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The 80/20 Guide to Better Cold Chain Management

“How to Achieve at least 80% of the potential gains, while spending 20% or less of the potential investment.”

1. **Clean and Calibrate.** Make sure your refrigeration equipment is clean and well-maintained, so that it performs at its best, minimizing chances of hot- or cold-spots in your warehouse or cold storage rooms. Also have in place a periodic re-calibration system for your temperature controls, for the same reason. These also help you reduce electrical costs, as clean equipment can function to full capacity.
2. **Know where the hot and cold spots are in your facility, and avoid storing product in them!** Why in the world would anyone store valuable produce in a known trouble spot? An infrared thermometer is perfect for this, and inexpensive data loggers can help as well. You will be amazed at how claims and rejects can be correlated to physical locations within your warehouse, once you start to keep score. Always remember – you can't manage that which you do not measure! Consider High-Volume Low-Speed overhead fans to reduce stratification.
3. **Pre-Cooling.** If your facility performs pre-cooling for freshly harvested fruit and vegetables, this is a critical component of shelf life and optimizing quality and value. Make sure the cooling coils are clean, your tarps and other gasketing systems are well maintained. And be sure your operators know how to use the cooling tunnels properly. Consider automatic controls, to reverse airflow for faster and better results, and also to turn off the pre-cooler when desired temperature is achieved.
4. **Good Humidifiers are Pure Profit Enhancers.** We all know that fresh fruit and veggies are 80+% water, yet most of the industry just lets profits literally evaporate away, by failing to control humidity levels during storage. Either you sell fresh produce by weight, or your customer does, so either way, it's a complete bottom line event to allow stored product to lose weight. If you can stop ½ of 1 percent in weight loss, this equates to adding ½ of 1 percent of sales, directly to your profits. For most companies, this is an increase of 10% or more in bottom line profits. *Fresh produce that retains more of its original weight, also has longer shelf life and better curb appeal, further enhancing the Bottom Line. We can help with Humidifier selection and ROI analysis.*

Decrease Costs, Increase Profits

Keeping It Cold Is Not Good Enough™

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Cold Chain Management for Better Produce

5. **Be Sure Your Facility does not have “Air Pollution.”** We have seen so many operators, doing things such as: running LP or diesel forklifts indoor, or letting diesel trucks and tractors idle when under roof. You should know that hydrocarbon combustion produces a range of hydrocarbons, including ethylene, which is deadly to most fruit and veggies. This combustion also produces carbon monoxide, which can be dangerous or even deadly to humans. Even if you use all electric forklifts, and keep engines out of your warehouse or shed, high ethylene producers can harm highly ethylene sensitive produce. Measure your airborne ethylene levels, and if you have more than 1 ppm in the air, investigate and install air purifiers, some types of which also kill airborne mold, mildew, fungus, and bacteria.
6. **Practice Absolute Product Rotation.** This is one of the basics of the perishable business, get religious about it. Be sure your systems and staff, assure 100% compliance with proper FIFO product handling, otherwise little problems will turn into big problems, and tarnish your brand.
7. **Practice “Statistically-Significant” QA Inspection on Arrival.** How many cartons or units do you inspect, from each incoming load? 8? 10? 20? The answer should be: a Statistically-Significant Percentage. In your system, what is the “trigger point” on initial inspection, to escalate to an even more thorough inspection? If you don’t understand the concept of “Statistical Significance”, ask for help. Your systems should all be intelligently constructed (we also refer to this as, “Sacrificing Less Virgins at the Full Moon.”)
8. **Keep score!** Claims, credits, markdowns, and repack, all must be zealously tracked. How else do you know if you’re doing a good job or a bad job? If the numbers change, something about the operations has changed, and you can investigate correlations and reasons, and fix the system, so that it stays fixed.
9. **Finally, remember: There’s Always a Reason™!**

We hope that these simple constructs, will be of value to you and your company and customers. Please feel free to call upon us, if we can ever be of service.

Sincerely,

Global Cooling Inc.
James D. Still, President



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