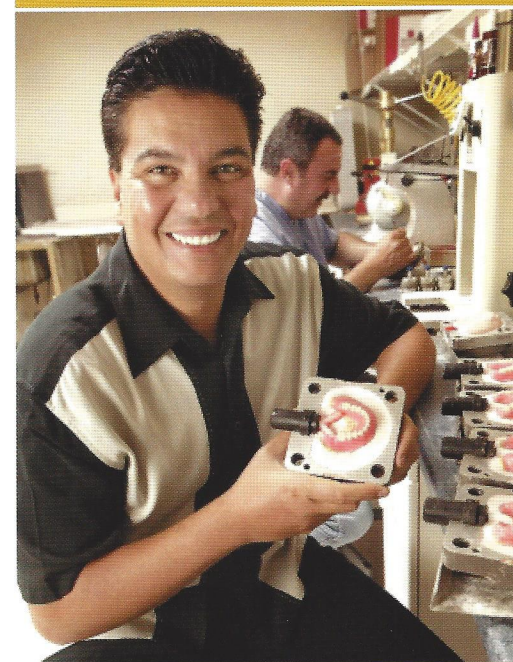




case study

Jesse & Frichtel Dental Labs



Breaking the Mold in Restorative and Cosmetic Dentistry

On the cover of every popular magazine and across millions of billboards, models with dazzling smiles display gleaming, perfectly-shaped teeth. So it's no surprise that in addition to being a universal expression for friendliness and approval, the smile has become a valuable asset to most people's personal and professional lives.

As demand for an attractive smile explodes, it's only natural for dentists to offer patients ways to restore or replace flawed teeth. That's why Pittsburgh-based Jesse & Frichtel Dental Labs is thriving. Formed in 1994, this full-service dental lab has become a leading partner for America's top dentists.

Jesse & Frichtel admits to biting off more than it could chew when the company purchased a 14,000-square-foot lab facility in Pittsburgh. Although rising demand for great teeth has no doubt created a new frontier for this kind of business, finding the right technical talent to join the company's team in the United States proved more difficult than expected.

The company's frequent training sessions with dental technicians from around the world prompted Jesse & Frichtel to seek business partners overseas. In 2004, they formed JF International, a company dedicated to providing high-quality, cost-effective products to the dental community. After an exhaustive search, they inked a deal with a lab partner based in Shenzhen, China, for its technical expertise and high industry standards for creating quality products.

In such a time-sensitive business, Jesse & Frichtel had heard about UPS's logistics capabilities and expertise in express shipping to and from China. "In fact, we wrote UPS into our business plan," said owner and co-founder Mark Frichtel. "From the very beginning, the alliance truly has been a strategic partnership."

Indeed, UPS's commitment to the lab's success led to much more than moving product. Both parties worked together to implement solutions that fit the lab's needs to ensure that its clients keep smiling.

Logistics Makeover

Before any of the company's dental crowns or bridges can be made, a dentist must first make a poly-vinyl-based impression of the problem area in a patient's mouth. Then, the dentist taps the lab to create a model based on the impression and the patient's unique needs. The finished product is delivered to the dentist who transforms the patient's smile with the new creation.

This entire process must happen fast because dentists use temporary teeth in the patient's mouth until the finished product is returned to the dentist for insertion. It is essential for the final product to be delivered to a dentist in two weeks or less to avoid any shifting of the temporary or even the patient's permanent teeth.

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"Working with UPS has given us global reach; there isn't anywhere we can't go. We've been able to turn days into hours, and hours into minutes – which is the key to our success."

MARK FRICHEL,
OWNER,
JESSE & FRICHEL DENTAL LABS



Delivering New Smiles On Time

Cosmetic dentistry is ultimately about helping people make their best impressions. So when a dentist recently came to Jesse & Frichtel with a special, last-minute case, UPS worked with the company to ensure all parties were smiling – and the wedding pictures prove it.

