

The **FBI** *Group*



A Company Culture



Last February, Freight Brokers International (The FBI Group) celebrated its 25th anniversary and it has been a busy 25th year. FBI rang in 2017 by moving into its new headquarters in Vaughan, Ontario. With more than 20,000 square feet of warehousing, five shipping doors and five levels of racking, the new facility grew the company's capacity multiple times over...

Written by Jaime McKee

The *FBI* Group

In July, FBI welcomed customers and carrier partners to its grand opening with BBQ brisket, a donut wall, gourmet ice cream, signature drinks, shirts, hats, grab bags and a company birthday cake in the shape of a trailer. In October,

FBI announced the acquisition of Consolidated Carriers of Markham, ON, after Consolidated celebrated its silver anniversary. Starting the next quarter century under a bigger tent, all indications are the FBI family looks to grow even more. ►

that *Drives Success*



The FBI Group



► From a small home office and one customer in 1992, The FBI Group has grown into a full service cross border logistics company, expanding its breadth of services to include white glove deliveries, pick-pack-redistribution and custom built mobile warehouse solutions. The central philosophy that has guided FBI throughout its growth has been “we listen.” Gaining a complete understanding of the client’s expectations, paying attention to detail and providing personal care is not a slogan at FBI; it comes naturally. That vision grew from the company’s founder Frank Elisio and it has been the reason why FBI has serviced some of its customers for decades.

Maintaining loyalty is critical at FBI. As Frank says, “When we started, job number 1 was making sure everything was right. I’m really fortunate because today I’m still talking to many of the same people I’ve been talking to for years. They’re not only clients; they’re friends and like extended family members. We share interests. We talk sports, music and family. Above all, we maintain our relationships because the job gets done. For me, the satisfaction is knowing that FBI has been a part of our clients’ successes and

growth. Twenty-five years into this and that part still gives us a large sense of pride.” Pride and family are an integral part of FBI’s culture and that’s the feeling you have walking through the entrance.

As a non-asset based logistics company, FBI continues to complement its personal service touch with investments in technology. Even though phones are answered the old fashioned way by a live person, FBI has deployed a lot of new technology in the last few years to service its customers. The technology push has been a major initiative of the other founding partner John Elisio. While many people may believe

the days of freight brokers are numbered due to the rise of e-commerce, advances in autonomous vehicles and the “uberization” of freight, John continues to see opportunities. “Our adoption of technology and pursuing system integration with our clients and carrier partners has really been an interesting process,” according to John. “For decades, service providers have been worried about giving out too much detail, almost like being suspicious of each other. At FBI we feel the opposite.

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We want to be better partners, less costly partners and less obtrusive. Trust and sharing information is critical. If 98 percent of everything we handle on a daily basis can be managed by updating each other's systems automatically, then we're not pummeling each other with emails and phone calls. Instead, we can focus our attention on managing exceptions."

John added that this initiative translates to FBI's clients as well. "If we can provide technology to better serve our clients, we'll do it. Right now we're implementing an API and web portal process for a key client that will save hundreds of hours a month for their staff. We want to make it easier for our client to move their freight. If this technology provides them added benefits even when FBI isn't moving the freight, that's just a bonus we can pass on."

The move last year into a new headquarters wasn't only about expansion, but also gave the company an opportunity to jump deeper into a whole host of services that it has added to its portfolio during the last five years. Beyond the regular "A to B" type freight moves that most companies entrust to freight brokers, FBI has gained the trust of customers to provide a wide variety of solutions. For a few years, FBI has been shipping products from southern distribution centres for a major U.S. retailer, bringing those bulk loads to its own warehouse, sorting, scanning and ►►

Ulaap
Logistics App

Process your freight from dock to invoice

Signature Capture
Update Status

Scan Barcodes
Scan Documents

Integrate drivers with your backoffice

info@ulaap.com



▶ repacking the product for distribution to retail outlets across Canada. With the space and the added shipping doors, FBI can accommodate much more capacity each week for its clients.

FBI has also delved into other interesting projects. One client needed a solution for mobile “tool cribs,” portable warehouses. These customized transport trailers are filled with safety equipment and other gear that is made available to trades working on job sites for lengthy periods of time. “It wasn’t something that we regularly got involved with,” explains Manny Speranza, a managing partner at The FBI Group. “Our client had a surge in business and needed a special solution. Even though they weren’t sure we could solve their problem, they confided in us. Not only did we provide a solution, we benefitted from the expertise of our other clients to help put the package together. We managed the custom crib construction, we help with the replenishment of inventory, we provide maintenance and track the assets.” As Manny says, “Now it’s just another thing we do here at FBI.”

A couple of hundred years of combined logistics expertise gets passed on to FBI’s clients through the daily and long-term transportation strategies harnessed in the Operations bullpen.

Sitting there, you feel like you’re simultaneously listening in on conversations at half a dozen companies, yet it all comes together in one room. “We’ve got you covered” is a phrase you’ll hear more than a few times during any hour sitting in Ops. Whether they’re coordinating pick-up or deliveries for light fixtures, Halloween costumes, grease interceptors or road salt, coast to coast or cross border, or managing a white-glove delivery of gym equipment, the team works seamlessly with every carrier partner FBI has.

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But becoming and remaining a partner is no simple task. Carrier compliance and maintaining good standing with insurances, certificates and licensing is of utmost importance with FBI. “Sometimes the challenge when you’re growing capacity is finding a qualified partner with an asset where you need it, when you need it,” says partner Richard Mathe, the VP of Oper-





ations. “We devote time each day reminding our partners to update their information so that we’re not left scrambling to get a copy of a current certificate when we need to move an urgent load for a client.” Mathe adds, “We’re growing, but we’re growing responsibly. We’re not compromising our processes or service levels for the sake of growth.”

Mathe also leads another part of FBI’s business that enables clients to leverage FBI’s increasing purchasing power under a service the company calls Freight\$olver. When a client is looking for a full slate of managed services, Freight\$olver optimizes freight budgets by analysing historic trends, routing and carrier performance then realigns the client’s needs with service providers that are tailored for those requirements. “Being in business for 25 years as we have, we’ve built up a large database of trusted and compliant carrier partners for all modes of transport,” says Mathe. “That level of trust and our volume gives us an upper edge as things get tighter out there. Our advantage is that we’re able to move freight when others can’t find a truck or a rate that fits their budget.”



The FBI Group has plans to grow organically and, when the fit is right, the Group is open to another acquisition. While sports teams on a slide are always looking to change the culture, the culture at FBI is well in place. The team won’t move out of their comfort level and they work hard to keep new clients comfortable with choosing The FBI Group. Sometimes their name becomes part of common jokes, but that usually eases the situation introducing the company’s services to a new client or partner. One thing is for sure, if you see an FBI wrapped trailer on the road, the picture says it all: your freight is safe with them. ■

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1380 Creditstone Road, Unit #3 Vaughan, ON, L4K 0J1 | P: 800-419-8486 | F: 905-482-3855 | E: info@fbifreight.com

www.fbifreight.com

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