

Interview: Rolando Medina Managing Director, FedEx Puerto Rico & Caribbean



23.10.2015

Tags:

[Pharma](#), [Pharmaceuticals](#), [Puerto Rico](#), [USA](#), [Latin America](#), [Logistics](#), [Transport](#), [Medical Devices](#)

Rolando Medina, managing director for FedEx Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, highlights the logistics provider's strong commitment to Puerto Rico's life science industry through a variety of services and flexible delivery options.

You have worked in FedEx for many years. What drove you to the company and what defines your loyalty to this company?

I have been with FedEx for 26 years. I started when I was 25 years old. I worked as a subcontractor for Flying Tigers, which was later acquired by FedEx. I was driven by being a part of one of the elite companies in Puerto Rico in the transportation industry. When I thought about shipping something fast, FedEx was the first company that came to mind. The PSP Philosophy, which means People-Service-Profit, always puts employees first and that philosophy has always had a big impact on me.

Puerto Rico is unusual for its concentration of life science companies in such a small area. What challenges or advantages does that pose from the transportation perspective?

Puerto Rico is 100 miles by 35 miles. Being that small and concentrated, it is very easy for us to transport in and out of Puerto Rico. Our timeframe allows for later cutoff times and we have more lift in the island. With two airports on both sides of the island, we have more capacity to move shipments more efficiently.

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

The healthcare industry is one of the world's largest and fastest growing industries, consuming over ten percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of most developed nations. According to certain studies, the global healthcare services market is forecasted to reach \$3 trillion by 2015. We also know that by 2030, emerging markets' share of global drug exports is expected to rise to about 25 percent, from only 15 percent back in 2011. That translates into opportunities all around for our business. We have been unaffected by shifts in the industry's supply chain; in fact, I can say we have benefited from it. We are so close to the industry in every market where it is relevant that we are able to move very fast when market, regulatory and industry conditions shift. That is a reality for us here in Puerto Rico.

What are some of the value-added solutions that FedEx provides to the life science industry in Puerto Rico?

Most of our solutions regarding the life science industry revolve around temperature control. We have invested significantly in the healthcare industry by innovating and bringing the latest technology to Puerto Rico so that they continue to find it profitable to stay in the country. Some of the value-added services include SenseAware, FedEx Deep Frozen Shipping Solutions, Thermal Blanket Solutions for temperature-sensitive shipments, ShipmentWatch Monitoring, and Cold Shipping Package, a controlled-temperature packaging system for shipping sensitive products. In Memphis, this fall we will open an 88,000 square foot temperature controlled facility to address the demand of cold chain shipping.

Where are these products shipped?

From Puerto Rico, our customers can reach 220 countries and territories and connect to 90 percent of the GDP worldwide. While most of our healthcare related shipments go to the U.S., there is a percentage of shipments that go to Europe and Asia as well.

How is the competition for FedEx, with UPS being the only other major transportation provider on the island?

Although the competitive landscape is ever-changing, I can tell you that at FedEx we strive to stay ahead of the competition. Our goal is to continuously build technology and innovation that helps our customers be more efficient, train our team members to serve as an extended part of our customer's teams and understand the value they bring overall, and lastly, stay true to our mission: stay close to customer's needs to react very quickly when need be. For instance, in Puerto Rico, we have a group of professionals that work closely with the pharmaceutical industry to uncover what their shipping and logistics needs are in order to match those needs with the products and solutions available. Additionally, FedEx in Puerto Rico has the most robust line-haul capability which is an advantage for the pharmaceutical industry.

In what ways can this affiliate act as a bridge between North and South America, especially considering the growth of business interaction between the two continents?

Puerto Rico serves as the fulfillment center for the Caribbean region, driving replenishment shipments through the FedEx network, and supporting the return of the inventory back to the U.S. Additionally through our alliance with Farmazona, the largest third party logistics operator in Central America based in Panama, we offer additional value to pharmaceutical customers looking for a hub/distribution center in Central America, the Andean region or South America. Farmazona has two modern regional and multi-client distribution centers that offer more than 315,000 combined square feet of warehousing space.

How flexible is FedEx when it comes to last-minute or weekend deliveries?

The healthcare industry is diverse. We are proud to provide solutions for the unique needs for the medical device, pharmaceutical & biotech, diagnostics, equipment and clinical trial segments. FedEx is experienced in handling healthcare products even those that have special requirements, including packaging, temperature control, shipment visibility, monitoring and end-to-end security. Additionally, we are constantly looking for ways to expand our solutions portfolio and adapt to unique market needs by working very closely with industry players.

What makes FedEx the logistics partner of choice for the industry?

Connecting healthcare products to the companies or the people who need them requires a great partner – one that handles deliveries with care, protects shipment integrity, provides visibility, and meets trade and regulatory requirements. We proudly connect all players of the industry – from healthcare services at hospitals, laboratories, and equipment manufacturers, to doctors, nurses, patients and beyond. That’s our contribution to the healthcare industry in Puerto Rico and around the world.

What do you feel is FedEx’s role in terms of being part of a process that saves lives?

When a life depends on a medical device, it is pivotal to entrust the transportation and logistics of that piece of equipment to a partner that understands the urgency at hand and has the capability to deliver the shipment on time and in excellent condition. Our employees are onboard with this mission; they know that a percentage of our shipments in and out of Puerto Rico is healthcare-related and treatment and time sensitive. In fact, many times we ship directly to hospitals and/or surgery rooms. That is a huge responsibility and one that we own up to as a team.

What is your growth strategy for the medium to long-term?

While we are proud of our accomplishments this past year, at FedEx we never feel complacent as we know that that has been the road to ruin for many big, well-known companies. FedEx is constantly seeking ways of keeping up with marketplace changes and surpassing customers’ expectations across the world, including Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is one of the company’s most important markets in Latin America. We have a great corporate strategy; an outstanding in-market execution and are confident that we are on a good path for continued growth.

[Click here to read more articles and interviews from Puerto Rico, and to download the latest free pharma report on the country.](#)

[See more interviews](#)
