



Direct-to-home delivery made easy

UPS helps Canadian perishable food exporter succeed in the U.S. market

Few take their food more seriously than those who suffer from celiac disease. When you're unable to consume anything made with wheat, oats, rye or barley, preparing a healthy – let alone tasty – meal is a challenge. But a Canadian company is helping those affected. Kinnikinnick Foods of Edmonton, Alberta, delivers delicious, gluten-free food overnight to thousands of celiacs each week. How do they do it? UPS makes it easy.

“Awareness of celiac disease is rapidly growing,” says Jerry Bigam, CEO of the company. “There are more than two million people with this condition throughout North America.” Kinnikinnick Foods offers a range of gluten-free products that celiacs traditionally have difficulty sourcing – everything from great-tasting breads, buns and rolls, to cookies, cakes, and even pizza, all available over the Internet. Customers can order online at www.kinnikinnick.com and, after the product is professionally baked, it is delivered fresh to their door within 24 hours.

The Need for Speed

Shipping food across the Canada–U.S. border comes with its own set of unique problems. In addition to the usual export issues, such as transportation and customs clearance, perishable products must reach the customer in the shortest amount of time. “So fast, reliable, direct delivery is the only way,” says Bigam. Speed is paramount. In fact, “even if a package arrives just one day late it can affect the product’s freshness.”

Within hours after the customer’s order is prepared, payment is processed, the shipping labels are prepared – including any customs documentation – and the order is delivered to its Canadian or U.S. destination.

How is all this accomplished cost-effectively?

“We’ve been working with UPS since 2001,” says Bigam. UPS did not always have all the company’s business. “We used to split it with another

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Jerry Bigam, CEO,
Kinnikinnick Foods





courier just to be safe.” But over the years, Bigam and his staff experienced first-hand the reliability and massive reach of the UPS air and ground transportation and logistics network.

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Integrated Solutions

To keep the promise of overnight delivery to its customers, Kinnikinnick utilizes a range of proven UPS solutions:

- UPS Connect® shipping software, the best of its kind in the industry, automates the preparation of the thousands of waybills and other shipment documentation needed each week.
- UPS e-Commerce experts work with Kinnikinnick to ensure its systems are integrated seamlessly with those at UPS.
- UPS Express™ shipping services enable the company to guarantee overnight delivery, without having to burden its customers with exorbitant shipping fees.
- UPS Quantum View™ Manage provides real-time, at-a-glance tracking information the company needs to stay on top of its supply chain.

“It’s all so easy,” says Bigam. “When a customer places an order on our Web site, everything happens – from payment processing, to shipping labels, to customer notification – without any human intervention. It’s all fully automated.”

Prior Notice Issue

Utilizing UPS solutions, the Kinnikinnick supply chain was working like a well-oiled machine – that is until the company had to adapt to a new regulatory change. In 2002, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) began to require “Prior Notice” of food imports into the United States. This involved completing and submitting a special form on the FDA Web site for each and every shipment.

“The problem was that we ship 16 to 20 skids a week,” says Bigam. All of these were individual orders for home delivery. This meant that to fulfill the FDA requirement, the company would have to manually prepare thousands of “Prior Notice” forms each week.

To help alleviate the workload, Kinnikinnick Foods created an electronic link with the FDA system, so Prior Notice submissions are generated and submitted automatically. “UPS was a big help during this period,” says Bigam. “They were able to adapt their systems to accommodate this change. No other courier we had dealt with would have been able to do this for us.”

Meeting the Demand

Today, the popularity of Kinnikinnick food products is growing fast. According to Bigam, UPS is indispensable for three reasons:

- **Reliability.** “The number of complaints we get in a year compared to the number of orders we ship is very, very small.” UPS ensures Kinnikinnick products are delivered overnight and on time.
- **Reach.** “With UPS, there is no customer in Canada or the United States that we can’t deliver to cost-effectively.”
- **Responsiveness.** “UPS takes the time to accommodate our needs. You can tell they want us to be successful and it shows in their service.”

Today, Kinnikinnick is the largest distributor of gluten-free food products in North America, with more than 120 employees. That’s not bad when you consider the company started fifteen years ago as a booth in a farmer’s market.

“We are very appreciative of the help and services that UPS has provided us over the years,” says Bigam. “They are a very significant part of our success.”

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