater evolution as technological advances push the warehouse towards smoother and more efficient workflows. Zebra, a longtime vendor for wearables solutions, is helping drive this evolution with their release of a new family of wearables solutions.

Over the past two decades, Zebra has made enormous strides in wearable ergonomics, developing additional features to enhance the user experience and better integrate wearable devices into user workflows that drive business critical operations in warehouse environments – transforming warehouse workflows by replacing complexity with productivity.

Zebra's latest wearable solution set is comprised of multiple products (see Figure 2), including a wrist-mounted wearable device, ring scanners (wired and wireless), and headsets, all under the Total

Wearable Solutions brand. In developing the Total Wearable Solutions, Zebra devoted special attention to the market pressures driving demand for greater productivity, designing their wearable solution to optimize multi-modal workflows. The wrist-mounted wearable's Android-powered, all-touch screen interface and support for Zebra's voice-directed picking application – TekSpeech Pro 4– enables a more complete user-experience and efficient workflow by integrating item visuals and voice-directed guidance cues for picking and sorting applications –similar to how a GPS's voice-directed guidance and map display can more efficiently direct a driver to the correct destination. Zebra will also include their latest scan engine in the paired ring scanners to further bolster the accuracy and speed of warehouse workflows, opening up opportunities to improve overall warehouse efficiency.

Figure 2: Zebra Total Wearable Solution Family



From Left to Right: HS3100 (Bluetooth) headset, RS6000 1D/2D Bluetooth ring scanner, WT6000 wearable computer, RS4000 1D ring scanner, and HS2100 (corded) headset.

In addition to these features, customers will find major upgrades to the user-experience including the all-touch interface for improved visual displays, NFC pairing capabilities for quick device, headset, printer and ring-scanner pairing. A detachable wrist mount enables users to pair a single wrist mount with a wearable device, creating a more hygienic environment, especially when switching between devices. The new wearables will run on Android OS, marking it a significant addition to Zebra's mobile Android portfolio. While Android adoption in warehouse has been limited, VDC's research indicates that rugged Android devices are gaining traction in the traditionally green screen TE dominated warehouse environment. This latest release from Zebra – designed specifically for warehouse workflows – should help accelerate Android adoption.

With warehousing organizations looking to maximize operational productivity, the turn to wearable technologies will enable workers to leverage a hands-free, multi-modal user experience to enable more efficient workflows. Zebra's release of its Total Wearable Solutions family supports these critical operational workflows by addressing the leading market pressures (seen in Figure 1) head-on. The incorporation of new technological advancements in touch screen, voice and visual guidance, and scanning capabilities are just some of the highlights of this device. Furthermore, the thoughtful engineering behind these devices pays special attention to the user. By taking into account hygiene as well as comfort, Zebra has designed products which enable an improved user experience, seamless integration, and ultimately create an environment which catalyzes productivity.

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