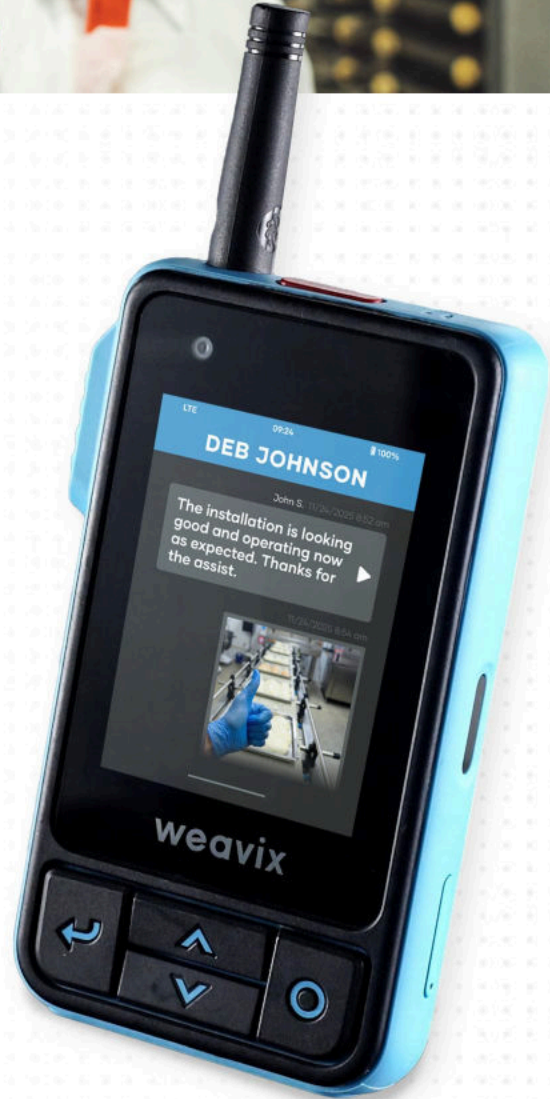




Industry: Manufacturing (Pet Food Production)

Alpha Improves Safety, Maintenance Response, and Plant-Wide Communication with Walt[®]

Alpha is the largest non-branded pet food manufacturer in the United States, producing dry kibble and baked treats for national and regional brands across seven facilities coast to coast. The company was formed in 2020, bringing together more than 70 years of combined industry experience from American Nutrition, C.J. Foods, Lortscher Animal Nutrition, and Veracity Logistics. Alpha's Bern, Kansas campus is a 24/7 operation running two 12-hour shifts with roughly 50 to 60 workers on the floor at any given time. The Bern campus includes a kibble plant, a flour mill, and a logistics repair division – all under one maintenance umbrella.



“Ensuring the safety and quality of our products is more than business; it’s our moral obligation to the families who trust us.”

– **Dave McLain**, Founder, President and CEO, Alpha (Pet Food Processing, July 2024)

That obligation runs through every department on every shift. At the Bern campus, it shows up in how maintenance keeps the machines running and how every worker on the floor stays connected – even when the old radio system made that nearly impossible.

“I don’t know how to function without the radios anymore.”



Shane Vislisel,
Maintenance Manager,
Alpha – Bern, Kansas

Business Challenge

The Bern campus runs three connected facilities spread across a small Kansas town. Before weavix, Alpha relied on Motorola radios from the early 2000s paired with a truncated repeater system. The system was built for a different era and a different layout. Workers 60 to 70 yards apart in separate departments – packaging, ingredient lab, maintenance – could not reliably reach each other. Cell phones were useless inside the plant. Text messages stacked up and arrived all at once when someone stepped outside.

