

B R I G H T A T W O R K



Product
Reference 4.15

Cara Donna
Provision Co.

Long Term Relationship, Crown Products Lead To Solutions for Cara Donna Provisions Company

Good Relationships Strengthen Business

Like his father and grandfather before him, Joe Cara Donna III has learned good, healthy relationships strengthen a business and are vital to its success particularly in an industry where profit margins are traditionally tight.

So when the younger Cara Donna examines his Crown fleet of lift trucks, he knows the value and efficiency needed for his food distribution company is there thanks to a solid relationship with Crown lift trucks. And it's a relationship he quickly adds that Cara Donna Provisions Company has never needed to second guess.

"That's been the best part of the relationship," he says. "Over the years, Crown products have created solutions for us. It's been a good relationship built over the test of time...The company, the service it provides and the product, Crown lift trucks, speak for themselves."

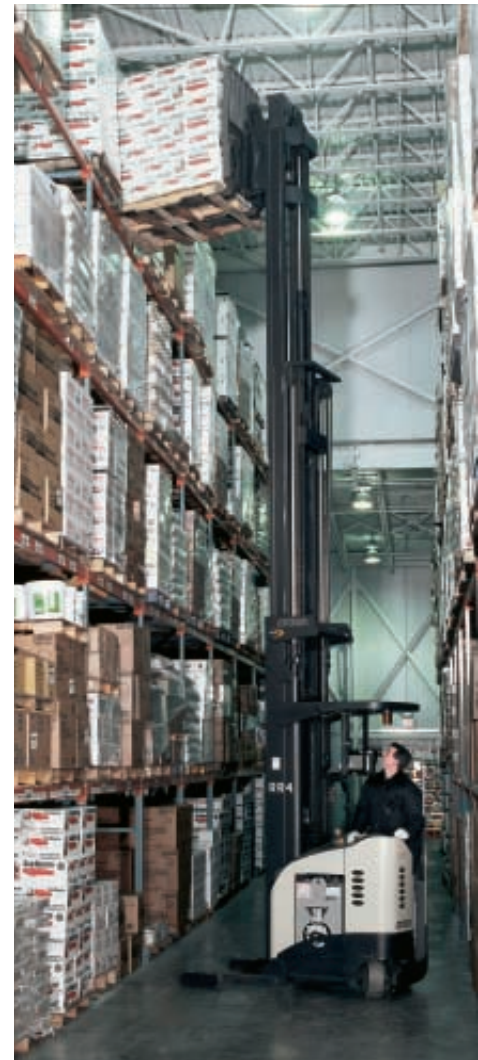
Loyalty, however, doesn't win over good common business sense, he adds. "We don't accept things at face value," he emphasizes. "Many times we've gotten competitive quotes and held Crown's feet to the fire...but Crown always comes through. They work very hard to keep our business and that's a very important part of the relationship."

No Ivory Tower Atmosphere...

And hard work has always been a part of the Cara Donna philosophy. "We didn't grow up in an ivory tower atmosphere," says the younger Cara Donna. This philosophy fits the image of a successful company built from the ground up.

His grandfather began the company in 1945 and Joe Sr. would ride the trolley car to exchange goods in the downtown Boston markets.

"You have the classic picture of a guy riding a trolley car carrying a 100-pound hind quarter on his back," he describes.



Four Crown Reach Trucks are used in Cara Donna Provision Company's warehouse. Above, the RR 5200 Series has been well received by operators because of the side-stance design and operator backrest as well as the product's ability to work in the narrow aisle.



In the 1950s, when his father and uncle entered the family business fresh from military service, the delivery system improved to a fleet of three trucks.

“They were the truck drivers,” says Cara Donna. “Of course, that was before supermarkets dominated the world. Each neighborhood had their own market where neighborhood people bought their goods.”

A smart, tough and dedicated businessman, Joe’s father, Joe Jr. and brother Leo Sr. would each make up to 20 stops daily, beginning the day by going to the market to pick up beef, pork, chicken, deli meats, cheeses and assorted goods for their customers.

In the 1960s, Joe’s father, described by his son as the “dynamo” of the second generation, posed the question, “How do we grow our business?” The decision was made to rent space in Boston’s New Market Square.



“That allowed us to buy larger amounts in bulk at better prices and lessen the traveling,” says Cara Donna. “And if we were able to cut some good deals, then we could sell to some of the other jobbers.”

The Next Generation...And Palletized Loads

As the company grew, the third generation arrived. Joe, brother Chris and cousins, Leo and Joe, like their fathers and grandfather, were learning the business.

“We were given every conceivable job imaginable. We truly worked our way up through the organization,” says Cara Donna.

As they were learning, the business again evolved. Supermarkets were emerging and dominating the retail business. The company shifted its focus to more specialized products like Italian deli meats, cheeses and related provisions. When the pizza revolution arrived, the company’s distribution business reached new heights and into a new dimension – palletized loads.



