
- Advertisement -

721 Logistics/J&K Fresh East enjoys early success in the Delaware River region

August 7, 2013

PHILADELPHIA — Most companies measure growth in percentages. To do that, 721 Logistics and its J&K East division, here, would need a pretty impressive calculator. Formed 18 months ago in a partnership with J&K Fresh of Inglewood, CA — a 50-year fixture on the West Coast — 721 has mushroomed from a mere handful of clients to a current roster of more than 200 customers.

The company has also swelled to 20 employees, with more coming on board as the business continues to grow.



The 721 Logistics team: (seated) Keri McClellan, Helena Mateus-Martins, Maura Miceli, (standing) Jack McIntyre, Mike McLaughlin, Dave Collins, John Antonucci, Anthony Barone, John Ercolani, Bill Fagan, Sue Greenjack, Vince Murphy, Anthony McClellan, Barbara Zimmerman, Evan Moss, Toni Pannell, Pat Kriebel and Larry Antonucci. *(Photo courtesy of 721)* “When we started we had seven people and a handful of customers, we were still

trying to get our feet under us,” said President Larry Antonucci. “But we knew exactly what we wanted to be and where we wanted to go and that hasn’t changed — we’re focused on building the J&K Fresh brand here on the Delaware River ports and becoming the premier provider of perishable customs brokerage and import coordination. We’ve grown very quickly but we’ve done it very prudently. We’ve invested back into our people. That’s really what runs this business. It’s all about the people. That’s our biggest asset and we invest heavily in that asset. They’ve been the catalyst to the kind of growth we’ve had to date.”

The sterling reputation of the company’s partners and the J&K Fresh brand has played a role in that success.

“Customers know us and they trust us with their business. They know they’re getting a consistent and stable service when they ask us to represent their import business. The J&K Fresh brand is certainly well known in the perishable industry,” said Vice President of Corporate Accounts John Antonucci.

As customs brokers, the 721 team members are also cost-savers, trimming away the fat that can cut into profits for grower-shippers.

“Every cent placed on the fruit is an added cost. There are enough costs logistically already to have a piece of fruit come from Chile or wherever the origin is to the plate here in the U.S.,” said Vice President of Operations John Ercolani. “When you try to best position the fruit and the release process and logistically keep as much cost as you possibly can off the fruit, it’s advantageous for everybody, all the way down to the consumer. From the brokerage aspect of it, we touch and handle many different pieces of the business. We play a very important part in trying to balance the expedited nature of keeping fruit moving while also keeping costs down. We’re consistently working to keep customers in a position where they’re following all the regulatory guidelines by establishing import controls from the time of export to meet that standard — there are a lot of pieces to it. At the end of the day, we have people who really care and who want to do what’s best. It’s not a 9-to-5 for us. We work when the fruit’s working. More and more it seems like 365 — it’s 12 months a year and it’s a lot of fruit.”

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, for instance, “We had people here around the clock that entire week,” said John Antonucci. “We didn’t tell them they had to be here. But with shipments being diverted all over the Eastern Seaboard they were doing their best to help our customers out. We had people tracking containers 24 hours a day. Why? Because it was critical that our customers knew the status of their freight in order to make the necessary arrangements for their business and with their customers”

“It sounds cliché but we treat our customers’ fruit like it’s our fruit. We really do. Their business is our business, their loss is our loss, their success is our success — we have skin in the game and that’s how we treat it,” said Larry Antonucci. “If we’re not 100 percent committed to the cost-effective and expeditious clearance of our customers’ produce, then we’re not doing our job and we’re not representing our brand. It’s about taking care of your customers and taking care of your employees; everything else falls into place after that. “

