



Success Story: All Waste

The streets of Detroit may be tough but the landfills are even tougher.

Just ask Sherman Rogers. After seeing his competitors' trucks pop apart at the seams as they traveled the uneven ground, he decided he didn't want his business to do the same. So the president of All Waste of Shelby Township, Michigan, decided that the secret to keeping his truck on the landfill and not in it was to have a backup — or two.

"The landfills are the toughest environment," Rogers said. "You're driving through a landfill, you're carrying a lot of weight and the landfill is not an even surface. They don't get 100 percent compaction. They leave a lot of low and high spots. It's like driving through enormous potholes. All that twisting and turning — that's what tears the truck apart."

Rogers has worked too hard to build his business to let something like equipment failure ruin it. He's also located in a market where, if he can't service a customer for even a day, competitors would quickly take his trade.

"Your truck goes down, your customer still wants that container delivered or hauled out of the way," said Rogers, whose company serves greater metropolitan Detroit by providing rubbish and trash removal from construction, industrial, commercial and residential sites. "They don't care that you don't have a truck."

Rogers started All Waste in 1998 with a single Mack® truck and 12 roll-off dumpsters, servicing contractors, shopping centers, malls and restaurants. He now has 15 employees, yearly sales of \$2.5 million and an all-Mack fleet of 13 trucks with more than 500 dumpsters.



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Over the years, Rogers has established good relations with his customers, a competitive advantage he wants to protect. That makes having reliable backup equipment a must.

“The Detroit market is tight. If the contractors don’t get their can the next day they’ll switch to another hauler. They want great service. We make sure we keep the trucks running. That’s why I’ve got a backup truck for the roll-off division and another for the front-load division. If I had 20 trucks, I’d probably have two backups. They’re an insurance policy. You’ve just got to have them.”

That’s not to say that All Waste is always playing defense. Located about 12 miles north of Detroit, the company is in the middle of a global battle in the automotive industry. Rogers is sympathetic toward the affected workers, and he wonders if some of America’s Big Three automakers could slide into bankruptcy — and take their suppliers with them. But he’s finding opportunity amid the turmoil.

“I see a lot of vacant storefronts in Detroit,” he said. “But if times are tough, we just go after a little more market share. Whether they’re going out of business or into business, there’s always trash.”

Rogers said he learned these lessons by watching how his uncles ran their hauling businesses. “They try to run so efficient without having a backup. I’ve seen them run to the dealership and pound on the service guy’s door to get the route going. That’s just insane.”

It also helps to have rugged equipment to start with — and the service to support it.

“Mack helps me with the durability of the trucks,” said Rogers, who runs a fleet of MR, DM and RD models. “When a truck goes through a landfill with 73,000 lbs. and it dips, that’s a lot of stress on the chassis. That’s why the big guys use Macks all the time.”

He said his good relationship with dealer Wiegand Mack in Sterling Heights provides another form of backup. “If they don’t have the part, they get it shipped out of Chicago and here the next day. From the service department to the owner, they’ve been really good. Without them, I wouldn’t be in business.”

