



ATA Retail Services Speech Recognition Order Processing System

ATA Retail Services is the leading provider of Direct Store Delivery of more than 700 household related items to more than 5,000 supermarkets in the United States. Founded in 1991, ATA has experienced dramatic growth over the past five years as more and more supermarkets have elected to partner with ATA, making ATA the largest wholesale distributor of non-perishables to supermarkets in the United States, providing direct store delivery in more than 35 states. The company operates large warehouses in California and Tennessee to provide its retail customers with fast, efficient, and cost effective service.

As part of ATA's store ordering process, merchandisers visit a store on a weekly or semi-monthly basis. Before implementing the LumenVox solution, the merchandisers were required to call in and leave a voicemail with the items that needed to be restocked. That voicemail was then manually transcribed and the order sent to a warehouse for processing. It often took several days and multiple transcribers to enter in the order data. There was also a large problem with mumbled orders by the merchandisers or mis-entered information by the transcribers. Several days later, 25 – 40% of merchandisers generally placed a follow-up call to learn the status of their order.

ATA wanted a solution to simplify the status tracking and speed up order delivery to the stores. While researching IVRs, they came across LumenVox's [Speech Platform](#), a GUI-based toolkit to create speech and touch-tone applications. They decided to move forward with LumenVox's product and selected a [partner](#) of LumenVox's, [TelASK](#) to create the application. The decision to move forward was based upon being able to recognize both speech and touch-tone with the application and providing the entire application at the right price.

The completed automated system allows a merchandiser to call an order into the speech-enabled system, provide a stores' number, the merchandiser's employee number, and then the product number and quantity to order. Their speech is then translated into text and sent to the ordering database, which automatically creates the warehouse order. Once the order is shipped, a Text-To-Speech message is generated so that the merchandiser can

easily confirm shipping status. The system also provides a UPS tracking number, enabling users easy access to the time and date the merchandise is delivered to the store.

The [Platform's Call Handler](#) connects with ATA's phone switch via analog phone lines, with access to ATA's order processing database using the [Platform's Extension](#).

The initial research by ATA Retail Services began in March of 2003. The final decision to move with LumenVox's [Speech Platform](#) was made in July of 2003 and the final application deployed in October 2003. Currently the speech application takes more than 50,000 line items daily – all ordered by the field-merchandising staff. The application has returned an ROI not only by increasing customer satisfaction, but also by removing the need to transcribe each voicemail order, avoiding costly errors and delays in fulfilling the orders.