- **Dead zones across departments:** The repeater system could not carry a signal between departments even when they were less than 70 yards apart. Workers in packaging could not reach the ingredient lab. Maintenance could not reach mill operators.
- **Constant physical tracking:** When radios failed, workers ran across the plant or drove between buildings to deliver a message. A 5-to-10-minute chase happened five or six times a day per person.
- **The telephone game in maintenance:** During equipment testing from the MCC room, crews lined up throughout the plant to relay messages person to person. One worker threw the switch. Five others stood in a chain to confirm the result.
- **No off-site reach:** Managers at home relied on phone tag. Calls went unresolved for hours. A decision that could take one conversation stretched across an entire evening.
- **A \$300,000 dead end:** When Shane pulled quotes to upgrade to a digital Motorola system, the price came back at \$300,000. That number forced a rethink.

Why They Chose Walt

Shane started Googling. The weavix homepage was where the search ended. The feature depth on a single device – radio, translation, photo messaging, system of record – was unlike anything he had seen. The evaluation requirement was simple: talk from the kibble plant to the mill across the street. What he found went well beyond that.

- **Cost vs. the alternative:** A \$300,000 quote for a Motorola digital upgrade made the decision straightforward. Walt offered more capability at a fraction of the infrastructure cost.
- **Multilingual workforce:** The Bern campus includes a significant Spanish-speaking workforce. Cross-language communication was immediately visible as a primary need.
- **Device simplicity:** Workers who had never seen a touchscreen radio figured out the interface on their own. No full training session required.
- **Durability for a demanding environment:** FDA-certified facility with clean zones, wet meat rooms, acid baths, high-dust flour mill areas, and outdoor equipment washdowns. Walt needed to survive all of it.



The Solution

weavix deployed across the entire Bern campus — all departments, all shifts. Approximately 100 to 120 workers use Walt devices. Managers use the Walt mobile app. Onboarding was handled with printed QR code cards, each labeled with the worker's name. Workers tap their card to log in, clip the device to their belt, and return it to the Wrangler charging station at the end of the shift.

- **Plant-wide coverage:** Every department is on the platform: kibble extrusion, flour mill, ingredient lab, packaging, bag lines, sanitation, quality, shipping, and truck drivers. Drivers communicate up to 20 to 30 miles out with no signal issues.
- **Translation across languages:** Spanish-speaking workers began initiating their own conversations with English-speaking colleagues within the first two months. Usage among that group trended upward without any instruction.
- **Photo messaging in context:** Workers send photos of parts needed, equipment states, and completed repairs. Technicians receive what they need without leaving the machine they are working on.
- **System of record for investigations:** Conversation history, keying activity, and photo logs are searchable. The maintenance team has used the record in injury investigations and property damage reviews.
- **Wrangler stations by department:** Maintenance, operations, and shipping each have their own charging station. Radios stay in their area and the right coverage is in the right place at all times.
- **Mobile app for management:** Shane and other managers use the Walt companion app on their phones. From home, Shane can read conversation history, see what is happening on shift, and make decisions without a phone call chain.

Results

Communication across the Bern campus went from a daily grind of physical tracking and dropped messages to a system workers trust and depend on. The shift happened faster than Shane expected. By the second month, adoption was moving on its own.

Operational Improvements

- **An hour recovered per person, per day:**
Tracking someone down physically took 5 to 10 minutes and happened five to six times a day. That time is now in the work instead.
- **Parts delivered to the tech, not the other way around:**
A technician mid-disassembly can radio the parts person directly. The right part arrives at the machine. The technician never loses his place.
- **Managers stay home:**
Overnight calls to Shane dropped significantly after deployment. He opens the app, reads the conversation thread, and responds — without a call chain or a drive back to the plant.
- **Communication trending upward over 6 months:**
Randy pulled conversation data showing total keying activity and message volume increasing across the first six months. Plant manager, safety manager, and maintenance manager all tracked the trend.

Safety and Communication Improvements

- **Solo worker coverage:**
With a lean workforce, maintenance technicians sometimes work in high-risk areas alone — rooftop, confined spaces, mill zones. Reliable two-way communication between a solo tech and the floor is now standard, not a workaround.
- **Investigation record:**
The system of record has been used in formal investigations. A forklift striking a pallet rack became a clear timeline: what was communicated, when, and by whom — including whether calls for help were answered.
- **Built-in flashlight reduces foreign object risk:**
Workers use the Walt flashlight during deep cleans to inspect machinery. A separate flashlight on an FDA-certified floor is a foreign object risk. The built-in feature eliminates that.
- **Explosion-proof and waterproof across a mixed-hazard environment:**
Walt handles flour mill dust zones, acid exposure, water washdowns, and sanitation wipes without maintenance intervention.

