

Eric Crawford

FRESH RESULTS LLC

DOUG OHLEMEIER | EASTERN EDITOR

In his more than 25 years in the produce industry, Eric Crawford has worked five jobs, two of them in his own corporations.

It's the knowledge the 49-year old gained by learning from produce sales veterans that he attributes to making Fresh Results LLC a success for his growers and retain customers.

Add his pro-customer attitude and you get a recipe for one of the fastest-growing U.S. produce companies.

The first years of the Sunrise, Fla.-based company he and partner Agnes Fitton, Treasurer, founded in 2007 experienced consistent 20% yearly sales growth.

This past year, the grower, shipper and importer enjoyed a 300% surge from the previous year.

While it focuses on blueberries from throughout the world and is expanding into U.S. growing regions, Fresh Results also is moving into other items.

Shipping blackberries, mangoes, papaya, asparagus, avocados and other items, the company adds new items only after customer request and won't start a new item unless it receives retail support, Crawford said.

"Over 25 years, I've made all the mistakes," Crawford said. "At this point in life, I have a good idea of what will happen before it happens, You have to love what you do because his is a lifestyle, not a job. I am enthusiastic to really go out there and try to accomplish and do bigger and better things."

In college, Crawford joined Dole Fresh Vegetables' Atlanta operation in 1986 and became its sales manager.

There he says he learned the fundamentals of produce trading through hours instruction from managers Tom Plether and Jim Nevis, men he calls among the industry's most patient.

In 1990, he moved to Farm Fresh Produce in Nashville, Tenn., one of the world's largest military buying centers, where he purchased apples, pears,

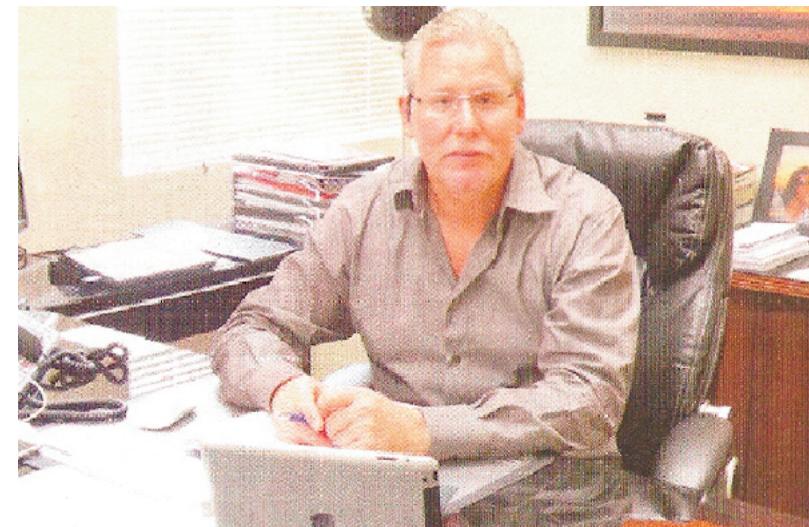
grapes, stone fruit and cherries. Wanting to return to growing and shipping, an associate in 1993 advised him to check with Eden Prairie, Minn.-based C.H. Robinson Worldwide Inc., which was assembling a retail-focused import program.

Crawford eventually became export manager but moved quickly into developing the company's import program.

That is where he gained clarity about what he wanted to do with the rest of his life -- form financial partnerships with growers and sell to retailers.

At C.H. Robinson, Crawford generated relationships with numerous growers of berries, cantaloupe, honeydew, asparagus and stone fruit, an experience that helped him develop lifelong relationships with leading North American retailers.

By the end of the 1990s, Crawford with Fitton's assistance started his first produce company, Weston, Fla.-



based Produce-ing Results International, and the importing company continues to grow.

"To be successful, you have to first have experience and, second, great partners from both the supply and distribution sides," Crawford said. "I love talking with retailers, customers and growers. These people have all become family."

Brent Rosenthal, owner of Sioux City, Iowa-based wholesaler Rosenthal Foods Corp., said he agrees with Crawford's generating fulfilling relationships with great companies.

Rosenthal said Crawford determination and attitude push him to excel.

He said he regularly receives text messages from Crawford by 5:30 a.m. and often talks with him several times a week close to midnight.

"He cares about his customers more than anyone I know," Rosenthal said. "He's extremely hard-working and is driven to success. He will go to the n-th degree to take care of his customers, oftentimes dipping into his own pocket to make sure his customers are whole.

"We need more people like Eric"