

LOGISTICS & TRANSPORTATION REVIEW

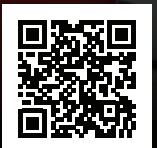
**COLD
STORAGE
EDITION**



FREZnSTOR

**COLD STORAGE MEETS
WARM CUSTOMER SERVICE**

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EDITION



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FREZ-n-STOR



The annual listing of 10 companies that are at the forefront of providing Cold Storage services and transforming businesses

COVER STORY

FREZ-n-STOR

**COLD STORAGE MEETS WARM
CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Nestled in the commercial cold storage sector, where technology and automation rule the roost, there exists a venerable company that harkens back to a simpler time, when the focus was firmly on clients. FREZ-n-STOR, with a legacy dating back to the 1960s, has steadfastly held onto the belief that it is in the business of fostering human connections. This doctrine is more than just a motto; it is a passionate commitment that challenges the conventional perception of being merely a ‘commercial cold storage facility.’

FREZ-n-STOR distinguishes itself in an industry dominated by two major entities and dotted with a few independents by providing exceptional service across quick freezing, handling and storage for food and other products. These services are instilled with sincere care for the products it safeguards, the customers it serves, and the consumers who rely on them. This dedication has allowed the firm to carve out a niche in the market, providing a caliber of customer service and accessibility that is often elusive for larger competitors.

“I believe in true accessibility. Every client has my cell number, and if issues arise, I am here to handle it,” says Brandon Siems, president and CEO of FREZ-n-STOR.

The firm maintains an open and direct line of communication between clients and the upper echelons of management. At the heart of its operations are dedicated customer service representatives individually assigned to each client, ensuring prompt and personalized solutions.

KEEPING IT FRESH WITH SERVICE EXPERTISE

At FREZ-n-STOR, a deep commitment to job excellence forms the cornerstone of operations, and this shines through in its comprehensive suite of services. This includes multiple cold storage solutions, efficient e-commerce fulfillment, and streamlined international shipping services.

Cold storage options encompass blast freezing, ambient temperatures, cold environments between 35 and 38 degrees, and freezing settings spanning from -5F in standard freezer



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Brandon Siems,
President and CEO

temperatures to coldest at -35F in blast cells. A significant portion of its client base specifically seeks blast freezing services—a process that rapidly reduces the temperature of various food products, including poultry, beef, and fresh produce.

When food is subjected to traditional freezing methods, its water content crystallizes into ice. Prolonged freezing leads to the formation of larger ice crystals, which could compromise the food's quality and flavor.

In contrast, blast freezing triggers the formation of minute ice crystals, causing negligible deterioration while maintaining the food's overall quality. Once food undergoes this process, it can seamlessly transition to a standard cold freezer environment for prolonged storage.

FREZ-n-STOR's adaptability knows no bounds as it extends its expertise to a diverse array of industries, recognizing that the benefits of blast freezing transcend sectors.

"We are always on the lookout for ways to better serve our clients, whether by taking on tasks that others outsource or by improving what customers do in-house," says Siems.

The firm's e-commerce fulfillment services represent a pivotal stage in the supply chain, involving tasks such as inventory reception, order processing, item selection, packaging, and delivery preparation—all tailored to meet the shipping preferences of customers.

FREZ-n-STOR also offers services such as pick and pack, involving careful handling, sorting, inspection, and labeling of products for end-users, and kitting services that assemble multiple product orders into a single package per the end-users' specifications.

Its clientele is diverse, encompassing producers, retailers, food service providers, and government-contracted customers. FREZ-n-STOR ensures a seamless international shipping process by taking care of all associated documentation, adhering to each country's requirements, and diligently following import/export regulations. It also has the capability to print and affix multi-language labeling.

The firm maintains a robust partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture, facilitating tasks such as scheduling inspectors for product approval, completing essential import/export documentation, and efficiently loading and sealing export containers for overland transportation via truck or rail. It also offers equipment and labor support for floor loading or slip-sheeting containers, ensuring utmost efficiency in the shipping process.

SAFETY, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

FREZ-n-STOR is deeply committed to safety and regulatory compliance. Remarkably, while many companies avoid the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) inspections for fear of potential fines and regulatory scrutiny, FREZ-n-STOR takes a different approach. It actively invites regulatory agencies like OSHA to conduct frequent inspections of its facilities and identify areas needing improvement.

Innovative technology and electronic data exchange capabilities are leveraged to enhance its operations. State-of-the-art warehouse management systems (WMS) and RF barcode scanning are used to ensure comprehensive product and inventory tracking. These technologies provide real-time data

and boost efficiency while reducing shipping and receiving errors. In-house SQL developers can also craft customized reports and efficiently manage data to meet client needs.

