

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORIES



For NTS, Helping Others Helps the Business

In 2008, as the Great Recession ran the trucking industry off the road, Cindy Normandin found an opportunity to assist a friend... and herself. The friend had worked his entire life to build a trucking company, only to see it dwindle in the downturn. As co-owner of the successful Braun's Express in Hopedale, Mass., Cindy knew she could help the friend into a well-deserved retirement. She discussed the situation with her husband and co-owner, David Normandin, and bought his business—all of five trucks and some property.

"I said, 'Let's see what we can do with it, what other markets we can get into.' My husband said if it didn't work, it would be mine to close."

As it turns out, it was hers to expand.

In the five years since then, Normandin Transportation Services (NTS) has grown in customers, employees and vehicles, from the initial five trucks to a fleet of 65. The company reached out to new customers and now does point-to-point line hauling throughout the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and Midwest. The road to success wasn't easy for the former teacher who left her profession in 1985 to join her husband in the trucking business. But through her enterprise, Normandin turned the corner, and a profit, with the help of other forward-thinking people.

"I never thought I was held back in the trucking industry before, but I did meet some barriers," she said. "The trucking business can be difficult. There are a lot of rules and regulations." And then there was the challenge of scale. In the beginning, potential customers considered her company too small to deliver. "If you tell people you only have five trucks, are they going to hire you?" The company had to grow to survive.

One of the smallest companies found an ally in one of the biggest. "I gained a Fortune 500 company as a customer who wanted to support diversity. They helped me achieve national certification as a woman-owned business."

She also received support from another industry leader, Mack Trucks, and sales rep Jim Lavoie at Ballard Mack in Worcester, Mass. Within the past year, NTS has purchased seven new MACK® Pinnacle™ tractors with 445 hp MP8 engines, 9-speed transmissions and 70-inch midrise sleepers. The trucks feature

MackTrucks.com



From left: Stephen, David and Cindy Normandin, with Matthew Cann.



idle-free auxiliary power units that use a dedicated battery bank to provide in-cab comforts without burning diesel fuel.

"The drivers say the trucks are great," Cindy said of the new Pinnacle models. "They have a lot of power, and the interiors are comfortable."

Fuel efficiency counts a lot for a company that participates in the EPA's SmartWay program, which promotes strategies and products to reduce fuel consumption. "The trucks are still in the break-in period but they're doing very well. We generate weekly reports and post them at every terminal with the drivers' MPG ranking. The drivers all look to see where they are on the ranking. We have quite a few people above 6.5 mpg. The highest this week was 6.95 mpg."

In addition to the drivers and Mack, she credits much of her success to family members, including her husband and the two newest members of the team—son Stephen Normandin and son-in-law Matthew Cann. They are the next generation of innovators and, not surprisingly, some of her best friends.