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## **Rocky Produce is a champ in Detroit**

By

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When it comes to Detroit's produce scene, few names have earned the success and respect that Rocky Produce does, and a lot of hard work has gone into building the exceptional reputation the company enjoys.



The Rocky Produce team.

“We have a great team, we work together well, that’s probably the No. 1 thing, and aside from that, we have great grower-shipper partners that believe in the value of working for us and who appreciate the job we do,” said Dominic Russo of the Detroit-based company. “And we appreciate what they do for us, and those relationships have been cultivated over many years. And it’s common that we find new relationships and have new programs to reinforce what we already have.”

An important aspect of the company’s success, Russo noted, is the outstanding relationships Rocky Produce has with its customers.

“All of those things work together, and we work very hard every day and we try hard and have integrity as we do it,” he said. “I’m just a firm believer that if you have that and you don’t get discouraged, in the end you’ll come out on top, and I hope that for everyone in the produce industry.”

Another essential element to the company’s prosperity is that it is rooted in faith.

“We keep our main focus on God and we understand that without him, nothing is possible and with him everything is possible,” Russo said. “We believe our company has been blessed and it’s a lot easier to give credit to him than to take it upon ourselves.”

While Russo said that COVID-19 made 2020 one of Rocky Produce’s most challenging years, he’s grateful for where the company is.

“Everything has been good — we came together and the guys that were able to be here worked hard,” he said. “We’re dealing with major labor issues because people were getting stimulus money,

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so it was really hard to attract people to come in and our labor force was diminished.”

On top of that, there were occasional COVID-19 cases that popped up and the company had to take advisement on that, so all these things together made it difficult.

“But our retail business has been very, very strong and we’re grateful for that,” Russo said. “Our foodservice customers, we feel for them. Their business has been down and that has affected us a little negatively. So there have been a lot of plusses and some negatives, but overall we had a successful year and we feel appreciated.”

One promising trend he’s seen is that more and more young people are enjoying quality food and learning how to prepare interesting recipes.

“I think that was going on before COVID-19, and everybody has been able to put that into practice, and that’s a good thing,” Russo said, adding that eating with friends and family is something that’s important to him through his Italian heritage, and that is something people from all walks of life can relate to.

“Food is not just something that you eat, it’s an experience, and relationships are formed around food, smiles and good times are formed by breaking bread and sharing a meal with somebody,” Russo said.

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