



1stLink

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I am excited to introduce to you our premier edition of 1stLink. I hope that you enjoy reading a little about our company, about some of the amazing businesses who we provide service to, about some products that may help simplify your business, and about other news in the world of business. We look forward to hearing from you, so please let us know how you like 1stLink. We appreciate doing business with you and we work everyday to find new ways to serve you.

— Lisa Powell
Director, Customer Care

Customer Spotlight: Tonyland Produce

At 1stel, we view ourselves as a business partner to each of our customers in helping them to build a strong, efficient business. As you can imagine, we get to work with some impressive Entrepreneurs! In each edition of 1stLink, we are excited to share with you a brief interview with one of our Customers.

We would like to introduce Tony Hill, President/CEO of Tonyland Produce Services. Tonyland Produce Services provides full delivery services of produce to companies all over the United States. Please enjoy reading our Customer Spotlight!

Q: What types of products or services does Tonyland Produce Services provide?

A: Tonyland Produce Services, Inc. provides full service movement over the entire United States for our nation's trucking industry. We buy and sell, as well as transport produce

all over the country. We put the vegetable and fruit loads together and then route the trucks accordingly for our many customers. We pride ourselves on picking up and delivering on time.

Q: What would you like people to know about Tonyland Produce Service?

A: Tonyland Produce Services, Inc is a produce transportation brokerage. We tender loads to many, many trucks all over the country, mainly California and Arizona and Washington, but we work the entire United States. We are a small company but we do a very large business with the produce and trucking industry.

I, Tony Hill, have been in the trucking industry my entire life. My father drove for Roadway Express, Inc. for 44 years and I guess that itch was passed on to me.

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I started over the road driving when I was just 17 years old and, managed to drive for 13 years, then was lucky enough to acquire a job in night dispatch in 1986. I worked in dispatch in Amarillo, TX till 1990 then came to Ft Worth, TX that year and worked produce dispatch till 2000. We then incorporated our new company and its been a nice ride ever since.

Q: What sets you apart from your competition?

A: I think the main thing that sets us apart from most companies is that we have over 40 years experience in the trucking industry. We have been out there on the road and know exactly what truck drivers go thru on a daily basis. We understand their loading and delivery processes as well as their on going trials and tribulations of being an over the road engineer. We handle each person with kid gloves, so to speak, and have a very good relationship with each of the drivers and shippers-customers we come in contact with.

Q: Do you have any current milestones?

A: We recently purchased a small company in Texico, NM and this so far has been a very lucrative move for our company.

Q: How long have you been in business?

A: We began our business in 1998 and incorporated in 2000.

Q: How long have you been a customer of 1stel?

A: We have been a customer of 1stel since October 27th, 2004. We have been very pleased with the personal service 1stel has given us. From time to time, in any industry, things happen that are out of anyone's control. When something would occur like this, 1stel was right on top of the problem. Very courteous friendly folks were there to not only take care of a particular problem, but to keep us informed of their every step along the way. I would recommend 1stel to any size business, because their technology and educated personnel handle all of our communication needs perfectly.

“I would recommend 1stel to any size business, because their technology and educated personnel handle all of our communication needs perfectly.” — Tony Hill

Who's Who @ 1stel: Kathie Short

Kathie Short recently celebrated 11 years of working at 1stel. She has been with the company since nearly the beginning. As the Finance Manager, her focus is on accounts payable and receivable.

When you sit down with Kathie and ask her what she likes most about her position, she says, “I can learn and grow more each day.” She enjoys working with 1stel because of the Christian based attitude toward the customers and employees.

Kathie has been married 30 years and has a son in his 20's. When she's not busy maintaining account information, she likes to spend time with her husband going camping and jeeping.

Product Preview: Call Forwarding

Have you ever needed to leave your office for several hours or days, but were concerned about not getting those important calls? Why not call forward them to another phone? Call forwarding allows you to have all the calls you would receive at the office delivered to the phone of your choice.

