

Schick Plant Solves Employee Notification Problem with MEDI™ Software System from Edwards Signaling & Security Systems®

September 2004 – Schick-Wilkinson Sword in Milford, CT, the company's largest manufacturing facility of Schick razors, was faced with a major problem when it came to notifying employees of scheduled breaks during their work shifts. Its various notification methods were not able to provide the necessary consistency and accuracy in alerting workers when breaks exactly began and ended. Many employees, for example, were basically deciding for themselves the timing of their breaks by glancing at a nearby clock – a timepiece not always synchronized with other clocks in the large 400,000-square-foot plant.

In addition, the plant's notification system did not have much flexibility in sending targeted begin-end signals to the plant's individualized work segments. The Milford operations are divided about equally between a 5-day and a 7-day workweek, each 24 hours per day, with plant personnel not only working different shifts within those schedules, but also in different departments or work cells. Managing the comings and goings of Schick's 600-employee workforce within this intricate arrangement had become a real scheduling challenge.

Above all, the system's inconsistency, inaccuracy and lack of flexibility were causing widespread confusion, misunderstandings and a disruption in workflow, with many employees leaving early for breaks or returning late. That's when plant supervisor, Tony Sanzo, decided to look for a solution from Edwards Signaling & Security Systems.

After seeing a demo of the Edwards system, Sanzo knew immediately that the new MEDI Software platform from Edwards was an ideal remedy for the notification problem. He was especially attracted by its turnkey capability, not to mention the fact that it would be much less expensive than if Schick tried to build a replacement system on its own. "But more important, it eliminated all the chaos," Sanzo noted. "The Edwards system is not just simple and easy to run, it's very clear and there is absolutely no question when a break starts and ends, no matter how many breaks there are during a particular shift or within an individual department."

The MEDI system runs automatically from just one central, stand-alone computer in a supervisor's office at Schick, eliminating any possible interference or required tie-in, with other company IT network functions. The software, with 56 individual prerecorded options, uses different tones to signal the beginning of a break and the end of a break. The tones are also accompanied by a strong but pleasant voice announcement (e.g., "The 9 o'clock break has begun... The 9 o'clock break has ended") that provides added clarity



to the message. Besides the software platform, Schick also purchased an amplifier and several speaker-horns from Edwards to complete the stand-alone system.

The Edwards system is now up and running in about one-half of the Milford plant including the assembly and packaging area and, as enthusiastic satisfaction with the system has spread to other departments, it will soon be functioning in three-quarters of the facility, according to Sanzo. "It has answered all our problems with regard to dependability and accuracy and it's extremely flexible for a plant the size of ours," he said. "We're very happy with the Edwards system."

About Edwards

Edwards is the leading supplier of audible and visual electrical and electronic signals for indoor, outdoor, and hazardous locations since 1872. For more information, contact Edwards Signaling & Security Systems, 90 Fieldstone Court, Cheshire, CT 06410-1212, (203) 699-3300, or visit www.edwards-signals.com.

Schick-Wilkinson Sword

Contact: Tony Sanzo, Plant Supervisor, (203) 301-5233.

