

THE GLOBAL GROCER

The Gristedes grocery warehouse at 8th Avenue and 26th Street in Manhattan is a 45,000 square-foot facility supported by 30 to 40 untethered workers, says Gristedes CIO Don Winant. Customer orders received through email at corporate headquarters enter a queue, and then download to the cadre of grocery pickers who carry **Handheld Products (HHP) Dolphin 9500 mobile computers** on the warehouse floor. Order numbers are picked and recorded on the Dolphins; the workers then load the items onto a conveyor belt that deposits them in a packing and shipping area. "It's all wireless from there," Winant says. "We marry the packing to the order numbers and [the system] generates a UPS ship-

ping label, which ends up coming back to us and also gets relayed to the customers" for tracking purposes.

Gristedes executives keep tabs on the warehousing and marketing operations with their own Palm Treo 700s. The corporate network, supported by triple-banded T1s, which interconnect all of Gristedes' servers, is backed by a fully redundant wireless network. On the warehouse floor, Cisco routers and access points deliver a signal to the roving pickers and packers. A wireless Towerstream bridge provides point to point redundancy in case the wireline network goes down.

"Years before, Gristedes was a brick and mortar oper-

ation," Winant says. "But now a customer can order any one of our products online and we either hand deliver them in the city of New York or ship UPS."



Gristedes now also ships to Armed Forces P.O. boxes as well as to families and friends of service people. "We get lots of thank-you letters and lots of business," Winant said. "Sometimes our pickers put an extra bag of M&Ms in an order to say we care." —A.E.