

# Navajo Incorporated Uses TeamViewer to Speed Picking Rate, Slash Training Time from Days to Minutes



## Initial Situation

Over more than 40 years, Denver-based Navajo Incorporated has grown from a small reseller of handmade Native American jewelry into a major distributor of consumer goods sold at supermarkets, drugstores, gas stations, and convenience stores, as well as distribution warehouses. They include travel-size grooming products, beauty items, small electronics, sunglasses, kitchenware, and more. Many of the thousands of items it carries are imported, and many are made available to retailers using their private labels. Navajo's more than 350 employees create, package, deliver, and replenish customers' merchandise, in addition to fabricating the in-store display systems used to merchandise those products. Navajo products are distributed and supported throughout North America from its four regional warehouse locations.

## Challenge

A series of issues, including some which are common to many companies and others which are largely distinctive to consumer product distributors, have faced Navajo Incorporated.

- ⊖ Handheld scanners and paper-based order sheets have proved cumbersome, slowing productivity and eroding morale among warehouse pickers.
- ⊖ Employee turnover can be high. Onboarding and training new warehouse workers to fulfill customer orders takes days away from productive staff time.
- ⊖ All the equipment employees use to fulfill orders in Navajo warehouses needs to be maintained and repaired as needed. Downtime poses a serious business risk.
- ⊖ When specialized technical service is needed, bringing an out-of-town expert in can be costly and time-consuming, particularly with pandemic-related travel restrictions.



## TeamViewer Frontline Solution

Navajo has adopted several TeamViewer Frontline solutions to improve efficiency in their warehouse processes, accelerate training, and ease maintenance issues. Wirelessly connected to smart eyeglasses, the necessary information is displayed to warehouse pickers or maintenance personnel using a hands-free mode, enabling voice-controlled operations and instant collaboration.

- ➔ TeamViewer's intuitive xPick solution projects order information directly into the warehouse worker's field of vision through smart glasses.
- ➔ xPick is also a high-value training asset, quickly showing new employees the steps required to complete an order, with only a brief orientation from experienced staff.
- ➔ When there's a question or problem, the TeamViewer xAssist solution supports frontline workers with voice-activated visual communication to supervisors or outside experts.



## Results

TeamViewer technologies have effectively addressed a range of challenges facing Navajo.

- ✔ The technology made possible a simplified series of steps in order fulfillment, reducing errors and accelerating productivity by 70%.
- ✔ Training time for new warehouse pickers was reduced from two-plus days to 25 minutes.
- ✔ Machinery downtime and repair cost has been significantly reduced.
- ✔ A library of in-house videos focused on warehouse issues is being compiled and made instantly available to help frontline workers through their smart glasses.

## Accelerate the Workflow

To optimize item selection from the thousands of products in their warehouses, Navajo's management and their operations team consulted with TeamViewer, ultimately selecting TeamViewer Frontline's intuitive vision picking technology, xPick. xPick responds to voice commands and displays information concerning the picking order directly into the wearer's field of vision. For their warehouse workers, Navajo chose Google's Glass Enterprise Edition 2 smart glasses. Using xPick, the company's picking process readily translated into an intuitive vision-based workflow. The user's display graphically depicts product shelf arrangements, guiding employees to each ordered item for picking. And without a lengthy menu of options to choose from, the system offers fewer distractions and opportunities for human error.

In the past, picking out the items for an order involved a number of steps – sometimes as many as 10 or 12. It typically required the use of multiple screens and juggling of hand-held devices to pick an item, then putting the scanner down, picking the appropriate box, putting the item inside it, picking up the scanner, scanning the next box, and so on. And when an exceptional situation, such as a broken item on the shelf would arise, the employee would have to write it on a paper tablet they carried in addition to their hand scanner. With xPick, however, options for exception handling are built directly into the workflow, automatically triggering a damage notification to the backend system.

## Results

Using xPick, in which all the relevant information is projected, step-by-step, through the wearer's smart glasses into their field of view, combined with certain shop floor layout modifications, Navajo was able to simplify the picking process, free the worker's hands, eliminate many of the previously required steps, and produce major efficiency improvements. From an average of 264 cases per day for each warehouse worker, the picking rate has soared to 180 cases every hour – an overall increase in line speed of more than 70 percent.

