

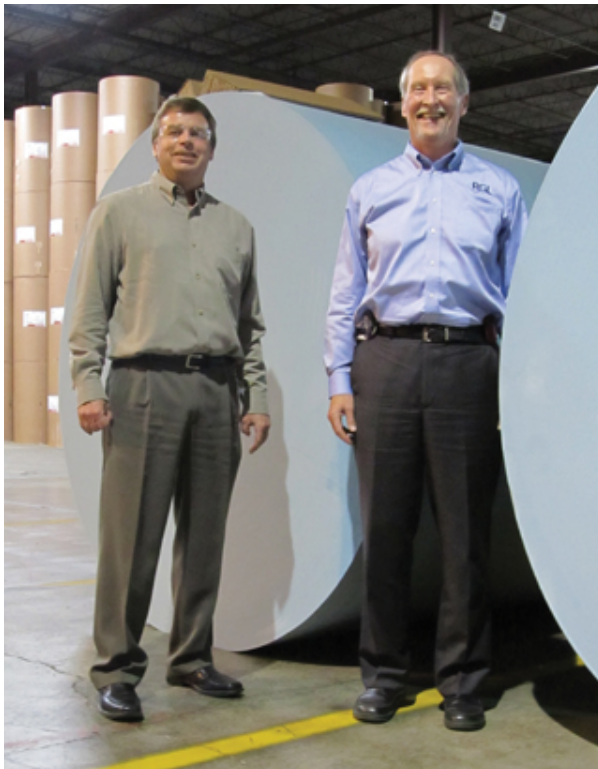


SMALL BUSINESS – What if?

Green Bay logistics firm undertakes rebranding

Posted by Sharon Verbeten on 8/01/13

Rebranding is more than coming up with a new name and logo. It's about tapping into the mission of the company – both inside and out.



That's the challenge RGL Logistics faced about a year ago, when it began the process of rebranding its three businesses – Leicht, Checker Logistics and RGL Specialty Services – into one core company.

“Companies need to have visions and challenging goals,” says CEO Bob Johnson. “Our vision is to revolutionize logistics.”

With three companies in two locations (Green Bay and Neenah) under one umbrella, RGL sought to realign as a more cohesive, recognizable and workable brand.

“We’ve gone through a lot of changes,” says Johnson, who has been with the company 12 years.

The company expanded its logistics offerings

to include transportation brokerage and contract packaging. “As we started doing that ... we thought, ‘What are we doing as a company?’”

The complicated world of logistics was changing, and Johnson realized it was a “good time for the company willing to take advantage of the changes going on.”

A brand takes shape

The new name, RGL, honors Russell G. Leicht, who founded Leicht 110 years ago. With such a long history, taking on a rebranding wasn’t done lightly. But it was really the company’s core goals that led its leaders, along with a consultant, to hone in on their new brand.

“This process makes you rethink your culture,” Johnson says. “It’s fundamental to your business.”

In doing so, RGL hired Mike Natalizio of HNI Risk Services, a business advisory firm in New Berlin. Through months of in-depth discussions with customers, staff and leadership about the company and its structure, goals and mission, Natalizio zeroed in on what he calls “the essence” of the company.

“You want a brand people can connect to,” Natalizio says. “We wanted it to be authentic and real.” As a result of discussions about what sets RGL apart from others in the industry, they came up with the catch phrase, “Go ahead. Ask what if.”

“When we are at our best, we’re asking a lot of questions and coming up with solutions,” Johnson says. “(What if) really does describe what we do when we’re at our best.”

RGL Vice President Jim Rasmussen agrees that the catch phrase is ideal. “The ‘what if’ concept ties exactly to our culture. It is who we are. It’s what we’ve always been.

“It’s not about us. It’s about the customer,” Rasmussen says, noting that they research their customers before they meet them, aiming to learn their challenges and solve them by asking “What if?”

Natalizio says, “When we hit it (that phrase), it was kind of an epiphany.”

While the rebranding effort took more than a year, it was a collective effort that involved all levels. Johnson says it was essential to get buy-in and input at all levels, including 300 employees at the company’s several Northeast Wisconsin locations.

“There has to be alignment both inside and outside,” Natalizio says.

Rasmussen adds, “For us to act that way externally, you have to live that way internally.”

RGL's people vision recognizes the critical role played by each employee, and the company plans to continue developing and implementing safety, wellness and training programs. "It is vital that our employees feel ownership of the work they do and that they go home every day feeling safe, healthy and fulfilled," Johnson says.

Changes have been rampant in the logistics world – beginning most notably with the deregulation of trucking in the 1980s. But now, under the "power of one" company, the leaders at RGL feel they are better poised to not only continue to offer the company's many services, but to also expand opportunities for employees and provide a clearer explanation for customers of what RGL does. And through it all, Johnson says RGL's goal is to grow the company to \$125 million in annual sales in five years.

And with a refined brand and message, the 110-year-old company looks forward to moving ahead with renewed enthusiasm.

"It's been really neat to see the energy," Johnson says. "We have to celebrate all these ideas; it builds on itself."

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