



AT A GLANCE

Profile:

Founded in 1928, Dreyer's/Edy's Grand Ice Cream is the best-selling brand of premium ice cream and frozen desserts in the U.S.

Business Goals:

Ensure accurate order selection in a harsh environment

Enhance customer satisfaction

Products:

Vocollect VoiceLink™
Enterprise Connector

Vocollect T2 Mobile Devices

Results:

Accuracy level increased by 50%

Productivity increased by 15%

Payback in less than 12 months

Edy's Grand Ice Cream

KEEPING THE 'GRAND' IN EDY'S GRAND ICE CREAM

In 1928, ice cream maker William Dreyer and candy maker Joseph Edy founded a small ice cream factory on Grand Avenue in Oakland, California and the rest is history. Today, as part of the Nestlé family, Dreyer's/Edy's Grand Ice Cream is a \$2 billion a year success story.

Known for uncompromising quality and tantalizing flavors, Dreyer's/Edy's Grand Ice Cream is the best-selling brand of packaged ice cream and premium frozen desserts in the U.S. On the international front, sales in the Far East, the Caribbean and South America have grown strongly in recent years.

Among the ingredients for keeping customers satisfied: ensuring accurate order selection with Honeywell Vocollect™ voice solutions.

“We’ve reached a whole new level of operational performance and we couldn’t have done it without the help of Honeywell and its Vocollect voice solution.”

— **Brad Adams**, *Division Logistics Manager, Edy's Grand Ice Cream*

The Challenge: Productivity at 20° Below

“Grand” has been part of the Dreyer’s/Edy’s name ever since the company was founded nearly 75 years ago. It’s both a reminder of its Grand Avenue birthplace and a testament to its products, whether marketed as Dreyer’s (in Texas and states west of the Rockies) or Edy’s (east of the Rockies).

Grand ice cream requires many things, including the coldest environment for any food product: -40°C (-40°F) during hardening and -29°C (-20°F) during storage, to keep flavor and consistency at their very best. While -29°C (-20°F) is optimal for ice cream, it’s near impossible for most equipment, including anything with an LCD screen, as most scanners can only tolerate maximum -20°C (-4°F).

For people working in the freezer picking customer orders, -29°C (-20°F) is almost unbearable. It’s a constant challenge to handle a paper list and mark off items with a pencil (ink would freeze), or to try to key data into a handheld device while wearing thick gloves. It’s also a very slow process, which prolongs the time people have to spend in the freezer.

For the company, the extreme cold poses a challenge as well – ensuring that every customer order is filled as accurately and efficiently as possible. Because Edy’s services the premium and super-premium markets, and offers high-end products, if a store runs out of stock, it misses a big sale. And, from the customer’s point of view, “out of stock” doesn’t just mean Edy’s ice cream. When that craving hits, nothing but Cherry Chocolate Chip or Ultimate Caramel Cup will do.

For more information:

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The Solution: Vocollect Mobile Devices on Ice

After implementing a number of operational improvements in recent years, management at two of the larger Edy’s distribution centers (DCs), in Chicago, Illinois, and Rockaway, New Jersey, believed that they were running nearly as accurately and productively as they could. Moving on to a new level would require a new type of effort – and the technology to support it. Independently, each DC came to the same conclusion – voice-enabling technology.

After due diligence, the Chicago facility selected and installed Vocollect mobile devices. Rockaway followed suit, but completed its installation even more quickly, as it was able to build upon the experience at the first site. In both locations, Vocollect mobile devices were integrated into the existing warehouse management system (WMS), as well as an RF system that transmits data/voice translations between the wireless Vocollect devices and the facility’s host system.

Ultimately, all 100+ order selectors at these sites wear a lightweight Vocollect device on a belt, under the bib of their freezer suit, to help them do their jobs. Throughout shifts, the Vocollect device continues to prove that it is engineered to stand up to the coldest temperatures. It’s also able to deal with high noise levels: With fans and compressors running, ambient noise in the freezer can reach 80 decibels. In addition, Vocollect mobile devices can accommodate a wide range of speech patterns and language needs. The system speaks most major languages, but because it standardizes work process commands, Edy’s has found that most workers are comfortable hearing commands in English. Workers can choose to answer in Spanish, French, etc. – it’s not a problem. The Vocollect device’s speaker-dependent, user-trained voice recognition accepts whatever verbalization the worker trains the system to recognize.

The Results: Sweet Success

Edy’s measures mis-picks more stringently than many other companies. To Edy’s, an order is either completely right or completely wrong, because that’s the way customers see it. By that standard, the results at Chicago and Rockaway are all the more impressive – mis-picks are down 50 percent with Vocollect mobile devices on the job. At the same time, productivity is up a solid 15 percent.

One key reason is that workers can now combine a number of separate orders as one pick assignment. At any given stop, they can select items for two or more orders, stacking them on separate carts. They’re able to run one trip, but fill multiple orders – and do so more accurately and more efficiently than ever before. It doesn’t take long for that combination to pay off. Also, the Edy’s facilities have noted a very quick acceptance of Vocollect mobile devices by their workforce. A few weeks was more than enough time for employees to get used to working in a new way – and more than enough to balk at ever going back to the old system. The learning curve was even faster at Rockaway, as some employees had trained in Chicago.

Finally, managers instrumental in the move to voice-directed picking have reported that, from the start, Vocollect mobile devices performed exactly as expected. The Honeywell site team had the entire system up and running – and people working very comfortably with it – in a matter of days. The result was a fast and easy transition to the new system, helped along by any support as needed. And now, it’s a hardworking system that stands up to the toughest conditions, even -29°C (-20°F)... which is certainly grand indeed.