A Cara Donna Provision Company worker puts the Crown 5200 Series Reach Truck through its paces in the company’s frigid freezer application. Operators express a strong loyalty for the Crown products especially the 5200’s ability to work in a tough environment.

Enter Crown...A Strong Relationship Begins

Instead of wooden carts with t-handles for order picking, lift trucks became a crucial element in the way the company moved product. And a 60 PW walkie pallet truck made the younger Cara Donna a believer in Crown equipment and how much the truck lessened the workload.

“I always remember the Crown trucks as solid and beefier than the competition,” he recalls. “And the way our warehouse was stacked you needed that in a truck. I became a fan of Crown because of those early years and the loyalty has remained.”

Cara Donna Provision Company’s docks are the hub of activity for the food distributor. Crown RCs and WP 2000s unload and load products on the company’s fleet of over-the-road trucks, five days a week, 24 hours a day.



Newest Cara Donna Provision Company operation in Braintree, MA is shown above...The 38,000 square foot facility with freezer, cooler and dry goods storage serves customer in the New England market.

In the early 1980s, another expansion meant the purchase of another piece of material handling equipment – a Crown Series RC Stand-Up Counterbalanced lift truck. “That was a huge thing for us,” says Cara Donna. “We thought it was the best thing in the world since sliced bread.”

And the Cara Donnas were on the floor operating the truck, keeping the RC busy doing multiple tasks, loading and unloading, stacking, and transporting goods in a tough, busy warehouse environment.

“We were the people doing the work. The truck became an extension of my brother, cousins and me. It enabled us to do a lot of work and learn a lot about the business,” he said.

Strong relationships with Crown sales and after-market support personnel further developed loyalty to the Crown products.

“I’m not going to downplay the role of relationships, either. We have always had good sales people with Crown. They’ve always worked hard for the account...we grew up on the docks

and these guys came up through Crown at the same time,” he says.

A New Warehouse Emerges...

Today the company operates out of two warehouses, one located in the Boston market district and a newer facility in Braintree. The latter warehouse was built in 1999. The 38,000 square foot facility provides freezer, cooler and dry goods storage and accounts for \$55 million worth of sales in serving the New England market.

Cara Donna says the company’s business base remains 1/3rd re-distributors while the remaining 2/3rds consists of end users like restaurants, pizza and sub shops, delis and institutional buyers like schools and prisons.

The Braintree location operates five days a week, 24 hours a day. Crown lift trucks load trucks, put away product, help pick and accomplish full pallet pulls.

The fleet includes GPWs, WP 2040-45s, PE 3540-80s, SP 3020-30s, RR 5000 and RR 5200s, RC 3020-30s and numerous PTHs.

Planned Maintenance: No Downtime

A strong believer in planned maintenance, Cara Donna says the program is based on the belief that “you either pay now or you pay later.”

“We can’t afford to have trucks going down because we don’t have a redundancy of equipment,” says Cara Donna. “We have the equipment we need and basically it needs to operate two long shifts.”

The company expects operators to take care of their trucks. Regular reports monitor the units closely and operator bonuses are based on truck condition.

A great example of how well the company takes care of the trucks and their durability lies in their history with Crown 60 PWs. The trucks usually last between 10 and 12 years before the company finally retires them.



Chris and Joe Cara Donna (l-r) learned the food distribution business by working all aspects of the family business. Today along with cousins Leo and Joe they lead the growing firm which serves customers throughout New England. One key feature in their warehouse operations remains Crown lift trucks.

“Our people take pretty good care of our equipment,” he says. “We seem to get longer life than most users in our industry.”



Crown PE Series 3500 pallet trucks are used for lower level order picking throughout Cara Donna Provision Company's warehouse. The 28" x 96" extended tip forks allow double pallet movement of food products for the food distributor.

Strong Operator Loyalty Toward Crown

Operators do feel a strong loyalty toward Crown products. When the company received their new 5200 Series Reach Truck, an operator videotaped the truck's arrival and unloading. He wanted to take the video home to show his family the truck he would be operating.

"This just shows how dedicated and how much our employees care about their equipment," says Cara Donna.

Crown: A Comfortable, Safer Truck

The trucks' ergonomics are also important, he adds. "Obviously, it makes for a more comfortable truck, a safer truck and I know Crown spends a lot of time looking at those issues," he says.

On the Crown reach trucks, the side-stance design and operator

backrest improves safety and operator comfort.

"When the guys are comfortable in the trucks, it makes their days less stressful. All of that plays a part in good productivity. It's good to see Crown hasn't taken a back seat in design. They always seem to be on the leading edge," he says.

Operator comfort with Crown products and the solutions the trucks provide only furthers to cement a strong relationship between Crown and Cara Donna Provisions.

Says Cara Donna: "For us, Crown is a 'no brainer'. It takes us out of the forklift business and allows us to concentrate on our business. I have many different responsibilities that I can worry about, but I know because of our relationship with Crown, our lift truck fleet will be in good hands."



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