The Part That Shows Up at Your Machine

In the old setup, a maintenance technician tearing down a piece of equipment would eventually hit the moment where he needed a specific part – a bolt, a belt, a fitting. He had to stop. Reassemble enough to safely leave the machine. Walk across the plant to the parts room or find the parts person. Hope the item was in stock. Walk back. Restart the disassembly.

With Walt, the call goes out while the tech is still mid-repair. He describes what he needs – or sends a photo of it. The parts person pulls it and delivers it to the machine. The technician never loses his place. According to Shane, it's an everyday occurrence now. Nobody thinks twice about it.

Key Use Cases



Cross-building Communication

The Bern campus is not one building. The kibble plant, flour mill, and logistics division are spread across a small Kansas town. The old repeater system could not bridge that distance. Walt connects workers across all three sites on the same platform. A truck driver 20 to 30 miles down the road stays on the same channel as the team at the mill.



Multilingual Communication

A significant portion of the Bern workforce speaks Spanish as a primary language. Translation in Walt let Spanish-speaking workers initiate and respond to conversations with English-speaking colleagues directly. Usage from that group grew within the first two months without a separate training process.



Photo Messaging for Maintenance

Maintenance relies on visual confirmation constantly – a worn part, a cleared fault, a completed repair. Workers photograph what they need and send it through the channel. The right person sees it in real time. Technicians get parts delivered mid-repair. No calls back and forth, no trips across the plant to describe a part by memory.



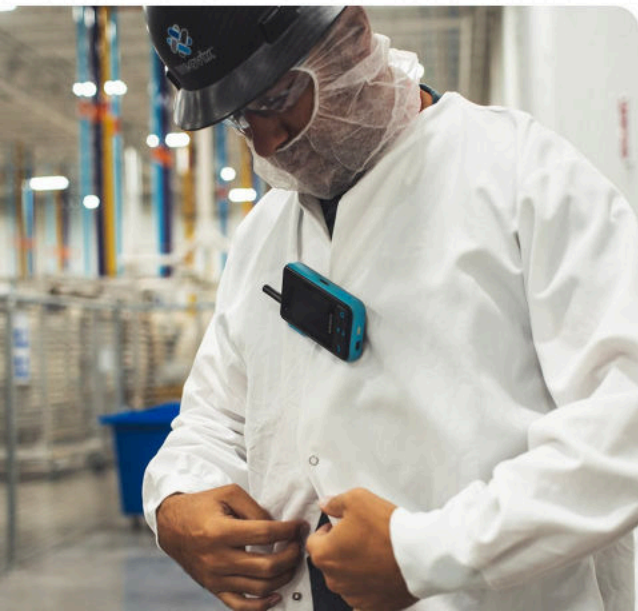
System of Record for Investigations

When something goes wrong on shift – a forklift incident, a property damage event – the conversation history is there. Maintenance and safety leadership can pull the record and build a timeline: who called for help, who responded, what was happening on the floor in the minutes before and after. The record exists without anyone having to create it.



Management Via Mobile App

By using the mobile app, Shane can read the full conversation thread from the current shift, assess a situation, and respond. Overnight call volume to Shane dropped after deployment. He makes a decision in minutes instead of spending 30 minutes working through a call chain.



Looking Ahead

Alpha has expansion plans and hopes to integrate MaintainX with Walt as a full CMMS integration. “That will be a gamechanger,” Shane explained, by using Walt forms and workflows to trigger work orders directly in the system Alpha already uses. When that integration is live, the paper-based and QR-code-based elements of the maintenance process will close the loop inside a single platform

Don't miss out, let's talk hello@weavix.com