

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, CA. The rest is history... Today, Dreyer's/Edy's Grand Ice Cream is a \$1 billion a year success story. Known for uncompromising quality and tantalizing flavors, it 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 tripled in recent years. Among the ingredients for keeping customers satisfied: voice-directed order selection from Vocollect.



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 marvelous products, whether they're marketed as Dreyer's (in Texas and states west of the Rockies) or Edy's (east of the Rockies).

Marvelous ice cream requires many things, including extreme cold: 40 below zero during hardening and 20 below zero during storage, to keep flavor and consistency at their very best. It's the coldest environment for any food product — or just about anything else, for that matter.

While -20°F is optimal for ice cream, it's impossible for most equipment, including anything with an LCD (as in *liquid* crystal display). Even the hardiest scanners bottom out at -4.

For people working in the freezer picking customer orders, -20 can be almost unbearable. And it's a constant challenge, handling a paper list and marking off items with a pencil (ink would freeze), or trying to key data into a hand-held device, while wearing thick gloves. It's also very slow, which prolongs the time people spend in the freezer.

For the company, the extreme cold is a challenge as well: ensuring that every customer order is filled as accurately and efficiently as possible. Because Edy's services the premium and superpremium markets, its products are high-end. 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.

"We've Reached a whole new level of operational performance: we couldn't have done it without the help of Talkman."

Brad Adams

Division Logistics Manager
Edy's Grand Ice Cream

Voice Results

Application

- Freezer picking

Installation

- 50 Talkman terminals
- Home-grown WMS
- 802.11b RF backbone

Issues

- Improved accuracy
- Increased productivity
- Extreme work environment

Early Results

- Mispicks down 50%
- Productivity up 14%

Future Improvements

- Additional applications and/or installations

"When you're working in extreme conditions, data entry is a real problem. We turned to Talkman as the solution."

Brad Adams

Division Logistics Manager
Edy's Grand Ice Cream

The Solution:

Talkman on Ice

After implementing a number of operational improvements in recent years, management at two of the larger Edy's distribution centers (Chicago, IL, and Rockaway, NJ) believed 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 answer: voice-directed distribution systems.

After due diligence, the Chicago facility selected and installed the Talkman® system by Vocollect. 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, Talkman systems were integrated into the existing WMS, as well as an RF system that transmits data/voice translations between the wireless Talkman computers and the facility's host system.

Today all 100+ order selectors at these sites wear a lightweight Talkman unit on a belt, under the bib of their freezer suit, to help them do their jobs. All week long, Talkman 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 db.

In addition, Talkman 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. If they choose to answer in Spanish, for example, it's no problem. Talkman's speaker-dependent technology accepts whatever verbalization the individual trains the system to recognize.

The Result:

Sweet Success

Edy's measures mispicks more stringently than many other companies. To Edy's, an order is either completely right or completely wrong, because that's the way their customers see it. By that standard, the results at Chicago and Rockaway are all the more impressive: mispicks are down 50 percent with Talkman on the job.

At the same time, productivity is up a solid 14 percent. One key reason is that workers can now run 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 Talkman. 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. The learning curve was even faster at Rockaway, as some people had trained in Chicago.

Finally, managers instrumental in the move to voice-directed picking have reported that, from the start, Talkman performed exactly as expected. The Vocollect site team had the entire system up and running — and people working very comfortably with it — in a matter of days.

The result: a fast and easy transition to the new system, helped along by top-notch Tech Support as needed. And ever since: a hard-working system that stands up to the toughest conditions, even -20. 🍷



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Vocollect. Voice-Directed Distribution.

Since pioneering voice recognition for industry in 1987, Vocollect has set the standard for warehouses and other business settings. Together, its market-leading Talkman® wearable mobile computer and integrated software suite cut operating costs by eliminating errors and improving worker productivity shift after shift.

Leading WMS providers, material handling integrators and specialty voice solution providers around the world choose the performance and reliability of Vocollect to deliver integrated voice-directed distribution solutions. And every day, over 60,000 workers around the globe rely on Vocollect's integrated voice solution to help improve their operations.