

Catching up with Michael Margarone, DeCarolis Truck Rental



Jinelle Shengulette 12:04 a.m. EDT June 25, 2016



Michael Margarone

There are times it can be beneficial to have friends in different area codes.

While DeCarolis Truck Rental is headquartered locally — with seven branches and 152 employees in the region — its trucks travel across the country, where anything can happen.

As part of National Lease, a network of independent truck rental companies, DeCarolis and similar companies offer reciprocal services. If a DeCarolis truck breaks down in Denver, for example, a member local to that area would jump in to help. If another member’s truck broke down in the Rochester, Buffalo or Syracuse area, DeCarolis would step in to lend a hand.

Michael Margarone, president of DeCarolis, says the company also takes advantage of NCMA’s Dealer Twenty Group program where similar businesses in separate markets meet to “exchange ideas and discuss best practices.”

“We visit a different member each year and spend a day analyzing their business. Then we give them a report of things they do well and things they should look at doing differently. We also submit financials and get a profit and loss statement that analyzes what we’re doing compared to the others,” said Margarone, a Webster resident.

The business-to-business truck rental and leasing company — which also provides maintenance services and heavy-duty parts and equipment — began 70 years ago and is owned by Paul DeCarolis today. It was ranked in the *Democrat and Chronicle*'s list of Rochester's Top Workplaces for 2016.

We spoke with Margarone, 53, recently about a problem in the industry that creates more business for DeCarolis, their apprentice program and more.

A problem in the industry is a win for DeCarolis: “Trucks have become more complicated. There’s been a lot of technology changes the past couple years that have made it more challenging to keep the trucks operating, but it made them more fuel efficient. The government put in the guidelines to be met by certain dates, which made it very hard on the manufacturers. So production was plagued with some challenges, and there are problems on the maintenance side. Customers are looking to outsource.”

Looking for talent: “If you’re a diesel technician, you’re never without a job. There’s a shortage in the industry, and with our growth, it’s been a challenge. We’re going to schools like Alfred and trying to recruit right out of school. We’re doing some things with Veteran Outreach programs. We’re offering bonuses to our current technicians who bring technicians into the company. We also have an apprentice program so we can bring young talent into the industry; we assign them to a mentor. It’s not glamorous, but it’s a trade where people can make a very good living.”

On their sales strategy: “We’re doing things in marketing, but we’re also somewhat of a grassroots business, and we’ve got boots on the ground. We do a lot of target marketing to accounts we know are the right fit. If they have a loading dock or they distribute something, they most likely need a truck. Food service is a strong candidate for leasing because you have two things to maintain: the truck and the refrigeration unit.”

The key to success across seven branches: “Communication between our branches is key. One of the things we do is we have everybody involved. Small customers to large, the owner and I know most of the customers, so the whole organization can assist customers on the sales side. Same with our employees: our owner travels to branches; he’s there with the people. Communication and being involved with our customers and employees is key on a day-to-day basis.”

For information: DeCarolis Truck Rental, 333 Colfax St., Rochester, NY 14606. Call (585) 254-1169 or go to decarolis.com.

Jinelle Shengulette is a Rochester-area freelance writer.