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## **Shippers, suppliers key to Ben B. Schwartz & Sons' success**

By

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For 115 years, Ben B. Schwartz & Sons Inc. has been a leading wholesale distributor of fresh fruits and vegetables, serving local and national chain stores, as well as foodservice providers, and the company continues to make winning decisions year after year.



Billmeyer

Jake Billmeyer and Drew

The company's distribution network, which is located on the Detroit Produce Terminal, spans the majority of the U.S. and Canada, with produce arriving to its facility daily from farms across the globe.

Following a year in which a lot changed due to the pandemic, Kyle Stone, in charge of special projects for company, is looking forward to getting back to the basics and thanks those in the industry that has helped Ben B. Schwartz & Sons continue to thrive.

"This is a good chance for us to let people know that without our shippers, packers, suppliers and growers, we would be nowhere," he said. "We've all had to overcome obstacles and challenges, and in addition to us rebuilding our business renaissance, we know we couldn't have done it without all of them doing an outstanding job."

Not that the company had a bad 2020 — in fact, Ben B. Schwartz & Sons recorded some of the largest sales it has ever seen. It's just that things were different as everyone had to change on the fly due to the pandemic.

"We try to keep our customers one step ahead of the curve," Stone said. "We recognize the capacity of the local chains to react and be nimble with market changes and we make sure we have fresh product for all of our customers."

Statistically speaking, Stone noted there's so much produce coming in that it will always have fruit and vegetables available in every price range for its wide variety of customers.

"We have a strict sorting process and segregate quality to make sure that the retailers get the premium quality and the wholesalers get the value that they want," Stone said.

Looking ahead, Ben B. Schwartz & Sons hopes to expand its delivery net and hopes that occurs sometime in 2021.

"All we need to do is hire more drivers and utilize third-party logistics to make sure that we can do things that others can't, all while following DOT and FMCSA guidelines," Stone said. "We are

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turning this family business into a more structured, systemized, organized corporate style of business to maximize consistency.”

The company is revamping its transportation department to maximize visibility and has added new software so merchandizers are better aware of what’s in stock.

“We are catching up to utilize modernization,” Stone said. “Right now, we are doing a passive-based GMP audit scheme and we are going to bump up to a Primus testing this year.”

And doing things like that is only going to help the company continue to be a leader as it carries on in 2021 and beyond.

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