



WESTERN STAR TRUCKS CUSTOMER PROFILE #2

Intelligent systems move Sea Cargo Logistics forward

Being 'something to somebody' as opposed to being 'all things to everybody' is Managing Director of Sea Cargo Logistics Lex Forsyth's key business philosophy.

With \$35,000 start up capital from the sale of shares, and an idea to build a niche container transport and logistics company, Forsyth commenced trading as Sea Cargo Logistics in January 2000.

Basing himself at his first client's premises in the Brisbane port area of Fisherman Islands, Forsyth set about building up his business.

Starting with just a truck and sideloader he has grown the international container haulage and logistics company into a substantial entity handling between 500 to 600 containers daily.

According to Forsyth the early days were pretty tough.

"I had to start at 4.30am every morning to unpack two containers of copra meal just to earn enough to pay the wages of Tom Norton, my first employee and now my Operations Manager," says Forsyth.

Today, Sea Cargo Logistics boasts more than 100 staff and is headquartered at Hemmant.

The company operates 45 trucks, a variety of specialist trailers and employs 25 permanent subbies to handle the ever increasing workload.

Storage capacity includes 8,500 sq metres of warehouse space, a further 20 acres of yards and hard stand and a number of depots strategically located in Brisbane and outside the capital.

The Brisbane based company provides container movement and logistics services, up and down the Eastern seaboard of Australia.

As a testament to Forsyth's ambition to grow the business by securing key accounts, the company recently won a world-wide logistics contract with Fiji Hardwood Corporation.

"We've managed to grow the business organically by working with our clients and providing the types of services that make it easier for them to do business with us," says Forsyth.

He points to a number of initiatives that have assisted in winning over customers.

"We are licensed to carry out AQIS inspections which can be a real time saver for our customers," he says.

"As well we have invested heavily in developing our own IT systems. This means



Three of Sea Cargo's Western Star Constellations

that we can offer our customers an online booking and routing system that gives them real time visibility of their freight as it moves across our entire supply chain.

"Our internally developed online booking system handles the client's booking. It keeps track of the freight right through to proof of delivery and provides immediate invoicing in a totally paperless environment.

"The clients really appreciate the efficiency and visibility that we have built into the system. One of our clients tells us that he now gets to see his kids at night time because he no longer has to stay back and phone the transport company."

All trucks have GPS tracking and Forsyth can tell where any of his units are in real time simply from his mobile phone.

According to Forsyth other intelligent initiatives are changing the way trucks are maintained.

"We've also developed an onboard intelligence maintenance system whereby at the appropriate time the truck will automatically book itself in for a service.

"The system will check that the required parts and lubricants are in stock and if not

will automatically order in the required parts or lubricants from our suppliers. No human intervention and the system works great."

While on the subject of trucks Forsyth believes in running only new trucks within the fleet.

"There are too many variables with second hand trucks," he says.

"New trucks work for us because you get the latest technology and support from the manufacturer.

"As a matter of fact we are just in the process of purchasing a new Western Star Constellation 4864FX which will join our other 7 Western Star trucks in our fleet.

"We have one Western Star 4864FX running as a roadtrain travelling 1,800 kms every day and it doesn't miss a beat.

"Two 4864FX Stars are operating in B-Double configuration while another four Western Star trucks are used for side loader work, each day every day."

According to Forsyth he has been very pleased with the productivity delivered by the Western Star trucks and has been more than impressed with the Rocklea branch's commitment in servicing his business.

"I was in the Western Star Rocklea branch this morning checking on the progress of our recent purchase. Even though the salesman was out I must have had at least four of their staff members come up and introduce themselves.

"These people weren't even in sales. They were interested to see if I was happy with everything or if they could help.

"I've been around trucks and dealership people a long time and I can tell genuine service from lip service.

"For my money Western Star has the right product and importantly the right attitude to retain my future business." ■



Sea Cargo Logistics Managing Director Lex Forsyth



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