

STEVENS TRUCKING, A FAMILY BUSINESS THAT HAS GROWN FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO BECOME A MAJOR PLAYER IN ITS SECTOR, STRIVES TO BE THE EMBODIMENT OF WHAT A TRUCKING COMPANY SHOULD BE.

TOWARDS NEW HORIZONS

PROJECT MANAGED BY: **TIMOTHY GARWOOD**

What started as a single-truck business has grown into one of the premier carriers in North America with 300+ trucks and 1500 trailers, serving customers across a range of sectors. Cole Stevens, Vice President for Sales, and a member of the second generation of the family business, tells us the family story.

“My father bought his first one-tonne hotshot truck at the age of 19 to run tools to oil rigs in the Oklahoma oil fields and gradually built up a small oil division. When oil fell to eight dollars a barrel, he sold off some of his most prized possessions to keep the business afloat and used the money to buy some trailers. That’s how the company got into general freight truckloads.”

Today, the company still operates a small oil division but with a total of nearly 2,000

pieces of equipment, it now hauls tyres and auto parts, and finished goods for four of the top major paper products companies, as well as water and food products.

“We service all of the general truckload segments including the automotive sector and general manufacturing industries. This diversification into different sectors has been one of the reasons the company has flourished even in challenging times,” says Cole Stevens. >>

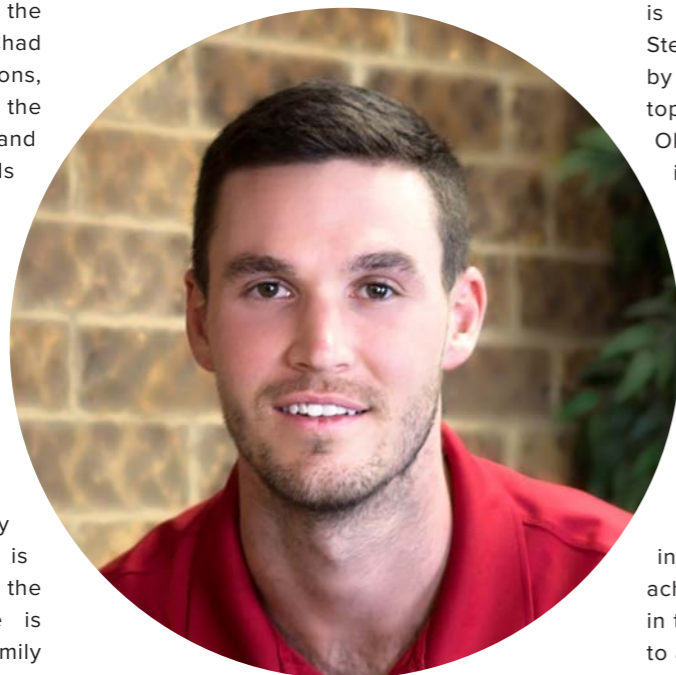




PEOPLE AT THE CORE

The other factor has been the hard work of the close-knit family. The founder, Kenney Stevens, continues to helm the operation, his eldest son Chad oversees freight operations, middle son Eric manages the drivers and recruiting, and daughter-in-law Jessi heads up the administrative department. Cole, the youngest, is in charge of sales.

“My father is a really great leader when it comes to making sure that what we’re doing is for the betterment of the business, not necessarily of ourselves. All the family working hard together is one of the reasons behind the company’s growth. There is not a single sibling, or family member that does not need the business to be successful, the success of the business is the success of every one of us. And that’s really special.”



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Cole Stevens,
Vice President for Sales,
Steven’s Trucking.

He affirms that the employees are put front and centre, as they are considered an extension of the family. And that approach is appreciated – in 2021, Stevens Trucking was voted by the employees one of the top workplaces for the state of Oklahoma. “That recognition is truly valued as it reflects how people feel about the environment that we’ve created,” says Cole.

Stevens Trucking performance has been also recognised on a more general level – in 2019, and in 2020 the company was named one of the Inc 5000 Fastest Growing Private Companies in the US. An impressive achievement, as organic growth in the trucking business is hard to achieve, Cole points out.

In a tough industry that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the entire year, that acknowledgement makes a tremendous difference in

the lives of employees and inspires the Stevens family to keep growing and striving for excellence. “Trucking is a very large industry with a high employee turnover. It takes a lot to be able to grow at that rate, and it shows that we are doing something right.”

HELPED BY TECHNOLOGY

The company has made several investments in new technologies to increase efficiency as well as drivers’ safety. One such investment is trailer tracking technology. In addition to enabling the company to optimize their assets within their network, it allows them to keep drivers and loads moving efficiently.

The technology brings a clear customer benefit as well. Because the tracking software is installed in the trailer, customers have complete visibility and accurate information about one of their greatest concerns: the movement of their commodities.

Three years ago, the company has also adopted the NoCell solution from NoCell Technologies to reduce the potential for device distractions and help

drivers maximise productivity. Basically, the technology disables unauthorised apps when the vehicle is in motion.

Cole says: “With NoCell we are reducing risk, liability, loss, and maximizing productivity because it helps drivers stay focused on doing their jobs. We have not had a single cell phone-involved incident in the three years since we implemented NoCell, and our fleet has travelled over 100 million miles.” >>

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He acknowledges that the company is also taking sustainability very seriously and is considering the best way to minimise its environmental footprint – not an easy task for a trucking company, but one that has been actively addressed; the company is just about to sign its first equipment order for electric vehicles.

MAKING THE WORLD THRIVE

Unlike for most sectors, the global pandemic has not presented a major disruption for Stevens Trucking. While Cole admits that the first few months were hard, demand for transportation skyrocketed quickly, pushing further expansion. So, what are the plans for the coming months?

“We will continue to expand as long as our customers see fit. As my father says, ‘we grow out of need not out of greed’. We want to grow when our customers need and enjoy the service that we provide. That is when we can continue our growth method, and we plan on doing so.”

In concluding, Cole reinforces the message that truck drivers on the road are incredibly safe. “If you look at the metrics published by various authorities such as ATRI (American Transportation Research Institute) or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, you will find that semi-trucks are actually about six times safer per 100 million miles than civilian vehicles.”

“Truck drivers and trucking in general are often tarnished by the media. I want to emphasise that we really are doing our best from a safety perspective as well as in terms of sustainability. We are really trying our best to make America and the world thrive on the goods that we move.”

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