

Trusted Solutions

In taking a personal, consultative approach and forming partnerships with clients, J. Knipper and Company is designing effective sample-management solutions. **By Eric Slack**

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**MIKE LAFERRERA,
PRESIDENT AND COO**

J. Knipper and Company has taken a long and winding road to becoming known as the leader in sample compliance, direct marketing and fulfillment to the pharmaceutical and biotech industry. The company’s founders, Joe and Jim Knipper, started out with a manufacturing company called JK Pharmaceuticals. When they got involved in direct shipping and promotional goods to support their products, other pharmaceutical companies began to ask them for help with their marketing and fulfillment needs. J. Knipper and Company Inc. was born in 1986, dedicated to direct mail and fulfillment services for the pharmaceutical industry.

Quickly becoming a go-to vendor for many customers, it grew into one of the top service providers for the pharma industry. This attracted the attention of McKesson in the mid-’90s, which acquired Knipper and formed a pharma services consortium called McKesson Pharmaceuticals Partners Group (MPPG).

After several years of growth for Knipper as an MPPG company, McKesson decided to invest in other areas. Jim Knipper was able



Knipper provides the broadest array of end-to-end sample-management solutions in the industry.

to re-acquire the company, coming out of the deal with a very strong and significantly larger business. From there, it embarked on a growth strategy focused on providing the broadest array of end-to-end sample-management solutions in the industry.

“Both organic growth and acquisitions have propelled Knipper to a position of prominence in the industry as the largest provider of sample-management services in the U.S.,” President and COO Mike Laferrera says. “We now have more than 600 employees and more than 600,000 square feet.”

Single Source

Knipper offers customers a single sourcing model, striving to be what it internally calls a sample-management vertical authority. This allows it to serve a very diverse customer base, catering to varying needs and imperatives.

“The evolution of our solutions is primarily the result of necessity,” Laferrera says. “We have become very good

at mastering the balance between compliance and commercial success by leveraging our experienced employee base and our library of best practices accumulated by collaborating with some of the most innovative pharmaceutical manufacturers.”

Aligning its offerings with client needs allows Knipper to provide that vertical authority model. At the same time, making it mutually beneficial for Knipper and its customers takes careful orchestration. “What we offer goes far beyond convenience of one-stop shopping,” Laferrera says. “We offer freedom from senseless errors in handoffs, as well as peace of mind and productivity so customers can focus on areas of their jobs that need their own personal attention.”

Knipper is dedicated to providing clients with ROI and quantitative demonstrations of value without losing sight of the personal interactions that lie at the heart of its core business. To do that, it must invest in customers, understand their businesses and create true partnerships that share mutually in each other’s successes.

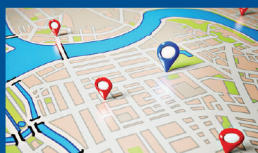


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CEO and owner Jim Knipper backs the company's goal to provide clients with ROI and quantitative demonstrations of value.

"At Knipper, we call these principles C.H.A.R.T., which stands for caring, honesty, accountability, respect and trust," Laferrera says.

Growth Methods

Acquisitions have been part of Knipper's approach to growth. It acquired entities like Pharmagistics, the MyStro division of InVentiv Health and the sampling business unit of MediMedia, all of which possessed the entrepreneurial spirit and institutional knowledge Knipper sees as crucial for success.

"We had already formed wonderful collaborations with the companies

selling those assets and ultimately we were able to purchase the assets outright. Now these teams work together seamlessly for the benefit of our combined customer base," Laferrera says. "Each acquired group is now able to focus on what we do best, which is sample management."

Knipper's most important investment is its people, specifically people with experience, principles aligned with the company and a strong work ethic. Beyond that, its largest investments have been in streamlining processes and systems and focusing on its defined strategic growth areas.

One prominent factor impacting

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President and COO Mike LaFerrera believes Knipper's most important investment is in people with experience and a strong work ethic.

the entire healthcare world is the regulatory environment, which has seen a steady increase in legislation and governance around activities that affect Knipper's sample-management vertical. These pressures can create new trends in areas like risk management, data consolidation, service consolidation and sales operations.

"Our growth goals are tightly coupled to the overall needs of pharma as they apply to our vertical, so it is incumbent upon us to stay well abreast of these factors as we plan organic growth, new areas of business and ongoing acquisitions," LaFerrera says. "We will continue to drive organic growth

through excellence in service while strategically expanding several key services such as contact center solutions, healthcare provider data management and field sales sample audit and inventory services."

Knipper's recent challenges have centered on managing growth in a manner that continuously increases its value to customers. Unlike many publicly held companies, Knipper measures value based solely on meeting and exceeding its customer needs. "Though this can sometimes mean taking a slower, more deliberate approach to growth, it has been at the core of our success to date," LaFerrera says. +

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