



## Summary

# Vera Bradley

**Customer**  
Vera Bradley

**Industry**  
Retail

### Challenge

Vera Bradley needed to optimize its inventory management and distribution center activities, as well as improve support for task and workforce management operations.

### Solution

Workcloud Workforce Optimization Suite

- Workcloud Scheduling
- Workcloud Advanced Analytics and Reporting
- Workcloud Task Management
- Workcloud Comm
- Workcloud Check

Workcloud Inventory Optimization Suite

- Workcloud Inventory Visibility self-scan software solution
- Zebra MC2180 mobile computers

DC Operations

- Zebra MC9200 mobile computers
- Zebra LI3678 scanners
- Zebra DS9208 scanners
- Zebra ZT230 industrial printers

### Results

Vera Bradley leverages Zebra Workcloud solutions and best-in-class scanners, printers, and mobile computers to improve workforce scheduling and task management, as well as inventory distribution management. Ultimately, the time and effort Vera Bradley saves in simplified execution, optimized scheduling, and streamlined inventory management enables on-site managers and front-line associates to better support the customer experience.

## Vera Bradley Leverages Retail Workforce, Task, and Inventory Solutions for Success

Based in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Vera Bradley is a leading designer of women's handbags, luggage and travel items, fashion and home accessories, and unique gifts. Founded in 1982, the brand is globally famous for its innovative designs, iconic patterns, and brilliant colors. The company operates about 150 Full Line and Factory Store locations throughout the United States.

### Communications and Task Execution Problems

The company's rapid growth strained communications capacity, as corporate-to-store communication was carried out via outdated phone and email-based processes and legacy systems. Conference calls and emails came at different times of the day, and pulled front-line managers and associates away from the store floor. Additionally, using email to communicate corporate initiatives was confusing store managers, who spent one-to-two hours a day reviewing their emails—and this was potentially damaging to the customer experience.

Under the old system, communications about store displays, promotions, price changes and more were sometimes unclear, and various corporate departments emailed stores without a strict gatekeeping function in place. Sometimes updates remained unsent, while at other times, stores received irrelevant or redundant communication from corporate. Finally, corporate lacked visibility into the stores' project completion levels.

### Improved Task Management, Communications and Auditing

To address these challenges, in 2014, Vera Bradley began rolling out a new retail operations platform, including Workcloud Task Management. The application offered a single place for tasks, communications, surveys, forms, and calendar functions, as well as a mechanism to collect feedback. The system streamlined the process for corporate-to-store communications and improved peer-to-peer messaging. Corporate gatekeepers review the tasks and real-time communications within Workcloud Task Management for clarity and to provide final approval before releasing to stores.

After the most recent upgrade, corporate gatekeepers and store managers use Workcloud Task Management to save several hours a week communicating. The system also prevents overwhelming message floods: there was a 95% reduction in email volume and the company eliminated an average of 10 email inboxes per store. Corporate sees the status of tasks across stores and can manage by exception, addressing issues at locations that have an execution challenge. The rate of on-time completion of corporate-generated tasks also rose to 95%, up from 40%.

District Managers can manage chats to communicate directly with stores, as needed. Store teams use Workcloud Task Management daily to help them execute their projects efficiently and with greater accountability. Store managers can now:

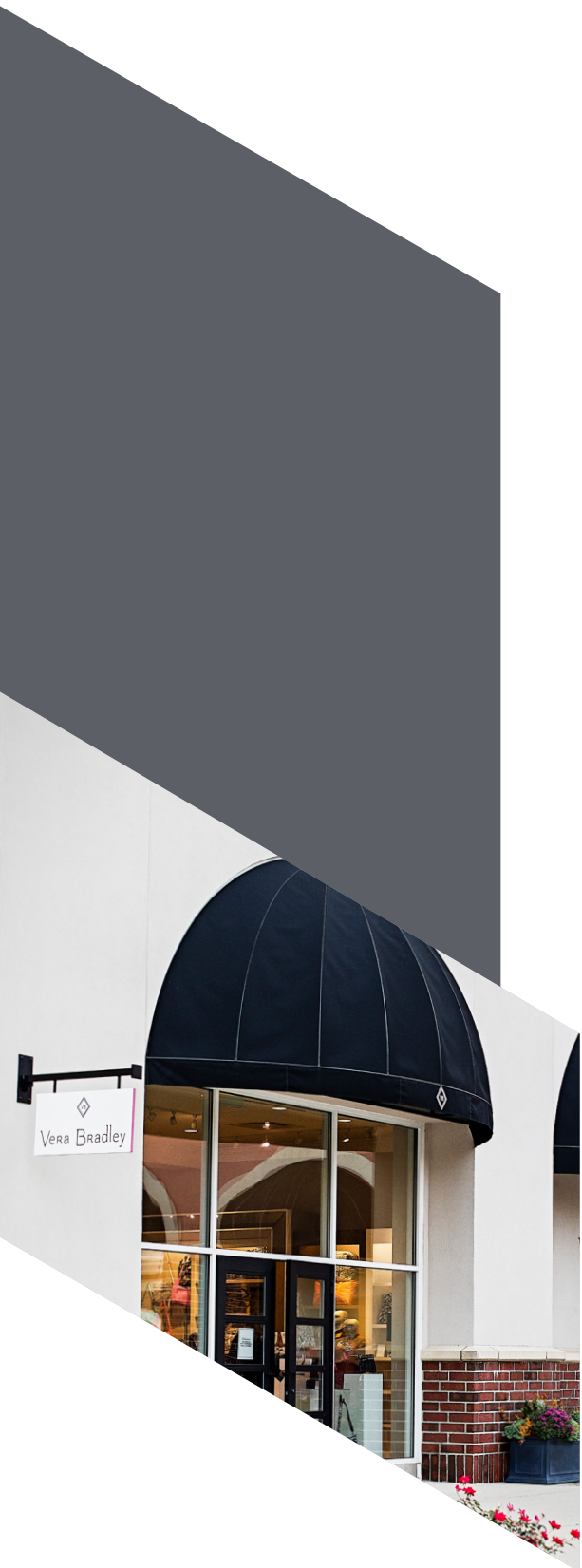
- see prioritized activities on a dashboard that is regularly refreshed with new information.
- quickly locate what is pertinent on a color-coded user interface (UI).
- plan out their week in advance with centralized calendars.
- see all messages in a single system, without the need to toggle between various applications to find their communications.
- quickly search for relevant messages without scanning through months' worth of email.

