



M.E. Dey

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

After more than a century in the logistics industry, M.E. Dey is using sophisticated technology to maintain its commitment to staff efficiency and high levels of customer service.

“A lot of people come to work with M.E. Dey because we have a strong reputation for looking after our customers,” says Robert Gardenier President of Milwaukee-based freight forwarder M.E. Dey. “Other people in the industry know that if a company is already a customer of M.E. Dey it’s going to be hard to win that business away from us.”

Founded in 1907, by Mae Elizabeth Dey, at a time when imports into the US arrived by steamship, and were then transported inland by rail. From its inception M.E. Dey’s success was based on strong partnerships with other brokers, and a deep commitment to customer service.

A hundred and five years later company president Gardenier, Mae Elizabeth Dey’s great-grandnephew, is still looking for ways to use the most modern technology in a way that will enable the company to maintain its most-long held traditions.

“In the early 1980’s we came under a lot of pricing pressure and significant demands for investment in technology. We realized that in order to survive we’d need to differentiate from our competitors, big and small,” says Gardenier. “Over the next 10 years M.E. Dey transformed itself, by focusing on client education, service expansion and technology. Our future will require fewer staff working shipments, and more managing processes, that requires staff who are more sophisticated.”

Rather than limit this ongoing transformation to a narrow focus on measureable outcomes, M.E. Dey’s approach was to adopt a culture of constant change and improvement aimed at finding better and more effective ways to cater to the needs of its client base. As a result M.E. Dey today clearly differentiates itself based on three main factors: excellent and consistent customer



service, a commitment to maintaining and enhancing highly skilled staff, and supporting a culture of ongoing change.

“We differentiate ourselves through customer service, education and the ability to be proactive, and our capacity to change and adjust in a short amount of time,” explains Gardenier. “We provide our clients with one key contact, and strive to ensure our small to medium size clients get the support and service they simply wouldn’t receive from larger providers.”

In spite of this commitment to customer service, change and adaption, M.E. Dey found it was losing ground to larger competitors when it came to the way it kept in touch with its customers. Customers and internal teams were finding it increasingly hard to compete as competitors bought into sophisticated data management systems and used them strategically to challenge M.E. Dey’s reputation for customer service.

“Clients are very mobile these days, they have fewer people doing the work and are not always able to communicate with us during normal business hours, so they need their information to be readily available 24/7 in a range of formats,” says Gardenier. “We recognized that we and our clients wanted and needed more interactivity, and access to real-time information.”

As a mid-sized service provider the company was also challenged with the perception that it was too small to manage major, or complex, shipments. While it was not leading to a drop in business, Gardenier says this perception meant that M. E. Dey was often overlooked, when customers when to market for larger contracts.

“Often companies who haven’t had the opportunity to work



Robert Gardenier, President
M.E. Dey

M.E. DEY OFFERS CUSTOMERS:

- Import Services including nationwide customs brokerage, online shipment tracing, automated notification, Customs bonds and marine insurance.
- Export Services offering shipment tracking to Incoterm, on-line air and ocean freight quotes, and letter of credit documentation services.
- Integrated Worldwide Freight Forwarding service including warehousing and distribution, point-to-point routing.
- Trade and regulatory services including compliance evaluation, customs compliance, parts classification, duty engineering, classification and FTZ services.

with us perceive our company to be too small when working in the international freight business,” Gardenier says. “Once they experience how our network of partners functions and how we can respond to their needs, their perception quickly changes, especially when they realise that we have the liberty to truly select the best partner in each country, and will ensure that we find partners who best fit the customer requirements.”

As it turned out, the solution for both customer service challenges, and the need to keep up with much larger competitors lay in the adoption of a single global customer database hosted on the ediEnterprise platform from CargoWise.

Affordable and sophisticated, the software enabled M.E. Dey to enhance and streamline its internal processes, while maintain the personal service on which it has built a strong reputation.

“We are one of a number of family owned businesses in our industry and my family remains intimately involved in the business on a daily basis,” says Gardenier. “That’s how we combine the continuity of service with quality of service, but without the right technology we would struggle to hold onto this reputation.

“We’re never going to present ourselves as the lowest-cost option, or struggle to undercut our competitors’ pricing but we will ensure we providing excellent value for the dollars spent.”

