



## eegee's and Panasonic Connect Elevated Customer Service with High Definition Drive-Thru Communication System.

### WHAT IN THE WORLD IS AN "EEGEE?"

Ask anyone from Tucson or Phoenix, Arizona, and there's a good chance they've had one of these famous frozen fruit drinks, known as an "eegee". Since 1971, Tucsonans and Phoenixians have flocked to the popular eegee's fast food to enjoy these frosty concoctions, along with their iconic submarine sandwiches. They take customer satisfaction very seriously and strive to be a community destination for fun and great food quality. In fact, part of their mission statement is to "...create vibrant shareable experiences that make normal days special and special days extraordinary for every guest."

This philosophy drives eegee's employees and team leaders like Dayne Thornton. Since 2014, Mr. Thornton has been the IT Support Supervisor at eegee's, providing his IT expertise to 24 restaurants and the corporate office. He is committed to using and upgrading to the best technology to enhance the customer experience, explaining, "At eegee's, our top priority is to focus on an excellent customer experience. This includes everything from providing impactful and effective marketing initiatives, to a quick and orderly drive-thru, and friendly customer service."

### ! CHALLENGES

The IT Supervisor for eegee's restaurants needed a new solution to improve the communication between their employees and customers. Their restaurants were becoming increasingly loud, with additional car traffic and the roar of overhead airplanes in the drive-thru, making it difficult to hear. They also needed better equipment to help streamline operations.

### 📄 SOLUTIONS

eegee's recently upgraded their technology to Panasonic Connect's drive thru communications solutions with the Attune HD. The digital noise reduction technology delivers the clearest, noise-free sound between customers and employees, for faster service and minimized errors.

### 📈 RESULTS

Panasonic Connect helped transform the way eegee's employees communicate with each other and their customers. So far, eegee's has experienced, on average, a decrease of 15 seconds on order times and 10 seconds for total drive times. Orders are going through more quickly, accurately and efficiently without the need to ask, "Can you repeat that, please"



## MINIMIZING NOISE AND MAXIMIZING EFFICIENCY

Over the past several years it was obvious to Mr. Thornton that communication between eegee's team members and customers was becoming more challenging due to background noise surrounding the drive-thru, such as heavy car traffic and even overhead planes. "We use technology to decrease service times and eliminate order errors, and even though we were using good quality audio, it was loud enough for the employees to hear clearly," he said. That's when he upgraded to the Attune HD drive-thru communication system part of the Panasonic Connect food services solution.



The Attune HD is a high definition, communication system featuring four levels of digital noise reduction technology that delivers the clearest, noise-free sound between customers and employees, so they hear each other – and nothing else. The advanced, durable and lightweight headset ensures that all outside background noise is eliminated, along with inside noise like ice makers, dishwashers and front of house chatter.

According to Mr. Thornton, using the right technology, as in Attune HD, has helped eegee's maximize operational efficiency and minimize error. He said, "We need to ensure that we're getting customers' orders right the first time – every time. Good communication is imperative, and Panasonic's Attune HD gives us better clarity among employees and customers and simplifies operations." He continues, "There's less stress on our customers and our employees that serve the customers. Customers aren't repeating themselves so they're less frustrated, so that in turn, makes our employees less stressed. The tone completely changes with good communication between all parties."

Mr. Thornton implemented the Attune HD system in two phases and communication was substantially improved. "We first installed the Attune HD system with the analog setting. Everything sounded good, then we switched to the higher

HD quality audio and it sounded great. The sound was much improved. It was very clear without the kitchen sounds heard in the background. We were especially pleased when we tested the system at one of our restaurants near an Air Force base and could actually hear each other over the roar of the plane engines," he said. Installation was simple and straightforward, and the team received the right level of support to ensure the system was up and running quickly, with all equipment properly labeled and comprehensive instructions.

Attune HD is not limited to the drive-thru lanes and can be utilized in other areas of the restaurant. According to Mr. Thornton, "Not only is the outside of eegee's busy, but the interior dining spaces are noisy as well. There are fryers beeping and toaster ovens chiming away. In addition, our customers in the dining area are talking, too. Yet, all that background noise is eliminated, and our team members are able to quickly take care of business."

