As the world’s leading distributor of food service equipment, Edward Don & Company (Don) required an efficient, centralized order-to-delivery process to meet the needs of its 70,000+ customers nationwide. Integrated with SAP, the cloud-based Descartes Route Planner On-demand solution streamlined the company’s delivery operations—increasing productivity, significantly reducing costs, and ensuring world-class customer service.

The Challenge: Inefficient Processes Hindering Customer Service Goals

Don has 12,000 items available for immediate shipment via its fleet of more than 100 trucks operating out of 6 distribution centers across the U.S. Driven by customer service excellence since its inception in 1921, Don strives for next-morning delivery—even if customers place their orders the night before. To consistently provide this level of service, Don required a streamlined, enterprise-wide delivery solution to increase productivity, efficiency, and responsiveness. The company also needed a way to route orders through a centralized system to eliminate downtime if one facility lost power.

Edward Don & Company
Delivering “Everything But the Food®” More Efficiently with Descartes

In addition to helping us generate savings of close to $100,000 in the first year alone through increased route productivity and delivery efficiency, Descartes has been a great business partner. They have worked closely with us to solve our business problems, meet our needs, and help us maximize delivery performance.

– Tom Wydra, Corporate Fleet Manager
Edward Don & Company

Edward Don required a technology solution that could help better manage its order-to-delivery processes, connect with existing systems and optimize delivery routes to maximize operational performance.

ABOUT EDWARD DON & COMPANY
Owned and operated by the Don family since 1921, Edward Don & Company is the world’s leading distributor of foodservice equipment and supplies. The company has 6 distribution facilities across the U.S. serving more than 70,000 customers, including independent restaurants, national chains, health care, universities, government institutions, and food service management organizations.
Instead of stand-alone technology in different locations, Don implemented Descartes’ cloud-based route planning and execution solution to consolidate order-to-delivery processes across six full-service distribution centers and more efficiently manage the movement of its unmatched product selection of 50,000+ items. Fully integrated with the company’s SAP enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, the Descartes solution optimizes Don’s delivery routes to improve truck utilization and time management while significantly reducing costs. “We can equal out the amount of orders and the stop, the cube, and the pieces to optimize the amount of driving a driver does. Plus, we can optimize the amount of product that goes onto a truck so that each route is as efficient as possible,” explained Robert Colbrook, Don’s Transportation Manager. “We saved close to $100,000 in the first year alone,” added Tom Wydra, Don’s Corporate Fleet Manager.

With easy cloud-based access to route planning and daily execution, the Descartes solution also provides visibility into operational performance. “From any location, we can monitor the real-time status of our deliveries. We can also assess our plan versus actual—to see how well our routers are performing on a daily basis compared to how drivers are actually delivering,” noted Wydra.

Prior to implementing the Descartes solution in 2004, each facility operated independently. The potential loss of business continuity in the event of power outages and lack of disaster recovery help were key concerns for the company. “Now, with all orders routed through a centralized database, if Florida were to lose power from a hurricane, God forbid, we would be able to route their deliveries from any of our other distribution centers,” said Wydra.

The Results

Substantial Cost Savings
Don significantly boosted its bottom line by increasing operational efficiency. The Descartes solution reduced overall fleet mileage and fuel consumption, improved time-window management, and increased the capacity of its fleet of more than 100 trucks.

Superior Customer Service
The Descartes solution optimizes Don’s delivery schedules and routes to ensure timely, next-day deliveries. By maximizing operational efficiency, the company has improved customer responsiveness and gained an advantage in the marketplace.

Increased Productivity
The Descartes solution helped improve operational performance through more efficient route development and a consolidated order-to-delivery process. Don can better align deliveries and schedules to enhance truck utilization and increase driver efficiency.

Improved Visibility
By replacing stand-alone systems with a centralized, cloud-based routing solution, Don can monitor the status of its delivery operations from any location. Real-time visibility also enables analysis of its plan vs. actual to evaluate operational performance.