Raley’s Finds ‘One-Stop Shopping’ at Melink

Intelli-Hood Controls and Melink T&B Help Supermarket Chain Nab Energy Star Rating

Nearly every supermarket these days is a combination grocery store, pharmacy, deli, bakery, photo processor, gas station and florist.

Raley’s Family of Fine Foods is no exception. The company is a top-rated, 140-unit supermarket chain based out of Sacramento, California that consists of four separate concepts—Bel Air Markets, Nob Hill Foods, Food Source, and Raley’s, which was recently rated number one in the nation by consumers.

It makes sense that the Raley’s supermarket chain looks to Melink Corporation for the same kind of “one-stop shopping” convenience it offers in its stores. With Melink, Raley’s can obtain a variety of solutions from a single company—such as specifying energy-saving controls and getting help qualifying for the ENERGY STAR® label.

ENERGY STAR® is a government-backed program that seeks to protect the environment by encouraging energy-efficient practices. Buildings that conform to a set of energy-conserving standards are eligible to display the ENERGY STAR® Label for Buildings (above). Raley’s is among a growing number of businesses seeking to achieve ENERGY STAR® status.

Raley’s initially thought of Melink when it saw an opportunity to save energy with the Intelli-Hood® Controls. Sam Cantrell, a mechanical engineer for Raley’s, heard of the controls and sought out the Melink booth at the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) convention last September. There he met with Melink’s director of national account sales, Jim Sether.

Upon discussion with Cantrell, Sether discovered that “Raley’s has the typical criteria that lend themselves to reaping a lot of benefits from the Intelli-Hood.” These criteria include diversified cooking equipment, appliances that are often idle during the day, and high energy costs.

So after Melink installed the first Intelli-Hood system into an existing Raley’s store in April, it wasn’t too surprising when the data came back “very encouraging,” Sether said. The controls were able to reduce the average speed of the store’s exhaust fans by a considerable amount, and the expected payback was well within two years. As a result, Raley’s has decided to specify the controls in future stores.

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After specifying the Intelli-Hood, Raley’s learned that Melink also offered testing & balancing services. Already in the process of applying for the ENERGY STAR® label, Raley’s was pleased to discover that Melink T&B could help them achieve their goal by providing them with a PE-certified, third-party air balance report—which is one of the criteria mandated by the ENERGY STAR® eligibility requirements. Melink is also helping the chain by collecting some of the additional HVAC data that Raley’s needs to submit to ENERGY STAR®.

Three distinct solutions—one company. Melink proves that you don’t have to be a supermarket chain to offer the convenience of one-stop shopping.
Employee Spotlight: Field Engineer Mark Snyder

It’s hard to imagine Melink Corporation without Mark Snyder, whose 10-year career as a field engineer is the longest in the company. In fact, the length of his career at Melink is second only to company founder and President Steve Melink.

As one of the first employees, Mark remembers when he and Steve shared Steve’s basement as the company’s “headquarters” during the early 1990s.

“I was fresh out of college and I was learning the ropes,” he said. “I thought I would never get used to all the little details that are involved in balancing a store.”

He did get used to them, however, and his contribution to the company has been substantial.

“Mark has helped Melink grow from a small company with just a few accounts to an industry leader with over 100 national account customers,” Steve said.

To meet the demands of Melink’s growing customer list, traveling has been a big part of Mark’s job.

“I have often flown to three or four cities in one week and done a job or two in each,” he said. On one occasion, he had to perform a job on the west coast and then take an all-night flight to the east coast, where he had a job scheduled for the next day.

Still, Mark admits that there are “definite perks to all the travel,” as he is sometimes sent to exotic places like Hawaii, the Bahamas, and the Cayman Islands for air balance work.

Although Mark travels quite a bit less these days thanks to Melink’s expanding national network of technicians, he still enjoys the “challenges of juggling the travel and the work.” He also likes the flexibility of his job, the fact that he is always learning new things, and the opportunity it affords him to work with Melink’s Intelli-Hood Controls.

“I love the Intelli-Hood product,” he said. “It is revolutionizing the foodservice industry.” And as a strong environmentalist, Mark’s enthusiasm for the energy-saving controls makes sense.

“His passion for the environment is legendary,” Steve said. “Fortunately for us, our T&B services and Intelli-Hood Controls fit perfectly within his strong personal belief system.”

Another reason for Mark’s long career at Melink is Steve Melink himself, whom Mark describes as “an excellent boss” who “is very fair and keeps the working atmosphere one of excellence.”

When not working, Mark enjoys rock climbing and reading. He lives in Denver with his wife, Natasha, and their seven pets.

Melink’s Reps Contribute to the Company’s Success

Don Hamilton is a foodservice equipment veteran. He has 21 years of experience in the commercial kitchen ventilation field and has owned his own company for the past 13 years. There’s not much he hasn’t seen in the industry.

