

DLJ Produce's Broad Lines Include Wide Range of Services and Partnership Opportunities

By Rob Bryant

Offering a broad range of quality fresh produce isn't enough for DLJ Produce, a distributor headquartered in Southern California. The company, founded in 1993 by three produce professionals, has been building "partnerships" with its retail and foodservice clientele through its unique brand of service.

"When you deal in commodities," Bill Coombs, the managing partner says, "Your competitive edge has to be unmatched. So 'our passion to serve our customers' is clearly what distinguishes us."

That unique ardor is manifested by providing whatever is needed from developing supply programs, transportation logistics and product safety, to initiating marketing and training programs that meet targeted objectives such as building a particular category for a retailer. The company has heavily invested in current technology that can support and provide any and all electronic data interchange programs.

DLJ offers a core group of products in all key categories from grapes and tree fruit to potatoes and onions that feature year round availability. Its supply partners are selected as much for their quality as for their growing seasons and volume to assure these popular supply programs are uninterrupted.



Its relationship with the Wm H Kopke demonstrates this comprehensive strategy of reliable and creative sourcing. As the west coast sales partner for Kopke, DLJ is a major shipper in the Chilean import deal.



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With product availability assured, DLJ can then implement its considerable customer service prowess, which includes a transportation/logistics department that supports immediate local orders as well as national and international distribution.

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"Moving" product in another way, DLJ provides its retailers with demo programs, sales contests, rebate programs and ad promotions to increase sales. As for enhancing its own visibility, DLJ is active in regional trade shows and organizations such as FPFC and Western Growers Assn., while also benefiting from national exposure through PMA United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Assn. and Produce for Better Health.

Product safety is another passion. DLJ's offices and 40,000 square foot refrigerated warehouse are both HACCP certified by S.C.S (Scientific Certification Systems) and Primuslabs.com with a Superior rating for both U.S and European food safety standards; and further protected by a high-tech security system complete with cameras and access control systems. Temperature controlled and monitored hourly, the warehouse has 14 dock high loading doors to accommodate the traffic generated by such additional customer services as same day shipping, consolidation and cross docking.

Customer service considerations are also apparent at the growing level. The Fresno office of DLJ is located in the fertile San Joaquin Valley where another partner, Robby

Johnson maintains contact with the leading grower/shippers in the area to assure DLJ clients receive the highest quality of grapes and tree fruits from the region. Johnson, whose career spans three decades in the area, enjoys unprecedented access to conduct field and packinghouse inspections prior to any purchase.



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As a result of its "can do" attitude, DLJ ships to over 22 states, exports to three countries and has ambitious plans to grow by impressing more regional chains with its partnership concept. "We're going on 15 years but we're still a work in progress," Coombs asserts. "In addition to providing what a client currently needs, it's just as important to anticipate what they will need in the future."

Toward that goal, DLJ is developing a web site that will offer information on current and future programs. It will feature a weekly Market Report and can be accessed at dljproduce.com.

It is very clear the entire company supports their core value....

"A Solid Partnership Makes A World of Difference"