



PROFILE

OAKLEAF

www.oakleafwaste.com

Annual revenues: \$700 million

HQ: East Hartford, Conn.

Service: Waste logistics

Jim Barnes: “We are aligned with our customers’ interest to recycle and divert every piece of the waste stream we possibly can.”

Jim Barnes founded OAKLEAF in 1995 to improve the information technology used by waste logistics companies.

SEEDS OF GROWTH

OAKLEAF revolutionized the waste logistics industry by introducing an asset-light operating system that uses state-of-the-art information technology.

By Kathryn Jones

Waste management services provider OAKLEAF is proof that a company’s annual revenues can’t go from zero to \$700 million in only 14 years without a sound business model. The East Hartford, Conn.-based firm revolutionized its industry by introducing a first-to-market, asset-light operating system that implements state-of-the-art information technology (IT). As a result, the company has attracted *Fortune* 500 clients working across North America and repeatedly wins awards for its innovation and remarkable growth.

President and CEO Jim Barnes started OAKLEAF after working as a sales manager in the waste-hauling industry for five years. “As a hauler, I was trying to get more national work from management companies, so I traveled to meet these companies and found that they were working a percentage savings model with their customers and trying to manage accounts that weren’t sustainable,” he recalls. “They would lose the accounts a year or two later once the savings ran out, and many didn’t have any IT investment.”

Barnes launched his own waste management company in 1995. “Our business model is straightforward,” he explains.

“Charge no fees, no percentage savings and review the customer’s invoice as a consultant to understand where I can buy the same services and give the customer a guaranteed discount rate.

“With no fees or percentage savings, it was easy for the customer to understand the proposition,” he continues. “As a result, we grew very quickly. Further, by not owning a truck or landfill, we are aligned with our customers’ interest to recycle and divert waste from landfills.”

At the same time, Barnes offered a value proposition to local haulers. “We became, over time, their single-largest customer, providing incredible route density, access to national accounts, electronic invoicing and dispatching with less windshield and more pick-up time,” he says.

“That, coupled with a heavy IT investment, has really been at the heart of our business and our growth.”

SEED OF SUCCESS

Like a seed to a tree, ACORN is what makes OAKLEAF an efficient management enter-

prise. ACORN is the company’s IT system, which develops and tracks detailed reports by recycling commodity. When a compactor is full, the customer will either e-mail OAKLEAF, or a compactor pressure monitor connected to the machine will alert the company wirelessly when it is ready to be hauled.

OAKLEAF has contracts with more than 4,000 haulers across the United States and Canada. Per an automated system, ACORN will contact the contracted hauler through e-mail, detailing the service request.

After the haul is completed, the hauler will enter the weight ticket from the transaction into OAKLEAF’s Web site, and ACORN will bill the customer according to its specified rates and terms. “That entire transaction occurs without a phone call or human intervention,” Barnes adds.

MICROSOFT AWARD

In recognition of its innovation, Microsoft awarded OAKLEAF its Dynamics Customer

Excellence Award for 2008. The honor is bestowed upon users and integrators of Microsoft software who develop unique applications around that technology. “We developed the latest version of ACORN over the last four years, and that’s really based on a dot-net platform,” Barnes says. “Prior to that, we were operating in a Microsoft access with a sequel server foundation, so we’ve been a Microsoft shop since we started.”

PROMINENT CLIENTELE

OAKLEAF provides comprehensive waste, recycling and sustainability solutions to more than 550 major customers at 100,000-plus locations.

The company is focused on waste diversion strategies and closed-loop processes that support environmental commitment, offset overall waste and build stakeholder value, Barnes says.

Its clients, he adds, are the “who’s who” of national retail, commercial, industrial, construction and healthcare corporations,

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OAKLEAF's IT system, ACORN, develops and tracks detailed reports by recycling commodity.

▶ including Wal-Mart, Dollar General, Burger King and GE.

TURNKEY SOLUTIONS

OAKLEAF provides turnkey solutions to its customer base through four subsidiary companies. GREENLEAF Compaction, based in Phoenix, provides waste compaction and recycling equipment through comprehensive rental, leasing and maintenance programs, Barnes says.

The company owns more than 6,000 compactors and balers from coast to coast. "Instead of renting the compactor from the trash haulers, we simply own it and incorporate that model into our OAKLEAF waste logistics offering," he explains.

In addition to having its own compactors, OAKLEAF rents construction dumpsters to contractors under the brand name The Home Depot Dumpster Rental.

