

S
A
R
A
S
O
T
A

MOVING

R O A D W A R R I O R S

The Valenti brothers' disciplined approach delivers a moving experience

by Laurie Sanfilippo photographs by Bill West

One trip to Davi & Valenti Movers on University Parkway and you'll know instantly that this company means business.

Visiting cars pause briefly at a gated entrance, identify themselves through an electronic apparatus, then are buzzed through by a friendly voice. Inside the oversized, immaculate parking lot, a fleet of shiny white and green moving trucks stand ready in neat alignment. A walk towards the front door offers a peek into what appears to be a giant warehouse, revealing neatly crated and stacked items tended to by uniformly dressed staff members. A far cry from the chaos that often accompanies enterprises involving men and

trucks and deadlines, Davi & Valenti looks to be a well-oiled moving machine.

If you were a couch in transition from one living room to another, this is where you'd want to be.

Inside the modern offices of Davi & Valenti Movers, the company character is reinforced. Clean, efficient, and professional, this center of operation is responsible for over 40 employees, 30 pieces of equipment, 30,000 square feet of warehouse space and, oh yes, the irreplaceable belongings of countless clients. The walls are discreetly dotted with awards in business excellence, honors for charitable efforts and Valenti family acknowledgements that indicate a

D O W N
balance between corporation, community and brotherhood in its most literal sense. Despite the fact that they are a family-owned and -operated business, one can see that this is no Mom and Pop organization.

As advertised, the Valenti broth-

crucial moves from north to south.

"We move locally," Leonard notes, "but our forte is long-distance moving and storage. We provide weekly service to the Northeast and New England. We are strategically aligned with movers in New York

ANYONE WHO HAS GONE THROUGH THE POTENTIALLY HARROWING EXPERIENCE OF MOVING KNOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF A LITTLE THING LIKE COMPETENCE.

ers (Nicholas, David and Leonard) have been "moving Sarasota since 1979." Their experience in the field, however, goes as far back as 1969 – when the brothers worked as professional movers in their native Hicksville, Long Island.

However, it wasn't until they made their own move to the Sarasota-Bradenton area in 1974 that the Valenti brothers really found their niche. Beginning with one truck and becoming an agent of the nationally-known Bekins Movers in 1981, the Valenti brothers found their business exploding along with the community.

The Davi portion of the company name belongs to a former father-in-law, who helped the brothers get started and has long since been bought out. But his name remains part of the business, says Leonard Valenti, vice president and operations manager, because it rates much higher in the Yellow Pages' alphabetical order than Valenti does.

"If we win the lottery," he vows, "we'll change the name to The Seven Valenti Brothers – because that's what we are by now, when you're counting nephews and cousins and everything else."

The addition of multiple Valentis to the payroll mirrors the phenomenal boom in Southwest Florida's economy in the quarter-century since the moving company made its start.

"This area is very transient, but growing," says Leonard. With new homes sprouting up and new businesses putting down roots, the demand for movers with expertise in commercial and residential relocation has become as crucial as sunblock to those coming into the area. And the Valentis have built their business by being in it for the long haul – specializing in those

and Boston."

Valenti Brothers also provide international service to Great Britain, Europe and all points in the free world. "The international moving is through contracts with overseas movers," Leonard adds.

Be it transatlantic or just Tamiami, Davi & Valenti Movers pride themselves on offering the experience and professionalism needed to execute even the most delicate move. During their career, they have safely transported everything from high-tech equipment to irreplaceable heirlooms.

The company was even given the task of helping the priceless scale model of the U.S.S. Sarasota make the voyage safely from the nation's capital to its namesake community.

"It was a one-of-a-kind scale model ship kept at the Navy's museum in Washington, D.C.," says Leonard, "and it's now on permanent display in the county administration building. The U.S.S. Sarasota was a combat troop ship used in World War II and Korea, so when a local veterans' organization wanted to have it moved down here, we did it for them at no charge."

This is the sort of challenge that Davi & Valenti Movers relish – to transport that kinds of materials that could never be replaced and absolutely must remain intact. So when Sarasota's 911 Call Center needed to move their operation, who do you think they called to handle the precise and intricate move of their critical emergency equipment?

Despite the movers' global reach, working with so many family members could make even the biggest of companies feel small. According to Leonard, however, it all works well: "It has its ups and

DAVI & VALENTI - CONT'D FROM PAGE 55

downs, but mainly ups."

The Valentis' father was a successful pharmacist in New York who made his Italian-born parents proud. Mr. Valenti had hoped that his second-generation American sons would follow in his footsteps. They didn't.

"He was a little disappointed when we first chose to work as movers, but he saw us work hard and grow. He became proud," Leonard says. The brothers earned that pride by turning their single-

screened and extensively trained in all moving, packing and storing procedures." In addition, the company pays attention to the little extra, such as well-maintained trucks with air-ride suspension and fresh moving pads that make for a clean, smooth transport.

Along the way, the Valenti Brothers have demonstrated that helping Sarasota build roots is just as important as helping its residents settle in.

"We donate our services to

"OUR FAMILY NAME IS ON THE TRUCK, SO WE HAVE TO PUT EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT INTO MAKING SURE THAT THE LEVEL OF SERVICE IS THERE." – LEONARD VALENTI

truck operation into the largest Bekins agency in the southeast United States, out of 450 nationwide. Through it all, they avoided the potential pitfalls of mixing family with business by working as a team, each member with his own area of expertise. Nick Valenti, the oldest brother, is company president, while David, the youngest, is vice president and sales manager.

"Our family name is on the truck, so we have to put everything we've got into making sure that the level of service is there," adds Leonard.

While the foundation of the Valentis' success begins with a family in sync, it certainly doesn't end there. The kinds of people the Valentis employ to represent their name and handle their clients' treasures are the crucial link in the chain – so finding and retaining highly skilled, career employees is a particularly important focus for the firm.

"The moving industry as a whole is not getting the professional talent. We're above that," Leonard explains. "To do a professional job, we don't use day labor like a lot of our competitors do. If you're paying six or seven dollars an hour, for laborious work in 100-degree heat, you get what you pay for."

Instead the Valenti Brothers will only send their clients personnel who are, according to Leonard, "bonded, uniformed, drug-

several local charitable organizations each year, such as Habitat for Humanity, Toys For Tots, and Mayor's Feed The Hungry. Our community is important to us," Leonard says.

"We've been here for over twenty-two years, back before this area was developed and University Parkway was just two lanes."

The business community has also responded well to Davi & Valenti Movers' accommodating level of professionalism. Their strong repeat and referral business is the backbone of their operation, bringing consistent accolades from the Bekins corporate office. On a local level, the Valentis have been awarded the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce's Better Business Council Insignia Award for outstanding customer service. Anyone who has gone through the potentially harrowing experience of moving knows the importance of a little thing like competence.

So, what does the future hold for a company that's constantly on the move?

"We're going to expand our market share," Leonard promises, "by providing quality service, a sense of urgency, attention to detail, all backed by a written service guarantee." ■

Davi & Valenti Movers
1755 West University Parkway
355-2936