

LEGAL SEA FOODS FINDS A TRUE-BLUE CARRIER IN EASTERN CONNECTION

“This is a difficult business,” says Kevin Foley. As director of plant operations for Legal Sea Foods, he’s responsible for getting vast quantities of live lobsters, shellfish and other raw seafood from the company’s Boston headquarters to its 25 restaurants up and down the East Coast. Delays and mistakes could have catastrophic results.

Legal Sea Foods (LSF) began in 1950 as a small fresh fish and seafood store in Cambridge, Mass. Now a top-ranked company with more than 1,600 employees, it operates a mail-order business and catering service in addition to the restaurants. The company has won widespread recognition for its leadership role in quality control, inspection and handling techniques.

Expeditious transport plays a key role in making sure that LSF’s mail-ordered packages, arrive in perfect condition. Since they contain the same fresh, high-quality ingredients as those used in the restaurants, “there is zero tolerance for mistakes,” says Lisa Landry (TITLE?). That’s why she responded to a call from Jack Barr, national sales manager for Eastern Connection. Eastern, based in nearby Wellesley, is the largest regional express parcel carrier on the East Coast. Barr promised later pick-ups and earlier deliveries than her previous carrier, and she decided to give them a try. That was back in 1989. Landry has had nothing but praise for Eastern ever since.

Meanwhile, LSF was expanding its restaurant business. Impressed by their superlative service to the company’s mail-order division, Foley turned to Eastern Connection about the time the first Washington, D.C., restaurant opened in 1995. “We saw that they could supplement our own refrigerated trucks in specific niches,” he says. As LSF added more restaurants, his relationship with the carrier grew stronger.

Each week, EC packs thousands of pounds of raw fish and prepared foods in 2’x4’ insulated fiberglass coolers, and moves it to the customer’s mid-Atlantic and New York-area markets. “They take everything from my back door directly to each restaurant,” Foley says. EC also manages transport, including air freight, to the newest LSF restaurants in Florida. “They take care of all the logistics,” he says. “It relieves us of a major headache.”

The fact that Foley deals with the same group of drivers is another plus. “They’re all very courteous and very professional,” he says. “They help us load and they help us unload. They’re not afraid to work. Like everyone we deal with at Eastern, they have a great attitude.” He recalls one example of Eastern’s outstanding service: “When one of my own trucks broke down, they got someone there in a hurry. They cleared it out, loaded everything onto their own truck, and made sure it was delivered on time.”

Legal Sea Food currently spends about \$400,000 annually with Eastern Connection, a number that will probably grow along with the company. “They’ve earned our business,” Foley explains. “We have a very good relationship.”

Eastern Connection, the largest regional express parcel carrier on the East Coast, provides later pick-ups and earlier deliveries than the major national delivery companies throughout the Northeast. Founded in 1983 and headquartered in Wellesley, Mass., the company has a network of 17 offices from Maine to Virginia. A large truck fleet combined with a centrally located Carlstadt, N.J., hub enables the technologically sophisticated carrier to guarantee next-day delivery before 9 a.m. to downtown business districts within the region. Eastern Connection also offers its customers cost-effective customized transportation and logistics services.

###