IEM SERVICES RETAIL

International Environmental Management (IEM), based in Alpharetta, Ga., provides waste services to shopping centers throughout the United States and serves as a one-stop shop for multiple retail ten-

SMART SOLUTIONS

"By delivering solutions that are zero-cost, zero-waste and zero-risk, OAKLEAF's comprehensive approach helps businesses to cultivate environmental stewardship, while uncovering opportunities for financial success," the company explains. OAKLEAF's approach for achieving sustainable waste logistics is to: implement sustainable solutions to limit environmental liability and increase productivity; identify waste logistics strategies that add value, while also providing a competitive edge; customize solutions that deliver results and achieve financial, social and environmental goals; partner with a network of providers focused on waste, recycling and sustainability solutions; and optimize supply chain management to strengthen brand and public image in the marketplace.



Committed To Excellence!

Success in our industry is not measured by assets alone, but by the quality of the relationships we have within the communities we serve. IESI believes in investing in our communities by donating our time, talents, ideas and money. As an example, pictured below is one of our District Managers teaching elementary children about recycling and the environment.

At IESI we believe in the importance of being environmentally responsible.

In 2008, we diverted the equivalent recyclables of more than five million trees from landfills. We generated enough energy to power approximately 20,900 homes annually. We opened a LEED certified community education center complex where students and members of the community are learning about recycling, alternative energy and environmental monitoring. IESI is also opening a LEED certified MRF in late 2009.

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OAKLEAF serves its customers through four subsidiary firms.

► ants working in a single location. “If you think about it, many retail and restaurant locations exist at freestanding locations or strip centers, and they can choose freely from one trash company to the next,” Barnes says.

“But, think about an enclosed shopping mall that might have 150 tenants. It would be very problematic to place all those containers around the property, so we have an exclusive relationship with the mall owner to provide compactor units strategically placed around the mall to maximize recycling.”

VALET WASTE

Valet Waste in Tampa, Fla., provides doorstep trash collection services to the multifamily housing industry five nights a week, Barnes says.

Tenants have the option of leaving a provided container outside their doors for collectors to retrieve every night, Sunday through Thursday.

Or, they could take the container to the recycling center that Valet Waste operates on location. “It’s the No. 1 amenity that folks in apartment com-

munities value, and it’s also an income stream for the property manager,” Barnes notes.

“What’s interesting is when we go out and sell this, we now combine that service along with our waste and recycling services; plus, we talk about how we can incorporate our equipment division, as well,” he continues.

“By having our couriers on site, we provide a centralized compactor to eliminate all the noisy dumpsters that get picked up and banged against the trucks at 6 a.m.”

WASTELESS ENVIRONMENTAL

WasteLess Environmental Service is OAKLEAF’s Canadian subsidiary. “We have personnel in every area of Canada who remain close to our customers,” according to Barnes.

“When we start accounts in the United States that also have locations in Canada, we simply utilize them to provide the same services.”

SUSTAINABLE MISSION

As an environmental steward, OAKLEAF is committed to diverting as much ►

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waste from its customers' locations as it possibly can.

"Overall, there is a green initiative that is at the forefront of the U.S. today, and interestingly, we were at this forefront starting 14 years ago," Barnes says. "Today, it's being embraced by CEOs and boards of major companies whose goal is to drive toward zero waste. We are aligned with our customers' interest to recycle and divert every piece of the waste stream we possibly can.

"With that as our marching orders, it's exciting to see what OAKLEAF can do to continue to find ways to divert waste from traditional disposal methods."

Through the OAKLEAF Zero Waste Program, "We are optimizing and identifying new ways for customers to divert their waste to different recycling facilities, and many of these [methods] are being created on a monthly basis," Barnes says.

"Some examples of that would be composting facilities. There are more and more compost and organic recycling

opportunities being created on a monthly basis. When those open up, we're able to redirect all of our clients' volume – which is substantial in the marketplace – to these facilities.

"Many times, our volume can make or break a facility from a commercial standpoint. Our volume can really sta-

"When we hear that prospects are being told from our competitors they can't do something in a certain amount of time, we'll see it as an opportunity for us to excel."

bilize and give that facility a strong foundation for further growth."

OAKLEAF also recycles tires through its brand The Tire Shark, a patented, hydraulically-driven compactor that punctures and compresses tires to one-third of their original size. This, in turn, reduces disposal costs for its customers.

In addition, "There is a great demand for used tires, but they have to be transported further to capitalize on those

opportunities," Barnes says, adding that by utilizing The Tire Shark, customers save on transportation costs.

At the hallmark of OAKLEAF's success is its commitment to customer service. "We really are a customer service company that happens to handle waste recycling," he explains.

"We pride ourselves on moving quicker than our competition and being able to launch massive numbers of locations, and using our technology and our systems as the foundation to do that.

"When we hear that prospects are being told from our competitors they can't do something in a certain amount of time, we'll see it as an opportunity for us to excel." USBA

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