

How To Effectively Increase Dwell Time in Cold Food Aisles



By: **CHRISTIAN AVEDON**

Is your supermarket cooling and heating difficult to maintain? Do you have high energy bills and uneven temperatures? Your problem might be stratification.

Stratification is the tendency for hot air to rise toward the tall ceilings in large buildings, and grocery stores often face this problem due to the variety of temperatures present in the store. From the cold cases to the deli, and with the front doors opening and closing for every new customer, maintaining a consistent temperature is difficult. Without a destratification system, a badly stratified grocery store can be an awfully unpleasant place to work or shop.

It's long been known that a shopping environment needs to offer a comfortable space for the shoppers to maximize the time they spend in a store and increase the general amount of goods purchased. Data has shown that an increased store comfort level is associated with

increased "destratification," a cost-saving measure that involves utilizing a specialized destratification fan in each area of the store to maintain an even distribution of air throughout the area.

The degree of success this strategy can have on people's perception of where they are inside the store may surprise you. Reduced discomfort means more time spent in the store, more sales and reduced energy usage, which is good for a grocer's bottom line.

In one case, an Alfalfa's Market in Boulder, Colorado, Store Director Dale Kamibayashi talked about the results they achieved after installing destratification fans: "We feel we were losing some business in products like cheeses, the olive bar, seafood and meats simply because chilly shoppers would get what they wanted but wouldn't take longer to browse over new food products or items not on their shopping list."

To increase customer and employee comfort, Alfalfa's in-

stalled several destratification fans throughout their store to equalize the temperature. The locally owned and independent natural food store also added specialized germ-fighting fans to combat viruses, molds and bacteria while reducing odors near its meat and seafood counter. These fans have an additional feature that uses ionized air to render pathogens inactive. Lower airborne and surface pathogen levels mitigate the risk to food products and customers alike and help increase profits for the store.

Does your store also experience fogging on the exterior glass of case doors? Destratification can help ameliorate this issue as well.

Another benefit of destratification fans is that they can help keep your freezer doors from fogging on the outside, allowing customers to easily see the items in the freezer cases. Minimized fogging, combined with a more comfortable temperature in the freezer section, will help increase customer dwell time in

this highly profitable aisle.

We hope this article has been able to help you gain more understanding of how to use destratification fans to increase dwell time in cold food aisles. In a world where visual merchandising is becoming increasingly important, it's imperative to understand the different ways that grocers can set up aisles to increase comfort and encourage customers to spend more time in their stores.

CHRISTIAN AVEDON is the Director of Sales & Marketing of Airius, a Colorado-based technology company focused on developing products that manage indoor air quality. Over the past 11 years, Avedon has successfully assisted thousands of customers in the selection and application of Airius destratification fan systems for their buildings. This customer base includes numerous companies in the grocery industry that have solved issues in their cold aisles, including door fog