

A Platform For Growth

Company:

Glazier Foods Company
Houston, TX

Challenge:

Equipping a new facility with levelers that enable safe truck access, door protection and easy wash-downs.

Solution:

Kelley Vertical Levelers.

Industry:

Food and Beverage

Geography:

Houston, TX

"We use verticals because by eliminating the pit, keeping the dock area clean is very easy."

From the time that C.R. "Bob" Glazier started his foodservice company back in 1936 with just \$300 in his pocket, the Glazier Food Company™ has gone on to fertilize this seed funding with a strong customer service mission. Since then, C.R.'s company hasn't stopped growing. Today, they have 4,300 food service accounts throughout Texas and beyond to Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas, annually supplying \$400 million in frozen and other food products to independent and chain restaurants, schools, universities and healthcare institutions.

In 2005, this growth led to Glazier Foods consolidating its office and central distribution warehousing operations from five buildings in the near downtown area to a new 208,000-square-foot building in northwest Houston. When they opened for business, the new site had 105,000 square feet of space of dry food storage, 30,000 square feet in the cooler area, 53,000 square feet for frozen food storage and 20,000 square feet for the corporate headquarters. The tract of land they chose serves three main purposes: it is large enough for the food distribution operation now and well into the future, it is close to Glazier Food's customer base and employees, and it provides easy accessibility to freeways.

Of course it is the equipment that enables Glazier to get the most out of this site. The company has chosen for this location Kelley® vertical dock levelers for multiple reasons, including



safe truck access, energy efficiency, protection of their dock doors and, of prime importance to Glazier, the ability to keep the dock area clean and free of debris.

Unlike standard dock levelers, which are installed in a deep concrete pit, vertical dock levelers are installed along the edge of a continuous shelf that runs the full length of the loading dock. This shelf configuration simplifies architectural design and construction and is the easiest application to clean and maintain, which is a benefit Glazier embraced fully. "We use verticals," says Glazier Vice President of Operations Bob Sarvis, "because by eliminating the pit, keeping the dock area clean is very easy."

"The crew doesn't have to worry about cleaning out a standard dock pit. Instead, there is a continuous shelf that is much easier to keep clean - certainly much easier than cleaning out an individual pit."

Sarvis goes on to point out, "The second reason is the vertical levelers defend the doors." When stored erect, the leveler's steel platform provides a barrier between oncoming forklifts and the dock door.

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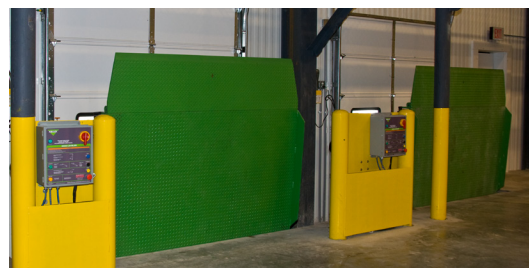


Having vertical levelers in their facility also provides Glazier with more energy efficiency and temperature control. Unlike traditional pit-mounted levelers, which often allow air to escape through the gaps around the perimeter of the leveler, a vertical leveler prevents air from escaping by allowing the dock door to be completely closed and sealed against the warehouse floor. Vertical applications can also be designed to allow trailer doors to swing into the facility, eliminating the need to open the doors before backing into position, and thus eliminating the risk of temperature fluctuation that results in spoilage – a necessity when dealing with food products in Glazier's cooler and freezer storage units.

One of the reasons Glazier selected the site for their facility was their planned expansion into the future. So in 2009, just after coming to the site, the company doubled both the dry and cold storage areas.

In the process, management rethought their choice of dock levelers, working with John Cadena and Bobby Griffin of The Miner Corporation in Houston to bring on the equipment they needed. Cadena immediately recognized that "Glazier is all about keeping the continuous shelf that runs along the dock absolutely clear of anything and securing as tight a doorway seal as possible to minimize energy loss."

One of the problems they faced with their existing levelers was the use of conduit around the equipment. In the first phase of the facility, vertical levelers from a different manufacturer were used; and a major mistake was made, the installer did not embed the conduit under the concrete floor, leaving it exposed on the pit shelf and



susceptible to damage as well as making it very difficult to keep the dock area clean and clear of debris.

The Kelley levelers, on the other hand, have a much cleaner installation, which Glazier appreciates, given their emphasis on cleanliness. Glazier likes the ability to mount the Kelley hydraulic pump and motor on a custom stanchion to the side of each leveler, creating a clean and streamlined setup. The hoses and conduit for the pump are run under the concrete, providing them with unobstructed access to the area around the leveler for easy cleaning.

Management throughout the supply chain is keenly concerned about cleanliness, which, as Sarvis puts it, "is a big issue for us." He feels keeping the dock clean impacts the ability to deliver a safe product to the table and comply with food regulations. Furthermore, Glazier is constantly bringing in representatives from both existing and prospective accounts, and the company wants a neat dock area to demonstrate that they are a reliable source.

Glazier has an annual sanitation inspection, and they face a write up if they don't have their areas clean. Thanks to the protection the levelers provide for the dock doors to provide an effective seal, the cleanliness of the installation and the ability of the Glazier crews to easily maintain the dock area,

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Glazier is confident they will not face a write up. In addition to their own annual sanitation inspection, Glazier has two or three of their customers that have their own inspectors regularly coming to the facility.

The levelers keep up with the pace of operation at Glazier. Along with the cylinder that powers platform deployment, a separate hydraulic cylinder controls lip positioning on the leveler for more efficient operation. Moreover, according to Sarvis, “The levelers appear to be a whole lot stronger than what we had been using before, especially the beefier size of the shaft on the hydraulic units that deploy the levelers.”

During peak times of the year, Glazier fills up all of their dock positions with traffic, so each and every one of their levelers must be ready and able to operate during this two-shift operation. The strong construction of the Kelley vertical levelers ensures that the dock position is always available.

The routine on the Glazier docks involves an employee known as the selector who is in charge of staging the product as it comes onto the dock from cold storage or off the racking. A checker verifies the contents of the pallet, and then the load goes onto the truck. Glazier’s strongest aim is to not have product sitting on the dock for a

long time, especially when it comes to frozen food.

Despite the short time product spends on the dock, Glazier aggressively seeks to stop air infiltration. Because the Kelley vertical levelers store upright the design allows for the dock door to remain completely sealed when closed, preventing air from escaping and providing better energy efficiency. The levelers also protect the doors from damage caused by forklifts driving into them. From the crippling damage to the lowest panel that can shut down the doorway, to the less severe hits that can cause cracks between the door and the doorframe, the Kelley vertical leveler prevents Glazier from bleeding their budget slowly and surely through the loss of cold storage air.

To protect their dock equipment, the dock doorway includes an electric eye sensor. If the door is closed, the leveler will not operate, preventing damage to the door. The Kelley leveler also has a fused-disconnect on the control box should power need to be disconnected quickly.

Throughout its over 70 years in the foodservice business, the Glazier Foods Company has had an appetite for growth. Paying special attention to their dock equipment has enabled them to be not only a larger company, but a smarter one.

