

Automating Ecommerce Fulfillment to Support Explosive Growth



Online thrift store Goodfair implemented Descartes Peoplevox™ ecommerce warehouse management system (WMS) to automate, streamline, and scale its order fulfillment processes to meet the escalating demand for its unique themed mystery bundles of secondhand clothing. By eliminating paper-based practices, the cloud-based WMS increased fulfillment by 700% and tightened inventory control while elevating the customer experience by reducing time to ship and ensuring order accuracy.

“The productivity gains, coupled with powerful inventory reporting, enabled us to not only bring our massive backlog under control but also to keep pace with explosive growth. By replacing inefficient warehouse practices with automated pick-and-pack workflows using Descartes Peoplevox, we’ve increased our order fulfillment speed by 700% and finally have accurate inventory data!”

Ryan Merket

Head of Product and Engineering, Goodfair

Company Profile

Goodfair
Online Thrift Store

Descartes Solution

Descartes Peoplevox™

About the Client

Founded in 2018, Houston-based Goodfair is revolutionizing the way people shop with the first-ever true online thrift experience. Every preloved item is a fraction of the cost of buying new and the team hand-selects each piece into a one-of-a-kind themed bundle.

Quick Overview**Challenge**

Manual Processes Impede
Fulfillment Efficiency

Solution

Automating for Dramatic Growth

Results

- Increased Productivity
- Scaling for Growth
- Greater Inventory Control
- Happy Customers

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Challenge: Manual Processes Impede Fulfillment Efficiency

With its atypical procurement process, Goodfair has unique fulfillment and inventory management challenges. The online retailer acquires large (100-150 lbs) bales of donated clothing from textile recycling centers. After unpacking the bales and sorting clothes in its 40,000-sq.ft. warehouse, pieces are transported 150 yards to a second warehouse to be folded, racked, picked, and packed into one-of-a-kind bundles. After a viral social media video drove sales to unprecedented heights overnight—rising from revenues of ~\$800/day to \$500,000 in 24 hours—the company realized its paper-based pick-and-pack process could not keep pace with accelerating volumes. Existing manual fulfillment processes resulted in a backlog of 14,000 orders and compromised inventory management and customer service.

Solution: Automating for Dramatic Growth

With the aim of streamlining and accelerating its ecommerce order fulfillment process, Goodfair deployed the cloud-based Descartes Peoplevox ecommerce WMS in March 2021, increasing efficiency, boosting picking productivity, and improving visibility into inventory to enhance the customer experience.

“The Descartes solution has completely transformed our warehouse operations. We used to manually print out orders, use a highlighter for each order, and find the clothes on the rack at the location,” said Ryan Merket, Goodfair’s Head of Product and Engineering. “And hopefully we had the inventory to fulfill those orders.”

Within two months of deploying Descartes Peoplevox, Goodfair increased its warehouse speed dramatically, with six pickers now able to ship 500-800 orders on average per day, up from 200 orders previously. “At our fastest, we can ship 1,600 orders out in a day, compared with our previous record without the WMS of 700 orders,” noted Merket.

In 2020, when Goodfair was flooded with sales of \$500,000 in 24 hours in response to a viral TikTok video, manual warehouse practices crumbled under the weight of the sheer volume of customer orders, creating a 14,000-order backlog as sales continued to pour in. Descartes Peoplevox, seamlessly integrated with the Shopify ecommerce platform, enabled Goodfair to quickly whittle down the backlog to manageable levels by shipping product within a week of receiving an order, instead of making customers wait up to eight weeks.

In addition, the inventory team uses Descartes Peoplevox on Android phones to enter items into stock, tightly controlling inventory management. “The item counts flow into Shopify so what customers see is what we actually have on hand,” said Merket. “This seems so basic but was revolutionary for us.”

Previously, employees were processing orders in the dark, guessing at which garments they thought needed priority. “With the Descartes system, we can run ‘need to be processed’ reports of priority items several times a day, synced with Shopify orders, to help get shipments out the door faster,” added Merket.

Results:



Increased Productivity

By eliminating inefficient and error-prone paper-based fulfillment processes, Goodfair reduced an initial order backlog of 14,000 to a manageable 3,000, increased shipments from 200/day to 500-800/day, and reduced fulfillment time from eight weeks to a single week.



Scaling for Growth

Descartes Peoplevox scales easily to handle huge surges in order volume while operating at full speed. Accelerating order fulfillment speed by 700%, Goodfair is on track to generate \$10 million in revenue in 2021—a 500%+ increase from 2019.



Greater Inventory Control

Integrated seamlessly with Shopify, Descartes Peoplevox drives accurate inventory management, making sure warehouse stock and website stock are matched up in real-time. Daily reports of priority ‘need to be processed’ items ensures pick-and-pack workflows run smoothly and swiftly.



Happy Customers

By automating its order fulfillment process and leveraging full visibility into warehouse inventory, Goodfair improved the customer experience, increasing order accuracy and reducing the time to ship to one week from the previous eight-week wait.