



CASE STUDY

Deliver Fast, Deliver Well

Mi Pueblo Foods Grows Fast with RiskSmart Solutions®

In the highly competitive retail grocery business, Mi Pueblo Food Center uses a balance of speed and execution to keep one step ahead. Growing consistently at a double-digit rate for the past five years, Mi Pueblo will soon open its 20th store, hire its 3,000th employee, and top \$250 million in annual revenue.

“Our growth is aggressive,” admits Hector Salas, Vice President of Human Resources, “but not reckless. We’re fanatical about the quality of our customers’ shopping experience – and moving fast is essential to keeping the quality of that experience high.”

CHALLENGES

Recently, as they prepared for their annual workers’ compensation renewal, Salas and Eddie Kwan, Mi Pueblo’s Manager of Health & Safety, questioned whether they were getting everything they needed from their existing broker. “It was an eight year relationship”, reports Kwan. “But with our growth, Mi Pueblo is almost a new company every year. What were we missing?” Salas puts it this way: “We sensed there were unidentified opportunities. I was concerned about the price as well. More growth looked like more worrying about risk, safety and cost of coverage.”

The two agreed to take action; a formal broker RFP and selection process needed to be accomplished in 10 weeks. A tall order, and one requiring special expertise. To run the project, Mi Pueblo engaged Charles T. Wilson of RiskSmart Solutions® (RSS). To meet the timeline, RSS would have to quickly digest the nuances of Mi Pueblo’s risks and culture, as well as manage a multiple broker assessment, interview and selection process.

RISKSMT SOLUTIONS’ CONTRIBUTION

“Charles brought three key attributes,” remarks Kwan. “First, he has vast experience, not just in workers’ comp, but across all lines of business insurance. Second, his professionalism: the utmost integrity, objectivity and persistence. Third, insight and understanding. I was amazed at how quickly he picked up on our business, culture and needs.”

RSS provided a range of services including: (i) developing Mi Pueblo’s RFP, (ii) managing the broker presentations, (iii) assisting Salas and Kwan in the evaluation, (iv) negotiating Mi Pueblo’s broker fees and service agreement, and (v) overseeing the transition to the new broker, including consultation on selecting a new carrier. Salas describes RSS’s role as



Profile

- Leading neighborhood grocery retailer
- Double-digit growth rate
- 3,000 employees
- Annual sales over \$200 million
- 2009 National Grocers Association award winner
- Established 1991

Challenges

- More employees and locations change coverage needs
- Escalating cost of coverage
- Spanish speaking employee population
- Short deadline for W/C policy renewal

“We sensed there might be unidentified opportunities with our broker. I was concerned about what we were paying for coverage as well.”

Hector Salas
Vice President, Human Resources

"I was amazed at how quickly Charles picked up on our business, culture and needs."

Eddie Kwan
Manager of Health & Safety

"We are very happy. We needed someone who could deliver, and in RSS, that's exactly what we got."

Hector Salas
Vice President, Human Resources

"business match-making" – where organizational fit and business culture are just as important as price and terms.

Mi Pueblo's new workers' compensation broker – a first-tier national firm – is many times larger than the incumbent. Wilson's experience with nationwide firms was instrumental. "Charles went in there and sweated the details for us," notes Salas, "everything from broker fees, to how much of what services will be delivered, to subtle things like the legal venue for arbitration."

RESULTS

Mi Pueblo projects up-front annual savings in excess of \$100,000. What's more, being marketed by a "blue-chip" national broker means more competitive quotes, and the opportunity for new, specialized services to help reduce losses going forward – such as claims handling by Spanish speaking representatives. Salas says, "We are very happy. It's a great fit for us, a great fee structure, and the service level agreement makes it a home run."

Time, it's been said, won't wait. Mi Pueblo Foods uses speed – whether it's bringing the freshest produce to market or aligning the company with strong partners to guide its aggressive growth – to its advantage. "We needed someone who could deliver," says Salas, "deliver fast and deliver well. And in RiskSmart Solutions, that's exactly what we got."