


[SIGN UP FOR THE EDGE](#)


[PRINT THIS PAGE](#)


REPLACING THEIR STRAIGHT-TRUCK OPERATION WITH TRACTOR-TRAILERS GENERATED THE LABOR AND OPERATING EFFICIENCIES GRIFFIN GREENHOUSE SUPPLY EXPECTED. BUT, EVEN WITH THIS SUCCESS, AND AS THEIR BUSINESS GREW, MANAGEMENT KNEW THAT THEY NEEDED TO GET OUT OF THE TRUCKING BUSINESS.



#### AT A GLANCE

##### CHALLENGE

MAINTAINING HIGH LEVELS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AS BUSINESS PURSUED AGGRESSIVE GROWTH STRATEGY; GROWING DEMANDS OF PRIVATELY MANAGED FLEET OPERATION.

##### SOLUTION

A FULL-SERVICE LEASE CONTRACT, COMPLETE WITH SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE, SUBSTITUTE VEHICLES AND ACCESS TO TEMPORARY VEHICLES TO COVER PEAK DEMAND.

##### BENEFITS

DEPENDABLE FLEET OPERATIONS; PREDICTABLE COSTS; IMPROVED CONFIDENCE IN AVAILABLE FLEET RESOURCES; AND CONSISTENTLY HIGH LEVELS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.

# GRIFFIN GREENHOUSE SUPPLY

## LEASING EASES GROWING PAINS.

Griffin Greenhouse Supply opened for business in 1947, with 2,000 square feet of leased space in a multi-tenant building. Several years after coming on board as a driver, Ken Hyslip Sr., successfully negotiated the purchase of the company and in 1969 opened the current headquarters in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. Today, the operation includes 11 locations in eight states, three of which –Tewksbury, Harleysville and Leola, Pennsylvania – serve as distribution hubs for the Griffin network. Annual sales are approaching \$90 million.

Customer satisfaction was always the company's calling card. "One of our primary concerns is being able to give our customers consistent and reliable on-time delivery," Griffin Greenhouse Supply President Rick Hyslip says. "Dependable transportation is a major factor in our being able to meet that commitment."

The company relied on a fleet of company-owned straight trucks to make customer deliveries, but unpredictable maintenance expenses and rising labor costs associated with that fleet strategy prompted the Hyslips to consider other equipment options in the late 1970s.

"We were serving a fairly large area from our site in Tewksbury, and we were never sure which

trucks would return to the yard – or when they would be available for reloading,” Griffin Greenhouse Supply Vice President Ken Hyslip Jr., says. “As a result, we paid a lot of overtime while staff who were to load orders waited for trucks to get back to the yard.”

“When a truck broke down on the road, it was even worse,” Hyslip Jr., says. “We had to send a replacement truck out, transfer the load and continue making deliveries, while finding a way to get the broken truck fixed. Just having routine maintenance service performed had become increasingly costly as it required two drivers to shuttle the vehicles back and forth.”

This latter point was one of the advantages the Hyslips saw in shifting from straight trucks to a tractor-trailer fleet. Their vision was to have a ratio of two trailers per tractor so that one trailer could be loaded while the other was on deliveries. The Hyslips purchased a used tractor and two trailers in order to test their theory. Once the efficiencies they had hoped for were proven, the company began planning the shift to the combination rigs.



**ALL IN THE FAMILY**

(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) CRAIG HYSLIP, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER; KEN HYSLIP SR., CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER; RICK HYSLIP, PRESIDENT; AND KEN HYSLIP JR., EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AT THE KONJOIANS GREENHOUSE IN WEST ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS.

The plan was well timed. With labor costs under control and demand for their products increasing, the Hyslips saw an opportunity to significantly expand their business through acquisition. They understood the role transportation would play in their success, and the demands private-fleet ownership would make on them in terms of management time and capital. The primary concern was that as the business grew, customers, old and new, would not experience the Hyslips' growing pains.

In 1979, the Hyslips brought in the local Ryder account executive, Peter Bartley, to discuss leasing options, and the Griffin Greenhouse Supply/Ryder partnership was born.

As Griffin Greenhouse Supply expanded its operating region through a combination of organic market growth and the acquisition of six competing greenhouse supply firms from 1992 through 2002, the Hyslips depended on Ryder to help solve any distribution challenges. Today,

Griffin Greenhouse Supply relies on a fleet of 28 power units and more than 50 trailers provided through a full-service lease from Ryder to keep materials flowing from hubs to branch locations, and from branch locations to customer doors. Ryder also provides a range of ancillary services that add value to the relationship.

According to Craig Hyslip, Griffin Greenhouse Supply chief operating officer, "They offer an array of seminars that are helpful to us, from drug and alcohol testing to hazardous materials handling and shipping regulations. Our Ryder safety manager, Andy Reed, comes to our facility to present training and instructional programs both to our executive staff and our employees. In addition, when he qualifies our drivers for hazardous materials handling and forklift operations, he includes and certifies the warehouse employees and customer service staff as well. This saves us the cost and hassle of locating and hiring an outside firm to perform that function."

The flexibility of leasing coupled with the shift from straight trucks to tractor-trailer combinations has helped Griffin Greenhouse Supply expand its market territory without a transportation glitch. "As a result," Rick Hyslip says, "we were able to bring separate businesses together under the Griffin umbrella, while maintaining high levels of customer service."

"Our relationship with Ryder enables us to meet our customer service needs," Hyslip says. "The dependability of the equipment is a major advantage, and we have the confidence of knowing that if there is an issue on the road, all it takes is a single phone call and Ryder is on top of it."

e



[>back to top](#) :: [back to index](#)



---

Other articles: [Staying Power](#), [Associated Grocers of Maine](#), [McJunkin Corporation](#), [SpaceFitters](#), [Havertys Furniture](#)

ABOUT RYDER SYSTEM, INC. | CONTACT US