The technology also helps Navajo to reduce errors. Every wrong pick leads to rework as well as to unsatisfied customers. And rework, in turn, creates new costs. Using xPick, the accuracy of the employee's selections increases while the opportunities for erroneous picks declines.

## Shorten New Employee Training

Employee retention has been an issue for many U.S. companies, particularly since the start of the pandemic. Navajo hadn't experienced as much turnover as many other companies, but certain warehouse jobs in specific locations were seeing significant losses of employees. However, recruiting new employees for seasonal demand swings, and then training them in the warehouse work, took staff time away from their normal assignments. And working with temp agencies, where workers turned over even faster, proved to be impractical, and in many cases impossible. What was needed was an entirely different solution.

It was here that TeamViewer's xPick and xAssist voice-directed technologies proved tremendously beneficial. Prior to their adoption, the Navajo training process required an experienced warehouse worker to spend the better part of three full days with the new employee, teaching them the process steps. And with the company's already lean staff, that often proved to be a struggle. But by using their TeamViewer systems, the company found a new recruit could wear smart glasses, have someone walk them through the simplified steps of picking one complete order, and within 30 minutes, be able to operate on their own. And whenever questions arise, they are only one video call away from their supervisor via the integrated remote assistance function.

So, while turnover can still be an issue, the onboarding of replacement personnel is being done far more quickly – reduced from three days to just half an hour. The systems' built-in flexibility also allows Navajo to pivot quickly in response to large orders – a capability which is especially valuable when a regular frontline worker is sick or on vacation.



## Warehouse Maintenance

TeamViewer technology also keeps Navajo Industry's machinery humming. Some of the company's warehouse equipment is older and, like all equipment, requires constant maintenance. Also like every piece of industrial equipment, they are susceptible to occasional breakdowns. Other types of equipment on site, although newer, are highly specialized – distinctive to the sorts of activities needed to run a fulfillment warehouse holding thousands of different items. Issues affecting them can require a site visit by an expert from the equipment's manufacturer.

But bringing an out-of-town expert into the warehouse is not only costly, it is also time-consuming. For example, it frequently takes between three and five days for a technician to arrive. Then, once that happens and a solution is proposed, ordering replacement parts will typically add more time to the wait before the machine can return to service. And today, with many Covid-19-related travel restrictions in force, site visits may not even be possible.

In response, Navajo's Vice President of Purchasing and Operations determined that to improve the company's self-help capability, it would install TeamViewer's xAssist. xAssist is a technology that enables frontline workers who don't have the time to wait for an expert visit, to visually connect with experts, no matter where they are located. It lets the experts see the problem for themselves so they can help the warehouse worker solve technical issues, even from a distance, using smart glasses or mobile devices.

Beyond that, the company took a cue from the popularity of YouTube's how-to videos to encourage its own front line employees to videotape machinery issues and build a library of service-related videos recorded through their hands-free smart glasses. Whenever a machine is down, the employee is sent a link for logging into the company's website to watch the appropriate recording.

## About Navajo Incorporated

Navajo Incorporated began in the mid-70s selling handmade Native American jewelry. Its founder, Gordon Levy, remains the company's CEO, operating the business from four distribution centers, including two in Denver, Colorado, where the company is headquartered. By the 1990s, Navajo Incorporated had expanded into general merchandise, supplying major retailers including Walmart, Kroger, Walgreens, as well as convenience stores and gas stations throughout North America with small and travel-size consumer goods. Today, the company offers an assortment of retail programs involving hundreds of name brand items. [navajoinc.com](http://navajoinc.com)

## About TeamViewer

As a leading global technology company, TeamViewer offers a secure remote connectivity platform to access, control, manage, monitor, and support any device – across platforms – from anywhere.

With more than 600,000 customers, TeamViewer is free for private, non-commercial use and has been installed on more than 2.5 billion devices. TeamViewer continuously innovates in the fields of Remote Connectivity, Augmented Reality, Internet of Things, and Digital Customer Engagement, enabling companies from all industries to digitally transform their business-critical processes through seamless connectivity.

Founded in 2005, and headquartered in Göppingen, Germany, TeamViewer is a publicly held company with approximately 1,400 global employees. TeamViewer AG (TMV) is listed at Frankfurt Stock Exchange and belongs to the MDAX.

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