

ESTES FORWARDING
WORLDWIDE, LLC.:

ON THE MOVE IN FREIGHT FORWARDING



www.estesforwarding.com





ON THE MOVE IN **FREIGHT** **FORWARDING**

Under the guidance of founder and COO Scott Fisher, this logistics solutions provider has grown into an international leader in seven short years **Written by Al Vickery & Produced by Michael Magno**



Scott Fisher, COO of Estes Forwarding Worldwide in Richmond, VA offers this somewhat whimsical, but entirely accurate, depiction of the flourishing operation: “We consider ourselves like travel agents for freight.”

The company’s expansion is largely the result of Fisher’s vision when he founded the company as a separate unit under parent Estes Express Lines. That vision was of an international logistics solution that would begin, humbly, in 2003 under a central call center model. That model would quickly develop into a regional operation with offices throughout the United States. With its direct link to Estes Express Lines, Estes Forwarding Worldwide can offer what it refers to as a hybrid network by combining the best of both worlds between asset based and non-asset based providers.

STARTING OUT

Compared to most of its peers in the industry, Estes Forwarding Worldwide got off the ground with a relatively miniscule initial investment. Having started with a simple call center model, Fisher estimates the initial expense at less than \$200,000 as compared to the multi-million dollar set-ups of many of the company’s competitors. This kept the operation lean and able to see profitability in a shorter than average timespan. That, combined with the good fortune of early revenue growth, allowed the company to expand its capacity at the necessary pace.

Within months of its inception, Estes Forwarding Worldwide generated more than \$565,000 in revenue. From there, Estes Forwarding has seen exponential growth and become a true full service provider of freight and



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logistics services. The company offers a full range of global solutions including air, ocean, ground and inter-modal transportation. In addition, the operation runs 24 hours per day and 365 days per year, including tracking, monitoring and reporting. The company has become an industry leader in coordinating large, time-sensitive product rollouts on a local, regional or national basis. Revenues have now grown to \$85 million.

FROM ONE SHOP TO ONE STOP

In order to keep the pace and provide an ever-expanding and yet high quality of service, the company restructured from a centralized operating model to six regional offices throughout the United States. In 2008, the company opened an international office in Charleston, SC and became a licensed Customs House Brokerage. Since then, it has added gateway operations in New York, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Dallas as well as an office in Hong Kong.



“In order to bring better service and value, we needed to be closer to the customers and service providers,” says Fisher. Estes Forwarding Worldwide now boasts a Government Services Division in Richmond, VA and has its largest shipping facility in Harrisburg, PA, which has contracted with the military. The Hong Kong office helps manage its international network.

The company now employs more than 180 people and has multiple programs in place to attract, retain, and develop staff. “This can’t be done without good people,” says Fisher. “We sell opportunity, and we have been fortunate to attract some real quality individuals.”

The company has added 80 new employees in the past eight months, and underscores the importance of training. “Developing an understanding of our culture and how we treat our customers, and setting expectations has

“Estes invests heavily in technology and works with EDI web-based programs to offer its customers complete transparency.”

been extremely important,” according to Fisher. “We started out in 2003 on a simple premise: take care of the customer and the rest will take care of itself,” he says.

Having a strong core of long-term employees is also a benefit. Of the original six members, including Fisher, that began the operation in 2003, five are still with the company. Fisher believes the combination of strong technology and loyal employees provides the “ultimate customer experience.”



GLOBAL NETWORK

Estes Forwarding Worldwide works with a select network of key partners and core programs in place. The company uses several independent contractors to provide seamless customer service. With its direct relationship with Estes Express lines, the company has a guaranteed capacity that sets it aside from many of its competitors, which is critical as the economy begins to recover. “While so many others have taken assets out of the market, no other freight forwarding group has the network in place that can be leveraged like we do,” explains Fisher.

Estes Forwarding Worldwide offers a variety of standard and specialized services to any location in the world. The company boasts no size limitations and offers such specialized services as armed escorts, EDI Transmissions (Electronic Data Interchange), transporting of dangerous goods, and mass distributions to simultaneous locations.

With such a large global footprint, Estes Forwarding Worldwide is acutely aware of the benefit of its green initiatives, as well. As Fisher points out, on this scale it can be as simple as turning lights off and using energy efficient computer equipment. On a larger scale, Estes also participates in the SmartWay program launched by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2004, which promotes environmentally cleaner, more fuel-efficient transportation options. The company promotes the initiative by making it a requirement of its asset-based providers to participate in the program.

TECHNOLOGY

Estes invests heavily in technology and works with EDI web-based programs to offer its customers complete transparency. The company also invests in specific real time data and networking of software for direct delivery and e-billing capabilities. As part of its support services, Estes



Scott Fisher,
Executive Vice President &
Chief Operating Officer

John Eastland,
Vice President of Operations

Jarrett Williams,
Director of Finance &
Administration

offers documentation preparation and export declaration, consular preparation, and global warehousing solutions. Some of these ancillary services have also contributed to the company's growth and operations over the past two years

GROWTH MARKETS

Estes Forwarding Worldwide has seen great growth in the international market and expects to grow and expand further into the Asia/Pacific markets and the Middle East. "Our biggest opportunity, moving forward, is on the international side," says Fisher.

Estes has no plans to commit specific assets to China in the near future, but sees opportunities there nonetheless. Instead, Fisher points out that the group plans to open up operations in Atlanta and Miami in the near term. As Estes continues to expand its presence, Fisher still believes it is its simple credo that sets it apart: "We never say no to our customers." ■

FACTS AT A GLANCE

COMPANY NAME:
Estes
Forwarding
Worldwide



FOUNDER: Scott Fisher

OPERATIONS: Global logistics solutions provider

ESTABLISHED: 2003

EMPLOYEES: 180

REVENUE: \$85 million

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