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Riggio Distribution uses tech to stay ahead

By

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Riggio Distribution Co., an anchor tenant at the Detroit Produce Terminal, has long been one of the largest produce wholesalers servicing the Midwest area.

“Our customers include independent retail, chain retail, independent wholesale foodservice, broad line distributors and food manufacturers,” said Dominic Riggio, president of the company. “We distribute in the greater Midwest, Southern Ontario, as well as parts of the South and East Coast.”



The company touches on all aspects of the produce industry, with a full selection of fresh fruits and

vegetables which are shipped seven days a week to retail customers and foodservice customers. It sources product from all over the world by air, boat, truck, and train, and takes pride in sourcing locally grown product as much as possible when available.

“Riggio Distribution is unique in the way we use technology as daily tool, starting with our custom software, wireless warehouse capabilities, and automated processes in shipping, receiving and accounting,” Riggio said. “However, while technology is a big part of what makes us unique in our market, we also apply the more traditional ‘old school’ practices to our daily operations of quality control, including hands-on buying and selling, and paying close attention to accounts receivable.”

One important thing the produce vet has discovered through the years is that when the efficiencies of the new way and the attention to detail of the old school come together, it is a very strong combination.

“What makes Riggio Distribution really special is our people. Our team has decades of experience and industry knowledge,” Riggio said. “Our company and our team members have deep roots in Detroit and the surrounding areas. We work with 2nd- and 3rd-generation produce families, and it’s a very close community. From restaurants and banquet halls, to independent stores and wholesalers, we have many relationships in this market that go far beyond business.”

Although the COVID-19 pandemic brought on new challenges for the company in 2020, overcoming obstacles is nothing new for them.

“In the produce industry, we adjust to the ‘new normal’ almost daily,” Riggio said. “The perishable business is full of challenges new and old, but the operators in this industry are built to adjust and adapt. While 2020 was full of new challenges, we are looking forward to 2021 and the new opportunities it will bring.”

Restrictions put on restaurants and the foodservice side of things has basically shut down that part of business for the company, but it saw traction building in retail, and it’s been moving resources to that segment.

In recent years, Riggio Distribution has seen a big rise in organics, as the company now handles hundreds of organic SKUs on a daily basis and serves as the exclusive distributor for major companies like Earthbound Farm and Cal Organics. It has also partnered with some local greenhouses to help offer some hard-to-fill SKUs remain available 12 months a year.

In 2021, Riggio noted the company will be looking to add to its sales and buying team as it continues to stay a leader in the marketplace.

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