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Commercial Furniture Transport Moves the Industry Forward in the Big Apple



TRANSPORT

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BY ROB KIRKBRIDE

The logistics of transporting office furniture is fairly straightforward. The manufacturer builds the furniture and moves it to the site where it is being installed (or at least to the dealer in the location where it is going). Unless the furniture is going to New York City. That's when things get logistically tricky.

Enter Commercial Furniture Transport, a company that has made the nightmarish prospect of getting office furniture into one of the busiest cities in the world a whole lot easier for the office furniture industry.

CFT has grown and evolved over the past 35-plus years by getting office furniture quickly and safely into a city where transportation is, well, a major headache. According to President Ryan Goor, CFT knows how to navigate a city that has more than 6,000 miles of roads.

“There are days that I look at our drivers, and I wonder to myself how they get 10-12 deliveries a day into the city with all the traffic, without parking tickets and without damage,” he says. “If (the industry) didn't have a company like ours, honestly, I don't know how you could do it.”

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Some office furniture manufacturers try. They use common carriers to get furniture into the city. The problem with that approach, Ryan Goor says, is losing control of your product. If the furniture gets stuck in one of their terminals, the customer can't just call them and say you need to pick it up as soon as possible.

Other busy cities in the U.S. have traffic problems, but none that approach the challenges New York poses. On average, more than 10 million vehicles enter Manhattan each month, about 600,000 of those trucks, according to the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. Anyone who has ever ventured into Manhattan by car, taxi or Uber knows how long it can take to get into the metropolis. Hours-long delays are common and when inside the city, parking — especially trucks — is next to impossible.

But Ryan Goor says CFT is comfortable navigating this web of obstruction and

has done it for office furniture customers for years. He is the second generation to run CFT. The company was started by his father, Marty Goor, in 1986. The business began primarily as an office furniture delivery and installation company. Over the Christmas holiday, when the company's warehouse was closed, the pipes froze and burst, collapsing the floors of the Jersey City facility. That forced Mary Goor to make a decision. Instead of calling it quits, he realized there was a real need for manufacturers to have a third party company help with distribution in New York City. This vision coincided with the dramatic rise in the office furniture industry.

New York has always been one of the most important cities in the world for office furniture sales, and the most volume is sold there. "You can't go into New York City to deliver five pieces here, 10 pieces there," Ryan Goor says.

You name the manufacturer and in some capacity, CFT has worked for them, including all the majors. Though it has experienced growth and a few dips over the years, it has grown substantially in terms of dollar volume in the last decade.

Perhaps that's because "furniture becomes sometimes more important than blood to some of our customers," Ryan Goor says. "If a manufacturer or dealer needs a delivery right now or needs it to be held, that's what we do. Our customers know that if they need us, they can call me up anytime on my cell phone."

CFT, which is based in Secaucus, N.J., has literally helped the industry build New York City into the commercial powerhouse that it is today. Many good examples exist of how the company has found a way to help supply furniture to the city despite enormous obstacles.

The first is the company's work to bring furniture to the new World Trade Center. Ryan Goor says CFT delivered furniture for the manufacturer and won a major workstation and private office portion for a major tenant there. It included the delivery of 300 loads. CFT was one of the first companies to deliver to the World Trade Center site after it was rebuilt. The deliveries included products from multiple factories that were consolidated on CFT's site and delivered to lower Manhattan for installation.

It remains a super-sensitive area when it comes to truck traffic and logistics. All of the companies drivers needed security clearance to deliver there. "Just delivering to that area and being on time for all 300-plus loads, that makes us very proud," he says.

Another example of what CFT can do came during the renovation of Madison Square Garden, the iconic sports facility in the heart of Midtown Manhattan. The chair manufacturer selected CFT to receive, store, pick and pull all of the seating for Madison Square Garden over the three-year installation schedule of the project. It included more than 20,000 seats.

"That would have been nice and easy if you could have gone in and out using trailer (trucks)," Ryan Goor says. "We have the specialized equipment, straight trucks and other vehicles that can deliver to the job site."



CFT also can help with installation. The company has union and non-union capabilities that make it unique in the industry. On an average day, CFT has 40-60 installers working in the field. On a recent 10-floor project in downtown Manhattan, it delivered and installed continuously 24-hours a day, seven days a week. It sent two or three trailers into the city every night starting at 11 p.m. Since the project was next to the Federal Reserve, there were restrictions on the times vehicles could deliver. CFT also has installed many hospitality projects, recently, outfitting hotel rooms for customers around the country.

CFT also has a liquidation and moving division that can remove old furniture and sell it, donate it or just salvage and scrap it. It can also help move computers and IT equipment. The service helps facility managers often overwhelmed with other worries during a move.

Since CFT might be working for a dealer or a manufacturer thousands of miles away, communication is critical.

"We know we need to act as a partner to dealer and not just another sub," Ryan Goor says. "They know they can trust us. New York is a totally different market, in part, because so many people are involved. There are so many different players. But from one chair to a thousand workstations, we can do it. When it comes to pressure, what I always tell people, is that the pressure is on us. We take it off them. You give us the freight, we will make all the issues disappear. From the warehouse to the dispatchers to the delivery. You don't just turn up in New York City and get lucky." **BoF**