Interview: José F. Oramas – Country Manager, UPS Puerto Rico



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José F. Oramas, country manager of UPS Puerto Rico, discusses the value-added services the packaging and logistics giant offers to meet the customer's needs and the natural gateway that Puerto Rico offers between North and South America.

What initial priorities did you set for yourself when you became general manager?

As general manager, my first priority was to familiarize myself with the functions of the different business units that support each other to provide customers with integrated business solutions. The ultimate goal in mind was focusing on developing new business opportunities within the market that would contribute to overall business growth for UPS yet continue to meet the industry's logistic needs.

With a 147,000 square foot facility dedicated to pharmaceuticals, what exactly does this facility do on a day-to-day basis?

The UPS Healthcare Facility is a state-of-the-art building dedicated biotechnology, pharmaceutical product and medical devices in a temperature & humidity control environment. On a day-to-day basis the operations runs seven days a week were we support the logistic needs of our customers from receiving product order, inventory, warehousing, and distribution of raw material and finish goods to end users or distribution locations across the globe. We are recognized as end-to-end service provide within the healthcare industry.

Puerto Rico is very strategically located between North and South America, serving as a natural bridge between the two. But how do you adapt to Puerto Rico's complex internal geography?

From a logistic perspective, UPS is strategically located in eight areas across the island. This offers our customers the flexibility when it comes to pick-up times. Our Carolina and San Juan locations allow us to be in close proximity to the airport as well as the ports which gives us a competitive advantage because we can respond to the challenges of their business needs.

How has the consolidation of the life sciences industry affected the supply chain?

Life science is in fact a very competitive market that we know has been challenged with supply chain transformation. As any other organization, life science companies have had to continuously look into their business model to identify opportunities to improve business processes. With this said, UPS has been a trusted advisor by providing professional consultation from a healthcare perspective, so our customers do what they do best and allow UPS to be the extension of their business by providing third party logistics for warehousing, distribution and transportation.

In terms of pharmaceuticals and medical devices, to where do you tend to export most of these products?

UPS is a global transportation provider for products that is exported from Puerto Rico to the rest of the world. We have the capability to provide customized solutions with flight alternatives from UPS Browntails to commercial flights that are fit to Customer's shipping needs whether it is Europe, Asia, South America or the US. As you may already know Puerto Rico's strategic location in the Caribbean has been attractive for healthcare companies in addition to the strong relationship with the US from an FDA compliance regulatory perspective.

Many companies in Puerto Rico are starting to look towards Latin America as both a market and potential investor here. Does that have an impact on logistics providers like UPS?

It is no secret that Latin America is an emerging market and so it is for healthcare as well. UPS is currently investing in Brazil, Chile and Argentina. In fact, two weeks ago UPS inaugurated a Browntail flight to/from Chile which increases our aircraft rotation from Miami to Latin America. We continue to expand our presence in Latin America to support the needs & growth within the market.

Could you elaborate on how the “small package” section of UPS which you offer to pharma companies works?

UPS offers domestic and international small package time-sensitive service offerings that meet the needs of pharmaceutical companies. To give you an idea, our premium services such as Early Morning or Next Day Service to the US that guarantee delivery at 8:00 am or 10:30 am. To Europe from Puerto Rico, UPS also offers premium two- day in transit services specific countries. In terms of innovative service offerings, we have recently introduced Worldwide Express freight for heavyweight shipments to international shipments. As healthcare partners we are well aware that reliability is a main factor for pharmaceutical companies when selecting a transportation provider. For that reason our healthcare slogan is “It’s not a Package, it’s a Patient.

In a small place like Puerto Rico it must be really important to be flexible and to really adapt to the customers’ needs so how is UPS tailoring its services to its clients?

UPS Puerto Rico has been tailoring to meet the customers changing needs during the past 30 years. As a service provider we continuously look for innovate ways to provide operational support to meet the needs of the new and existing customer base. From a delivery/Pickup standpoint the dispatch hours have been scheduled according to the daylight savings time and the flight departure times. I would also like to highlight the flexibility to perform weekend pickups upon customers’ requests which is mostly Next Day Service volumes that are pickup on Saturday and delivered in the US on Mondays before 10:30 a.m. Last but not least our intra-island service has also added value to our customers by providing Next Day delivery to any location on the island.

How much of a challenge is it in terms of meeting very strict specifications for high-tech products or focusing on temperature control?

There is always a challenge when it comes to meeting strict specifications for high-tech or focusing on temperature control products. UPS has alleviated some of those challenges for our customers from an engineering perspective by introducing the PP 360 which is new technology equipment designed to transport temperature control product to US domestic and international destinations. In addition, we have local temperature control trailers for products that require transportation to/from pharma sites or our healthcare facility.

What makes UPS the preferred partner of choice in the industry?

I can confidently say that it is our people, the array of services and business solutions that make UPS the preferred partner of choice in the industry. In an evolving world, UPS Puerto Rico has been

able to respond to market needs and adjust during downturn of the economy. We have put forth our value, added solutions, invested in the healthcare sector, developed new ways to move product and created a global reach to increase market growth. Strategic partnership is everything to us' we take pride in serving our customers.

The UPS brand is known and trusted worldwide. In terms of healthcare, how well known is UPS in terms of its work specifically in pharmaceuticals?

In terms of healthcare, we inaugurated the PR building in 2009. Our brand definitely caught the attention the healthcare sector. With this said, you can imagine the high level of expectation from a demanding Industry. After six years I can proudly say that we have exceeded our customer's expectation with proven performance results. It was their confidence in our brand that made the difference and leads the way to our success in the healthcare market.

Looking to the future, what are your expectations for growth over the next five years?

I have high growth expectation over the next five years. Our sales force will continue to lead the market by identifying areas of opportunity that will support new and innovated service offering tailored to overall PR market needs. We will continue to focus on alleviating healthcare challenges from a strategic partnership standpoint so they can do what they do best while UPS take care of their overall supply chain needs. Just recently the healthcare has been certified as Free Trade Zone (FTZ) which really adds significant value to the pharma industry.

In conclusion, we have challenging times heading our way, but our customers are thinking differently about UPS. Our existing 30 years of service in Puerto Rico have definitely demonstrated overall commitment to all Industry sectors with proven experience when it comes to healthcare and obviously our core business transportation.

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