It’s no surprise, then, that his first impression of Melink’s Intelli-Hood Controls at a NAFEM show in 1999 was one of skepticism.

Little did he know that just a year later, he would be selling the controls himself.

“Every objection I had was answered fully by Melink,” Hamilton said. “Now I believe in [the controls] completely. No hood should be without them.”

Hamilton is president of a company that specializes in kitchen ventilation, from design to complete turnkey installation. Although he started his company in 1991 as Hamilton & Associates, the name was changed this year to Commercial Ventilation Solutions, LLC.

“Adding Melink to our product line [was] the main reason for changing our company name to CVS,” he said.

The company now produces a brochure promoting the Intelli-Hood Controls that says: “Would you buy a house without a thermostat? Would you buy a car without a thermostat? Why do you let your kitchen exhaust hood fun all day at full throttle? Stop wasting energy!”

Hamilton’s enthusiasm for the controls was infectious to one of his colleagues, Kurt Kaemmerlen, who is another expert in the industry. His family’s 80-year-old business, Kaemmerlen Parts & Service, specializes in commercial foodservice equipment and ventilation.

Kaemmerlen’s first saw the controls when he was working with Hamilton on a grocery store project. He thought it looked like a “great system,” so he found out more and even attended a training class along with Hamilton at Melink’s Intelli-Hood plant in Cincinnati.

“After training at the factory, it became very obvious that this was a great addition to all the kitchen ventilation work we were doing, and we needed to start promoting Melink,” Kaemmerlen said.

Today, both Hamilton and Kaemmerlen are representatives of the Intelli-Hood Controls in the St. Louis, Mo. region.
Melink Corporation’s annual Company Meeting was held March 25-26 at the Ivy Hills Country Club in Cincinnati. Technicians came in from 18 different cities across the country, many with their spouses. Melink employees made the meeting an enormous success as they absorbed a wealth of information, participated in meetings and brainstorming sessions, met the many new employees, underwent training, and received some new equipment. The group also enjoyed a riverboat dinner cruise on the Ohio River. Employees came away feeling refreshed,
Meet Melink’s Newest Employees

Matt Baer
Matt is an Account Specialist for Melink. He last worked at Rite Track Equipment as an Applications Engineer. Prior to that, Matt was a co-op integration technician. He has a Bachelor’s degree from Miami University in Media Management and an Associate’s degree in Electro-Mechanical Engineering Technology from Cincinnati State College.

Keith Johnson
Keith fills a new role as General Manager for Melink T&B. His mission is to help grow the T&B business to its full potential and provide the necessary leadership along the way. Keith has worked as an engineer for Procter & Gamble for the last 10 years. He has a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois in Electrical Engineering and an MBA from Duke University.

Danielle Heming
Danielle joins Melink as an Administrative Assistant with the Test & Balance team. She has spent the last seven years with Delta Air Lines as a Reservations Specialist. Danielle is the graduate of a two-year, intensive office education program where she gained expertise in a variety of business and office managing topics.

Patrick Hiti
Patrick joins the Melink team as a new Test & Balance Technician based in the San Francisco area. He last worked as a Controls Engineer for Epic Engineering. Prior to that, Patrick spent two years at Club Med as the Head Tennis Pro. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Industrial Technology from Ohio University with a minor in Business.

Keith Taylor
Keith comes from Kansas as Melink’s new Test & Balance Technician for the Midwest. Keith has spent the last four years as a Service Technician for ADJ-HUX. He has also worked as a Service Technician for City Wide Sheet Metal. Keith has numerous certifications and has much coursework and training in HVAC-related topics.

Geronimo Tanap
Geronimo is Melink’s new Test & Balance Technician for the Las Vegas area. He last worked for Boeing Satellite Systems as a Senior Space Simulation Technician. He also has experience with FANUC Robotics as a Manufacturing/Robotic Field Installation Engineer. Geronimo holds an Associate’s degree in Electrical Engineering.

Intelli-Hood® Controls Training Opportunities

Interested in learning more about the Intelli-Hood® Controls? Attend a training class in Cincinnati to learn how to install, commission, and service the controls. Melink offers the classes based upon demand. Call Ted Owen at 513-527-7020, extension 201.

At left, a group of “trainees” takes a break to pose for a photo in the Intelli-Hood plant during a training class that was held March 4-5. The group consists of attendees from Greenheck, Commercial Ventilation Solutions, Kaemerlen Parts and Service, Pro-Ducts, Town Center Refrigeration, Energy Management, and Automated Controls Systems. Another class was held May 20-21, and the next class will be offered in July.

Interested in becoming part of Melink’s future growth? We are always looking for top-notch talent! Please visit our website at www.melinkcorp.com/careers for more information.