

Mission Critical: Syfan Logistics Met Pandemic Challenge to Help Supply America

Back in March 2020, as speculation of a worldwide pandemic suddenly turned real, Syfan Logistics was about to learn what it meant to be an “essential provider.”

The federal designation allowed the company to continue operation. But it came with a responsibility far eclipsing the demands of everyday deadline shipments by Syfan’s professional team of logistics planners, dispatchers, fleet drivers and carrier partners.

Working with one of its key shipping partners, Syfan was tasked with assembling a network of over 100 drivers, trucks and equipment that could be on stand-by and ready at a moment’s notice. Drivers had to be available around the clock; for long hauls, a team of two drivers were required.

The Syfan Critical Express team knew their cargo would be



precious and in heavy demand. Shipments would range from ventilators, personal protective equipment, body bags, and medicines to more mundane consumer goods like paper towels and toilet paper in short supply.

Like volunteering for a risky military mission, the drivers also knew they would likely be exposed to the rapidly spreading virus while traveling to the country’s hottest hot

spots, places like Los Angeles and New York City.



STEVE SYFAN

On each side of the shipment, from driver

to the end-user, lives and livelihoods were all on the line.

“We knew the impact of our mission,” said Steve Syfan, executive vice president. “And we knew the risks. It required bravery and patriotism. Healthcare workers and their patients, first responders, citizens sheltered at home — a whole nation was counting on us. And we were proud to be part of the solution.”

CHALLENGES AND BUMPS ALONG THE ROAD

Driver recruitment was the first order of business. Pulling together large numbers of drivers and equipment, and then idling them — sometimes for days — until emergency loads became available, was

lining was that the slowdown in some sectors of its customer base allowed Syfan to shift more resources to its Critical Express team.

The logistics planning had a lot of moving parts as stand-by drivers were dispatched to locations around the country. As many as 15 to 20 driver teams had to be

In one sense, the pandemic created conditions like the traditional holiday peak season — on steroids. From mid-March through the summer, Syfan's load demand mushroomed to record heights. For perspective, consider this: On average, Syfan hauled 15 to 20 shipments a week for one of its key shipping partners prior to the pandemic crisis; afterward, that number soared to as high as 80 loads on a single day!

"In the end, we were successful for many reasons — our competent team of professionals, our longtime experience in over-the-road transport, our carrier partners and other relationships," Syfan said. "But the biggest factor simply came down to our trust and transparency.

"We tell it like it is, bad or good. And when we make a promise, we deliver."



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an enormous undertaking. An asset-based provider, Syfan was able to recruit many from its own fleet in addition to enlisting the most reliable and trusted drivers from its longstanding carrier partnerships.

"It was not only a challenge to amass such a large team on stand-by, but also to hold it together while some drivers were already getting sick from COVID-19 exposure," Syfan said. "We were very concerned about our driver safety and initiated numerous changes to our protocols to keep them safe and in their trucks as much as possible."

Syfan's diversified customer base was key in its ability to deliver. As the pandemic settled in over the spring, many of Syfan's customers in manufacturing and other industries were starting to feel the pinch of shuttered consumer demand. The silver

on stand-by at one time, waiting on site at a pick-up location. And as soon as one truck shipped out, Syfan had to replace it with another hauler team, ready to reload and ship out.

A \$250 million-plus company, Syfan was blessed with the financial resources to pay their driver teams — on and off the clock — while waiting for loads.

"It was a calculated risk, but we knew our financial support up front was absolutely necessary," Syfan said.

