

The FruitGuys Beats the Clock to Deliver High-Quality Perishables

Customer Success Story



Meet The FruitGuys: A Company On A Mission

San Francisco-based delivery company The FruitGuys is on a mission to create healthier workplaces, support sustainable agriculture, and combat food insecurity. In 1998, founder and Executive Chairman Chris Mittelstaedt kickstarted The FruitGuys with deliveries of fresh fruit to San Francisco's Embarcadero Center. Chris made these deliveries with parcels tied to his scooter or loaded in the back of his Honda Civic. Fast-forward to today, The FruitGuys now operates eleven facilities and provides fresh fruit and snacks to offices, homes, and schools in all fifty states.

B Corp Status

In 2019, The FruitGuys leadership decided to become a certified B corporation, a for-profit business that meets the highest standard of social and environmental performance.

"We're a mission-driven company," says President Erik Muller. "So part of our mission is to give back to the community we work in." The company serves the community through various avenues, including:

- Food Donation

Like any produce delivery company, The FruitGuys often comes across imperfect or blemished products. Rather than sell these products to juicers for profit, The FruitGuys donates them to local food banks to help fight food insecurity.

- Profit Donation

TheFruitGuys commits 20% of its annual profits to fight hunger and support sustainable farming practices.

- Grants to Small Family Farms

Through its fiscal sponsor, Community Initiatives, The FruitGuys is able to provide grants for sustainability projects to small farms. These projects focus on water conservation, cross-pollination, and healthy soils.

Just-In-Time Delivery Creates Capacity Challenges

The perishable nature of fresh fruit delivery prevents The FruitGuys from accessing any long-term storage options. "We don't hold any product," says CEO Erin Mittelstaedt. "We want to deliver it as fresh as we can. We hand-check all the product to make sure it meets our quality standards and then ship it out overnight." The FruitGuys emphasizes focus on 100% customer satisfaction, so they pick only the best fruit and deliver it as quickly as possible so it arrives to the customer in perfect condition. With no need for long-term storage capacity, transportation capacity becomes the next challenge to solve.



Third-Party Contractors Drive Last Mile Complexity

The FruitGuys found that working with conscientious and customer service focused B2B delivery businesses were key to providing excellent service. In coordinating with these businesses, The FruitGuys needed new ways of interacting with partners in order to satisfy their client's requirements.

- Proof of Delivery

With thousands of products out for delivery each day, The FruitGuys' customer service team needed to work with their partners to have information about delivery time, location, and completion.

- Time Windows

The FruitGuys clients often have specific delivery requests. "We needed to find a tool that worked for both FruitGuys and our B2B delivery partners in order to handle transparent communication of delivery requests and allow the partner to accept, reject or change the request so we could communicate that to our customer" says Manager of Technology Scott Larson.

- Route Planning

How do companies with thousands of deliveries plan daily for those deliveries? The answer used to be spreadsheets. The FruitGuys had team members in all of its facilities working with spreadsheets and mapping tools to frantically produce package delivery data for their vendors (who then also had to plan their routes) day by day.

Route Optimization Streamlines Operations and Ensures Service Excellence

Now, The FruitGuys integrates with Route4Me's API in order to coordinate with their B2B delivery vendors in order to handle automated route planning, vendor management of customer time windows, and proof of delivery. Route4Me takes the hours spent by team members preparing delivery data day by day and automatically creates routes for B2B vendors directly from orders sent to The FruitGuys.

The software also accounts for time windows requested by customers and enables drivers to provide photo proof of delivery. Upon receiving optimized routes from Route4Me, The FruitGuys partners are able to manage the routes and have the option to accept, reject or change the routes based on their capacity. With Route4Me's route optimization software and the utilization of curated B2B delivery partners, The FruitGuys successfully operates on a national, regional, and local level and plans for it all simultaneously. With resources properly allocated, The FruitGuys works to maintain its satisfaction guarantee for customers in need of healthy snacks.

"We stress every single detail down to the color of the banana we deliver to our customers." says Muller. "What we're trying to bring to the customer is a better experience, and (Route4Me) only helps that level of quality and excellence."