Security is a top priority for FREZ-n-STOR, showcased by its IP-based surveillance systems that vigilantly monitor all cold storage facilities. Approved customers can access these surveillance systems from the firm, adding an extra layer of control and peace of mind. To further bolster security, third-party monitoring services cover various risks, including burglary, temperature, ammonia and fire.

Controlled access is rigorously enforced throughout FREZ-n-STOR's facilities and grounds, ensuring the integrity of its operations and the safety of its employees and customers. The company's secure networks, bolstered by network penetration testing, are also critical in protecting customer data. Moreover, it is worth noting that FREZ-n-STOR is SQF certified, representing a higher level of food safety audit standards. It maintains an audited food defense plan as well to further enhance the commitment to safety and security.

SAFEGUARDING QUALITY

FREZ-n-STOR is more than a vendor—it is a strategic partner focused on providing value and expertise that goes beyond the conventional supplier relationship, ultimately benefiting both parties, as well as consumers. It consistently seeks avenues to enhance customer interactions and proactively address their needs, often identifying challenges before they occur.

In a recent case that, areas for improvement were identified in a customer's recall procedures, a paramount concern in food safety. FREZ-n-STOR shared consumer insights and best practices, enabling the client to enhance their recall management capabilities. Consequently, when a subsequent food safety concern arose, the customer's recall process unfolded with remarkable efficiency and speed,



“ I BELIEVE IN TRUE ACCESSIBILITY. EVERY CLIENT HAS MY CELL NUMBER, AND IF ISSUES ARISE, I AM HERE TO HANDLE IT

allowing them to successfully retrieve 100 percent of the product in question.

NURTURING TALENT AND EXPERTISE

In FREZ-n-STOR's view, the formula for success is straightforward—take care of employees and customers, and the rest will fall into place. It takes pride in its ability to nurture talent and transform individuals into accomplished supervisors and managers. It recognizes that formal education is not the only way to measure potential. Instead, it values practical knowledge and common sense.

A culture is fostered where employees empathize with customers. Team members put themselves in clients' shoes when addressing inquiries, ensuring they provide meaningful solutions. Their extensive industry knowledge enables them to effectively anticipate and address customer needs. Added to the expertise is a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Mistakes are acknowledged, owned, and rectified without blaming others. This fosters trust with customers, who appreciate FREZ-n-STOR's honesty and dedication to making things right.

FREZ-n-STOR strongly encourages its employees to challenge the status quo, question authority, and propose innovative ideas. The belief is that

everyone deserves to be heard, from the person on the loading dock to the truck driver. A culture of open communication and collaboration is at the core of FREZ-n-STOR's success, allowing it to continuously adapt and improve.

FORWARD BOUND: A STRATEGIC PATH TO SUCCESS

Operating at the forefront of the industry for decades, FREZ-n-STOR understands the ongoing challenges clients face, particularly in maintaining the requisite temperature controls for each product. The firm's recent venture into the aerospace sector exposed it to the intricate demands of storing materials destined for aircraft and helicopters—a challenge FREZ-n-STOR adeptly surmounted.

Adapting to the unforeseen challenges posed by shifting weather patterns has also become a focal point. An unprecedented ice storm in Texas served as a catalyst, compelling FREZ-n-STOR to rethink and modify its storage strategies to withstand the harshest weather conditions. This commitment to maintaining a balanced temperature environment remains a priority. Innovative solutions are being explored, such as off-grid operations using backup power generation for uninterrupted service.

The firm's future is illuminated by a dedication to growth, service excellence and strategic innovation. FREZ-n-STOR is about to expand its physical presence, acquiring adjacent land to increase its footprint in the Texas market. The pandemic has also underscored the need for preparedness, prompting investment in automation, further reinforcing its ability to consistently meet customer needs. While automation plays a pivotal role in its future plans, FREZ-n-STOR understands it must be the right fit for customers.

These expansions are not merely a matter of growth for its own sake. They result from thoughtful conversations with customers and a keen instinct for market needs. Extensive research was conducted to explore opportunities from coast to coast and collaborate with customers to identify areas that align with its vision of conservative growth.

In a world where the cold storage industry is often perceived as cold and impersonal, FREZ-n-STOR is a beacon of warmth, dedication and innovation. Its journey to success is not just about preserving products, but serves as a reminder that even in the coldest environments, warmth and care can flourish, creating a recipe for unparalleled success. **LT**