Do you need to stay home because of a family emergency? Do you have a business trip that will keep you away from your office for a few days, or even just a few hours?

By having call forwarding, you can take care of business no matter where you are. Plus, it's easy enough that it takes little time to set up. All you have to do is dial *72 and the 10 digit number from the phone you want forwarded to activate the call forwarding. To deactivate it, dial *73.

What if you leave and forget to set up your office phone? By having remote access to call forwarding, you can set that up on your way. You won't have to feel guilty about forgetting because it's just as easy to set up remotely. Just call customer service to add it to your service features.

Business Corner

As partners of 1stel, we want to see your business grow. One way to help achieve that is by sharing information with each other. With partners from all different fields of business, our customers represent nearly every industry.. In each edition of 1stLink, you will get to hear business advice from our customers who speak from experience.

We would like to introduce Martin Magallan, Sales / IT Manager of Rio Grande Steel. Rio Grande Steel is primarily a supplier of fabricated reinforcing steel. Please enjoy reading our Business Corner!

Grow Your Business & Empower Your Employees Through Computer Training

If you are a business owner or manager who recently computerized most of your business operations, or even one who has had computers as part of your operation for years, you have probably wondered at times why you are not getting as much out of your systems as you first expected. Well, maybe it's not your system that needs tweaking or revamping; sometimes we spend so much of our IT dollars on equipment and software that we often neglect the people who will be operating them. Most business owners hire otherwise well qualified individuals yet they lack computer literacy skills that are necessary in today's business environment. I have often worked with cus-

tomers who have the most up-to-date equipment and software, yet don't use it because their employees "don't want to use it". It might be time for your company to invest some of its time and money on helping those employees get up to speed with the company's current technology.

Most of the time once I talk to the employees at these places, I find that its not that they don't want to use it, its more like they do not know how to and are hesitant to admit it for various reasons. Software as well as computer equipment is updated at an amazing speed,

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some people often joke that once a computer is taken out of its packaging it is already out of date. Well, while that might be exaggerating things a little, software updates do come almost on a daily basis. Yet, many good programs have been around for years and have upgraded without totally abandoning its original purposes.

With this in mind, your company might greatly benefit from providing some in house computer training. This might sound expensive at first but once you consider the benefits of this investment, the cost does not seem so high. While there is a vast amount of training opportunities available to your employees outside your company, they are mostly generalized training that sometimes overwhelms people more than it empowers them. That's where in-house training can be most beneficial. It can be custom tailored to your specific needs. Not only providing training for your business' specific specialized software, but also providing training on common software suites such as Microsoft Office, can greatly improve your company's productivity.

In-house computer training does not have to be expensive. Sometimes you already have people on your staff who are computer savvy, and who may be enlisted to help you bring your other employees up to speed. Your local trade school or community col-

leges are packed with students who would be more than willing to offer some low cost computer training to supplement their incomes. Of course you can also hire local computer course instructors, yet sometimes you get the same amount of benefit from people who are willing to help out, rather than from "professionals" who are there only to instruct.

So who has the time to attend training? The real question is why waste the time with a lack of training. It is amazing how something as simple as mail merge, can cut wasted time when you do not have to individually address a series of letters. Invite your employees to a sack lunch the first Tuesday of every month and have someone introduce or further explain a feature on one of your programs. Or maybe provide one-hour sessions during one of your slower workdays. Then again you might want to go all out and provide formal training during a weekend company retreat or other time that is better suited to your company's needs.

Regardless of how much training you provide, a little does go a long way, and before you know it the gains in productivity and employee satisfaction will make whatever training investments you make some of the most profitable. Go ahead try it out it's a win-win situation your company grows and your employees get empowered.

—Martin Magallan
Rio Grande Steel

"Istel is an excellent provider of phone and Internet services. Deborah always provides us with excellent customer service and is always available to help us with any problem that may arise. Donovan also provides excellent support to our IT department. I am thankful we have such an excellent partnership with our telecom provider."

—Todd Tubbs
Southwestern ColorGraphics

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