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Baldor expanding routes in Mid-Atlantic

By

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May 16, 2024

[Baldor Specialty Foods](#) aims to provide a distribution system that meets all the supply needs of its customers, reducing the friction and supporting growth for all customers, vendors and employees.

“We travel the world to identify trending flavors, up-and-coming vendors, and new products,” said Bill Hodge, director of sales, mid-Atlantic, for Baldor. “We also work with the vendors we have to see if there are new ways they can help us meet customer needs. In terms of fluctuation in supply, we recognize the need to keep a diverse portfolio of vendors to account for risk created by weather and other unpredictable factors.”

Product quality and safety is a cross-functional effort for the company, and it’s a process that starts at the vendor selection stage.

“We have stringent standards that all vendors must meet before being onboarded,” Hodge said. “Once we have selected the vendor, we manage the lifecycle at three stages: inbound, in-house, and outbound. We aim to ensure the highest level of freshness and shelf-life, using direct and local sourcing as much as possible, and ensure temperature adherence across the supply chain.”

Baldor is a zero-food-waste-to-landfill company, and purposely seek out vendors that have dedicated sustainability practices.

Philadelphia is a key market for Baldor, as it runs 40 routes in the area with six-days-a-week delivery.

“It’s a market that is competitive owing to such a close-knit group of restaurateurs, which is why placing a distribution hub in the market has been key to our continued growth,” Hodge said.

This has been a tough spring due to the wet weather in the Salinas Valley, which has presented lots of challenges on supply for some of Baldor’s customers’ favorite items, including romaine and romaine hearts, small artichokes, baby kale, arugula and more.

“The good news is that we’re expecting this period to pass in California, and supplies are starting to

come in from spring growers,” Hodge said.

On April 24, the company held Baldor BITE, its biannual food show/party. “This allows the company to connect the best chefs from the East Coast with the best farmers and vendors in the world,” Hodge said. “We welcomed 3,500 people to Basketball City in New York City, the most we’ve ever had, including Riverwards Market and Bridgett Foy from the Cry Baby Group from Philadelphia as well as The Bardea Groupe from Wilmington, DE.”

This summer, Baldor is opening a new double-sized D.C. facility, which will allow the company to better service the DMV area.

Other news around the company is the recent hiring of a new chief digital and innovation officer, Satyan Parameswaran, formerly president of information technology at UPS; and a new chief people officer, Regina Picciano from Southern Glazer’s Wines and Spirits.

“In addition, we expanded our offerings of our Murray’s Cheese program to Boston and Philadelphia, and we have also begun offering local items in all of our regions,” Hodge said. “We’ve also expanded our delivery regions to include more mid-Atlantic shoreline, Harrisburg and Scranton, among other areas.”

While Baldor services the hospitality industry, it sees itself being in hospitality as well.

“To be radically hospitable means actively listening to your customer and providing solutions,” Hodge said. “The main thing is to be present for them — we prioritize visits to our customers in their kitchens. We believe in continuous improvement, and we take seriously any concerns our customers bring to our attention. They are immediately escalated to leadership, and we work to offer a correction on both the individual and macro level.”

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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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