



Leading the Way: Sysco Utilizes Warehouse Technology to Keep Customers Safe

Next time you sit down to eat there's a good chance something on the table was shipped by Sysco. Sysco is a Houston-based food distributor that annually ensures 21.5 million tons of food makes it quickly and safely from producers to consumers. In fact, one out of every three restaurants, cafeterias and sports stadiums in the U.S. – or one-quarter of the entire American market - serve food and food products from Sysco.

Sysco utilizes 193 distribution centers across the U.S. A key feature of Sysco's warehouse technology is bar coding all food and restaurant products. The bar coding ensures that Sysco knows exactly how much stock it has in its warehouse at any point in time and also allows the company to assign expiration dates to every single piece of inventory – even non-perishable items!

In addition to helping the company track where inventory is going, it helps Sysco keep track of which products are provided by all of their individual vendors. This technology can assist in emergency situations, such as helping prevent the spread of food-related disease. When the Food and Drug Administration ordered the recall of salmonella-contaminated peanut products supplied by Peanut Corp. of America in 2008, Sysco was able to notify the FDA that six of its vendors could also have potentially tainted goods. In the May 27, 2009 *Fortune* magazine article "Veggie Tales," writer Jia Lynn Yang wrote, "The company says it also used its tracking software to help the FDA investigate the sources of contamination by triangulating information about its shipments, eateries that had reported outbreaks, and the suspected ingredients. Using that kind of information, Sysco also helped health officials identify sources of contamination during the 2006 spinach E. coli outbreak."

Sources:

Yang, Jia Lynn. "Veggie Tales." *CNNMoney*. Cable News Network, 27 May 2009. Web. 19 May 2014.

"Meal Deal." *The Economist*. The Economist Newspaper, 14 Dec. 2013. Web. 14 May 2014.

"Sysco | Customer Solutions." *Customer Solutions*. Sysco, n.d. Web. 30 Apr. 2014.

