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## **TMK Produce adds greens, beans and corn to product mix**

By

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TMK Produce has called the Philadelphia Wholesale Market home for decades and operates out of a 2,000 pallet facility offering some of the finest produce available in the world.

Tom Kovacevich, president and chief operating officer of the Philadelphia-based company, credits a

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big part of TMK Produce's success with the market itself, calling it a vital source for produce and containing a great group of companies who work together and try to help everyone to make sure everyone is getting the product they need.

That camaraderie has helped just about everyone in the market stay strong throughout the pandemic and has certainly been a catalyst for the success TMK Produce has seen in 2020.

"Adjusting to the 'new normal' of the pandemic has been seamless for us," Kovacevich said. "As market wholesalers, we are always adapting to change; this is our competitive advantage over the giant service wholesalers we compete with."

As it has during any problem or challenge, the company swiftly adapted to the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

"It's what we've always done to survive," Kovacevich said. "I believe the competitive environment we live in creates strength in people and products. All the Individual companies at the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market are amazing, and thus our combined talents and offerings make the market very formidable competition in the region."

Consider that combined sales at the Philadelphia Wholesale Market is more than \$1 billion, with fresh produce arriving by air, truck and rail 24/7.

TMK Produce has seen a lot of trends in 2020, with apples, grapes, lemons, oranges, lettuce, watermelon, berries, pears, mangoes, and celery all among its Top 10 list of products.

This year was the first full one for salesman John Nelli, category manager for greens, beans and corn, and Kovacevich said that has added to the success the company has seen in 2020.

"John has done an amazing job incorporating these product lines into the TMK business. We have always wanted to add these items and the customer response has been terrific," he said. "We are very excited about these product lines and the potential to keep expanding. Customers are responding with regular orders and these categories have exceeded our expectations and we are excited to see what 2021 brings as we hopefully return to a more normal year in business."

Still, Kovacevich added, TMK Produce's personnel advantage extends into all aspects of the business.

"Our salespeople and buyers drive the business and no other company at the market can match the experience of TMK's 12 person buying/sales team," he said. "Our 24-hour a day, extremely experienced team of quality control people are also critical to the customer happiness and thus our success. The team of order selectors at TMK are another secret to success; these guys truly care and do their best to get the proper product to each customer."

Kovacevich does not like to focus on growth, rather directs the company to focus its attention on doing business right, knowing that when everything is done correctly — especially the small stuff — growth will come.

"We've seen 90 percent of our new customers come as a referral from a current customer," he said. "Retailers telling other retailers how they appreciate our prices, product and service, well that's a plus. These referrals come from doing the customer right, by getting them great quality produce at a

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value, so this is where we focus our energy.”

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