### **Workforce Budgeting and Scheduling Gaps**

Vera Bradley also saw an opportunity to put an automated scheduling system in place. This would free up store managers and give front-line associates more control over their schedules. Under the old system, each week, store managers relied on eight different spreadsheets to handle scheduling, payroll and related operations. They spent between five and 15 hours per week performing manual tasks, including looking up spreadsheet-based schedules and approving associate time swaps.

In some of the larger Factory Stores, the General Managers spent hours each week creating schedules for 30-40 store associates, trying to account for employee skillsets, availability, customer traffic, labor overtime, and much more.

The system had gaps and lacked automation, and managers were concerned that the schedules weren't compliant with the myriad of labor laws. Also, the schedules weren't always aligned to sales peaks and other types of customer demand drivers.



## Reducing Time and Effort with Automated Scheduling

Vera Bradley needed a system that would save time and effort spent in scheduling, while complying with labor laws and business rules. So, in 2014, the company also rolled out Workcloud Scheduling for labor budgeting, forecasting, and scheduling. The system is integrated with Workcloud Task Management to ensure stores have enough labor resources for the timely completion of all corporate-generated activities.

With a couple of clicks, on-site managers can quickly get a store snapshot and make changes to schedules. “From a personal perspective, our store managers are a thousand times happier than they had been,” says Lauri Bray, District Manager at Vera Bradley. “They’re not working on schedules until 8 p.m. at night.” For managers in high-volume stores, it has reduced schedule creation time to 30 minutes and put three-to-four hours a week back on the floor for selling.

The employees enjoy fair and equitable schedules with timely postings. Among the various return on investment (ROI) metrics were a 25-50 % improvement in scheduling effectiveness (through allocation of labor to customer demand). Each store now saves 15 hours per week—time which can be used by associates to be on the floor, selling—while the system also provides a 6% payroll savings annually.

“With Zebra solutions, stores feel so much more organized and staff can focus on the customer,” says Vice President of Stores, Kelly Brown. “And store managers love [Workcloud] Scheduling because it is so fast, intuitive, and efficient. With [Workcloud] Advanced Analytics and Reporting, store managers can review overs and shorts and corporate can identify opportunities to further optimize schedules.”

## Explosive Growth in Supply Chain

Vera Bradley’s continuous rapid growth and expanding channels required the rollout of retail inventory solutions in its distribution center and to support its stores’ fulfillment processes. The company services multiple distribution channels (including those involving partnerships with major retailers, while supporting their own Vera Bradley Full Line and Factory Stores) as well as the e-commerce business. Today, Vera Bradley has deployed Zebra LI3678 and DS9208 scanners as well as Zebra ZT230 industrial printers to assist in the order picking and outbound shipping process. Zebra MC9200 mobile computers are also used for inventory tracking and interfacing with its Warehouse Management System (WMS).



## Driving Visibility, Accountability in Inventory Processes

Vera Bradley leverages the Workcloud Inventory Visibility self-scan software solution and Zebra MC2180 mobile computers for annual physical inventory. Workcloud Inventory Visibility offers real-time inventory visibility to optimize shrink, boost sales and provide Corporate stakeholders with real-time chain-wide views of all activity for both Vera Bradley Full Line and Factory Store locations from a single dashboard. The Workcloud Inventory Visibility system controls audit routines while task management software ensures an accurate and streamlined process to conduct the physical inventory.

Leveraging the easy-to-adopt Zebra platform, Vera Bradley personnel from all levels (Corporate/District/Store) can quickly access their physical inventory to sure up their in-stock positions and in-store displays to help to reduce the potential for lost sales.



To learn more please visit [www.zebra.com](http://www.zebra.com)



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