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BRS Produce relies on great customer service to thrive in Philadelphia

By

Keith Loria

May 10, 2023

[BRS Produce Co.](#), was among the original tenants at the new Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market when it opened in June 2011. It currently occupies units D-2 and D-3, working with all customers who come into the market.

“This year has been good, though winter is usually a lot more sluggish than other times of the year, but it started out decent and it will start picking up now because the weather is nicer,” said Rick Milavsky, president of the company, who has been with BRS Produce for most of his life and has enjoyed the difference of working in the newer facility.

“We have a nice market now; it’s fully enclosed, completely refrigerated, so it’s a lot easier to work in and out of,” Milavsky said. “It’s good for us and our customers.”

Milavsky has found that being at the new market has made it easier to unload a truck, and they don’t have to break the cold chain which is beneficial.

Working in Philadelphia is the perfect place, he noted, because of the many restaurants in the area and Philly natives being very food-centric.

“They want good food and really look for it,” Milavsky said. “For us, we sell a lot of items: greens, tomatoes, mushrooms, avocados, limes, garlic — we have a really good range of product.”

Although no one item seems to be trending in 2023, he does note that everything seems to be steady and there’s a bit of growth across the board.

“Our customers are purveyors who have a group of customers that they buy for, whether it is pizzerias, hoagie shops, diners, etc.,” Milavsky said. “But then we get quite a few customers outside the market, like foodservice guys.”

The key to success all these years is to have what the customers are looking for and staying on top of any new trends.

“Good customer service is also very important,” Milavsky said. “My guys do a nice job selling the product to people, taking care of it and making sure they get it in a timely fashion.”

It’s the team at BRS that has been responsible for much of the success as well.

“I’ve got quite a few guys who have been a big part of this all,” Milavsky said. “My nephew, John, takes care of the limes, avocados, onions and garlic; another guy Anthony takes care of the

mushrooms and spring mixes and greens; and then there's Kenny who takes care of the tomato root. They all do a great job and the customers really like them."

When the pandemic first hit, the first few weeks were confusing and things were up in the air. It didn't take long for BRS to get back to normal and things were really busy because people had to stay in and eat.

With the two units on the market, Milavsky noted that the company isn't huge and works to keep its customers happy and have a full selection of what they're looking for. Therefore, it's not looking for any major growth. Still, it grows steadily and is happy with the business it has.

"We all work hard, and you might not always do everything right and make the right decisions, but we try hard to please everyone and the customers are our first concern," Milavsky said. "It's all about making them happy."

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About Keith Loria |

A graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for close to 20 years on topics as diverse as real estate, food and sports. He started his career with the Associated Press and has held high editorial positions at magazines aimed at healthcare, sports and technology. When not busy writing, he can be found enjoying time with his wife, Patricia, and two daughters, Jordan and Cassidy.

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