



Customer Case History: Food Bank of Central New York

Q: Tell us a little about yourself and Food Bank of Central New York.

A: I'm chief operating officer for Food Bank of Central New York, which serves an 11-county region stretching across Central New York, Northern New York, the Mohawk Valley, and into the Southern Tier. We provide food and resources for our neighbors in the community who are facing food insecurity.



*Brian McManus,
Chief Operating
Officer — Food Bank
of Central New York*

Q: What role does materials handling play in your operation and value proposition to the community?

A: We have a 50,000 square foot facility where we acquire, store, and re-distribute over 20 million pounds of food each year to people in need — and in order to do that, we rely heavily on material handling. We have a fleet of forklifts, and a fleet of riding pallet jacks, all of which we acquired through Thompson & Johnson. We really couldn't

get a single thing done without this equipment, and we genuinely rely on T&J to make sure they're up and running.

Q: Can you expand a little on both the inbound and outbound aspects of your operation, so we can gain a real appreciation of the scope?

A: Absolutely. On the supply side, we source food pretty much from three distinct categories — and it does break down to about 33 percent from each. The first is donated food that comes from a range of food industry sources, like grocery stores. It's of good quality, but for some reason or another it is not saleable — often because of shelf life or perishability, so in these instances we're often dealing with a pretty tight window to receive the inventory and get it back out the door. Secondly, we purchase a lot of food, which establishes and maintains a core inventory of products we know our community partners consistently rely on. And the third component stems from our being the official distributor of USDA commodities in this region: That's a Federal program that takes surplus agricultural commodities and prepares them for distribution through food banks and other entities.

Lifting expectations: Customer Case Study

As I mentioned, all of that adds up to around 20 million pounds of food annually that needs to be received, put away in our racks, stored in our inventory system, then accessed by our fleet of selectors — who go through the warehouse and prepare outbound orders which are shipped to our partner agencies and then distributed to neighbors in the community.

Q: Let's talk about your forklifts and the relationship Food Bank of CNY has with T&J.

A: When I took over this role about 20 years ago, Thompson & Johnson was already our primary provider for our materials handling needs — so it's been a longstanding relationship, for sure. Whether it's preventive maintenance, fixing problems, or responding to emergency repair calls that can arise with equipment — Thompson & Johnson does all of those things for us. They're also our preferred supplier for acquiring new equipment. Structurally, we have a lead account manager and a team of techs who do the hands-on work. The latter are very pleasant to work with and responsive; since they tend to be the same folks every time, we're familiar with them and they're familiar with us and our equipment. I believe every 250 to 500 hours of run time triggers preventive maintenance

and, you know, they're always checking to be sure our batteries are watered, no wires are frayed or worn on the vehicles, things of that sort. T&J's mobile service also has thousands of OEM parts on board, so service is quick and efficient.

Q: You mentioned batteries... Is Food Bank of CNY's fleet electric?

A: At this time we are entirely electric and have been as long as I can remember. We just feel they are more compatible given the space we have and the kinds of

are aware of the overall benefits of electric as far as being green is concerned. Running electric fleets and servicing electric forklifts is also an area of expertise at T&J, so that's a match too.

Q: Can you speak to any stories or anecdotes about T&J going the extra mile for Food Bank of CNY?

A: Actually, yes. At the onset of the COVID pandemic, the demands on our organization skyrocketed, which was common across the entire United States. Plus, we were obviously dealing with a lot of challenges on the workforce and supply chain fronts. Despite all that, we just had to keep going and the fleet of pallet checks that we had wasn't enough. We called Thompson & Johnson and they immediately donated one. So, they treat us like a valued customer — but they also recognized and were generous about the mission orientation of Food Bank.

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food we're moving. Plus we try to be a good community member in every way that we can, so we

Q: If you were asked by a colleague for a recommendation or about the service you receive from T&J, what would you say?

A: I would say exactly what we've been talking about... From a professional standpoint, they do what they say they're going to do: They're good business partners. But they also have a vested interest in the community and treated us in a way that helped us out.



If you would like to join the ranks of T&J's loyal and satisfied customers, contact Tim Gaughan today for a capabilities presentation or initiate a quote.