In addition, with Attune HD, there's no frequency disruption because it operates on a unique frequency to avoid interfering with nearby devices and has individually controlled in-bound and out-bound digital noise reduction to reduce or eliminate environmental noises like traffic, planes, or trains, and background noises like employee chatter or kitchen equipment.

*“ My philosophy is that if it's not going to work for the customer, it's not going to work. ”*

— Dayne Thornton, IT Support Supervisor

## TRANSFORMING OPERATIONS WITH DYNAMIC NEW SOLUTIONS

Like all other restaurants, eegee's had to pivot during the height of the Covid pandemic, utilizing different technology and equipment to serve their customers in new, effective ways. Mr. Thornton described how overwhelmingly busy the drive-thru became when their dining rooms were forced to close, saying "Like everyone in the restaurant industry, we were trying to come up with new ways to provide great customer service, despite the long lines in the drive-thru."



His first initiative was to try to streamline the equipment. "At first, our drive-thru team members were line busting using walkie talkies, along with their headsets, tablet and a payment device not attached to the tablet. When they had to communicate with the staff inside, they'd have to put down the payment device and fumble between using the walkie talkie and headset to take orders," he said. The solution? The Attune HD wireless repeaters, which eliminated the need for the walkie-talkie. The repeater can double the distance of communications to the center module. He explains, "Now, our drive-thru team members can leave the talk lock on the headset and our interior team members can clearly hear when the customer is ordering, which is so much more efficient and accurate. No one must repeat themselves multiple times, so customers moved through the drive-thru much quicker. Plus, there's no more fumbling around with all this equipment."



During this time when everyone was masking up due to COVID mandates, the eegee's team discovered that communication wasn't a problem at all. In fact, the sound was excellent. According to Mr. Thornton, "With the 457 Headset, also by Panasonic Connect, the sound was crystal clear, despite customers and employees wearing masks. Also, the extended boom microphone is great. Now, employees can easily see where the mic is, so if it gets moved out of the way it can easily be readjusted for maximum clarity."

The sleek, environmentally conscious, durable design of the 457 headset is lightweight and built to withstand accidental drops and resist chemicals. And, the ear cushions can be run through the dishwashers to sanitize them – a Panasonic Connect exclusive. Dynamic noise suppression functionality allows you to independently adjust and reduce the amount of digital noise – for both incoming and outgoing noise. Easy-to-use headset buttons make communicating a breeze, with one button to change volume, one button to page and one button to change lanes to a second optional lane.

## DURABLE PRODUCTS AND A LASTING PARTNERSHIP

Mr. Thornton has partnered with the experts at Panasonic Connect for years, working together onsite at eegee's, troubleshooting issues and sharing ideas while listening to the system. He says, "Well, I've dealt with a number of companies before that involved too many people in the middle, which caused us to lose focus. I've been fortunate to work with one product expert at Panasonic Connect who consults with us onsite if we are having any issues and gets them resolved very quickly." This also gives the Panasonic Connect team the opportunity to use this valuable feedback to apply suggested fixes that lead to superior solutions like the Attune HD communication system. For additional flexibility and convenience, the Attune HD also includes an extended browser-based remote control that lets managers remotely connect to any of their restaurant units – via any browser – to easily troubleshoot, diagnose issues or make setting changes.

eegee's and its technology have come a long way since the early days in 1971, when their drive-thrus used a rubber hose to "ding" when cars would pull up to the restaurant. Since then, for years, eegee's has utilized Panasonic Connect's wireless drive-thru communications solutions because of their rugged durability. Mr. Thornton appreciates the longevity and reliability that Panasonic Connect affords its customers, commenting "The systems we used back then are, honestly, as robust as the ones we use today. Panasonic Connect makes something so good that I usually set it and forget it and don't need to go back to it for years. Their products and systems last and last." He recalls removing some of the older systems when it was time to transition to the newer ones. "I remember removing some of the older drive-thru systems that we had, and they were still performing strong."

*“ For longevity and equipment, Panasonic Connect gets an A+. If anything, Panasonic Connect products are over-engineered, which is a great thing. ”*

*— Dayne Thornton, IT Support Supervisor*

