



GRM the Focus: Business Resumption

In the Face of September 11th GRM is called on to Act and Get its Customers Back to Business.

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GRM is a national purveyor of records management services headquartered in Jersey City, minutes from both the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels. One of the benefits of GRM has always been its immediate access in and out of New York City. Since the events of September 11, GRM has had to rethink its entire business model. With over 3,000 customers located in the metropolitan area, they were immediately concerned about meeting the needs of their customers. With quick thinking, preparation and commitment to the customer, they were able to play a key role in business resumption for many in their large customer base. Below, Jerry Glatt, Executive V.P. General Manager, New York of GRM illustrates the role they played in business and the commitment of their team to act in the face of tragedy.

Considering we had over 30 clients between the World Trade Center, World Financial Center and Liberty Plaza, we were immediately concerned with how our customers were going to get back up and running. We tried to contact them on September 11 by phone, fax, e-mail, anyway possible. We were unsuccessful. A few days later they contacted us from their new locations and gave us new contact information for going forward.

Our customers' immediate concerns were with their collections in their buildings, in other words, their active file rooms. How were they going to work? As soon as their buildings were deemed safe and they could get us access, we had men packing their files, inventorying them, and moving them to our facility where they set up temporary in-house file rooms. We then dedicated vans to bringing files to where our customers were working. Because they could not get the same amount of centralized office space as they had before, in some cases this meant delivering to numerous locations. This is not the first time we did this. We also did this when they tried to bomb the World Trade Center in 1993.

Another stumbling block was just getting to the customers. Every access to Manhattan below 14th street was closed. We contacted as many key accounts as possible to find alternatives. One such account was a law firm. They needed some boxes that pertained to the World Trader Center. They requested 12 boxes. So using a little ingenuity, we drove 12 men with those boxes to the Path station. They took the subway into the city to 33rd Street. The client met them with a van at the train station. Our team hand delivered the boxes and we were able to provide the customer exactly what they needed.



We also found a lot of our clients, national companies, were trying to ship back up tapes and the like, but airlines were not delivering. There were no freight forwarders to forward the materials, and these people needed these tapes. As soon the vehicles were up and running and the airlines were moving again, we shipped back up tapes to other locations outside the area. In some cases, customers drove tapes to their other locations. We have one customer who came to pick up their tapes and literally drove them to Atlanta.

Another thing we needed to do was to call all of our key accounts to talk through the new restrictions and security measures. Sometimes deliveries would now require that their staff be brought downstairs to make deliveries quicker. Customers were more than willing to comply with whatever it took to make things work. A lot of give and take went on. We believe it is because our customers saw us work so hard to service them, that they worked so hard to service us.

As of now we are doing just fine. We have access to the Lincoln tunnel. Drivers who used to come in at 7:00 a.m. now come in at 5:30 a.m. They are still waiting an exorbitant amount of time at any bridge or tunnel into the city due to the new increased security. They are at the tunnel by 6:00 a.m. and into the city by 7:30 a.m. They are not being allowed to go to some loading docks. They are being asked for 2 or 3 pieces of ID. Boxes are being spot checked. Through it all we just tell our drivers to comply with any given security measure and to just give themselves extra time.

The key to our success has been communication with our customers. That alone has been critical. Through this experience and because we have remained in constant contact with our customers, we have bonded and furthered our relationships.

We are now speaking to other clients who are finally getting access to their old offices or new office space and we are setting up their file rooms. Slowly we are hearing from customers from the World Trade Center. The 30 or more customers we had not heard from are now requesting deliveries and pick ups.

We have one success story we are proud to report. We had one employee, Amara Sylla, a driver who had two rush morning deliveries in the World Trade Center and one in another location. Fortunately, he opted to do the other location first or his fate might have been quite different. We used the Nextel communication system, two way radios, and cell phones to contact him. We told Amara to leave the van and get out of the area. We just wanted him to watch out for his own safety at this point. He finally went on his way. We didn't hear from him again until 9:00 that night - remember we last spoke to him at 9:00 that morning - when he drove the van into our loading dock. He had zigged and zagged through Manhattan waiting hours and hours and following the many detours posted to finally get to our offices. He said he didn't want to leave the van on the streets of New York. What dedication!



In closing, I want to say from my heart, that our thoughts go out to everyone involved in this disaster. This will stay with us for years and years. The best medicine for GRM was going forward and meeting the needs of our customers to get their businesses up and running. This may have been a small piece, but at least it meant we were helping, if only in our own small way.