A Pittsburgh bride made a last-minute decision to correct the gap between her two front teeth just one week before her wedding day. To ensure her new smile would make it down the aisle, her impression was expedited through customs at UPS's Worldport facility in Louisville on a Friday evening, and then through Hong Kong by Saturday morning with the help of UPS customs brokerage.

Jesse & Frichtel's UPS international account executive already had pre-alerted his counterparts in Hong Kong. The impression personally was delivered to Jesse & Frichtel's lab in Shenzhen where lab technicians worked their magic to create veneers for the bride's new smile.

"We received an e-mail from our lab saying, 'I don't know how they did it, but the case will be back on time,'" said Frichtel. The perfectly crafted pearly-whites became the bride's most fabulous accessory, arriving the day before her wedding bells rang.

Patients and doctors alike are on a tight schedule, so Jesse & Frichtel's success is heavily dependent on reliability and consistency. "We knew smart logistics would give us the competitive edge we needed," said Frichtel. "With UPS's help, we improved our time-in-transit by four days."

Using UPS's global transportation network, the precious cargo journeys from Pittsburgh to China and back again like clockwork. After receiving an impression from a dentist, Jesse & Frichtel ships it to Hong Kong using *UPS Worldwide Express*SM. From there, the impression is sent ground via UPS to the Shenzhen lab where a new smile is created. The finished product is shipped back through Hong Kong to Pittsburgh, then finally to the dentists. This entire process takes just one week, compared to nearly two weeks with other carriers.

"It's what puts us out in front of everyone else – competitors can't believe we can do it," Frichtel said of the quick turnaround. "It has made customers more loyal and keeps stress levels inside my organization in the United States and China at a minimum. It really makes the difference between chaos and a well-oiled machine."

Cutting Teeth on Competition

With UPS's speedy delivery, Jesse & Frichtel uses its unprecedented turnaround time as a powerful sales message. In fact, the company encourages its customers to schedule a patient's fitting appointment knowing that through UPS, the case will be back on time. But the business ultimately revolves around retaining dentists as loyal customers – which means the company must deliver on promises – no matter what happens while products are in transit.

For example, U.S. Customs routinely inspects packages at random to ensure Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations are followed appropriately. If proper procedures are not in place, companies can experience costly delays. Jesse & Frichtel uses UPS customs brokerage to streamline this process by clearing orders electronically – before they even reach the border.

If an issue arises, the company immediately is alerted via e-mail using *UPS QuantumView*SM *Manage*. From there, Frichtel calls the company's dedicated UPS international account executive who relays pertinent licensing information to a UPS import specialist at Worldport, UPS's major air hub in Louisville, Ky. From the FDA office at Worldport, the import specialist can locate packages and clear any issues within minutes.

In addition to handling customs clearance for the mission-critical cases, the company relies on UPS to keep business at home running smoothly. For instance, complete visibility of a shipment's location and status is available at any time, which can calm anxious dentists. In addition, *UPS WorldShip*[®] helps keep administrative time at a minimum by making it easy for staff to complete necessary customs documents electronically.

A Smiling Success

With the logistics piece in place, Jesse & Frichtel's streamlined processes have allowed the business to flourish. The company's international division, J&F International, is responsible for slightly more than 17 percent of Jesse & Frichtel Dental Labs' total revenue after just one year. If the trend continues, that number could increase to 36 percent within a year. And with a customer retention rate of 97.6 percent (directly related to reduced cycle times), it's no wonder the lab is confident about its business.

Now, Jesse & Frichtel is seeking ways to capitalize on UPS's extensive network throughout Asia to partner with additional labs. With UPS's help, the company can better deliver high-quality products with the tightest turnaround times in the industry.

"We're becoming a virtual lab based solely on logistics. Working with UPS has given us global reach; there isn't anywhere we can't go," said Frichtel. "We've been able to turn days into hours, and hours into minutes – which is the key to our success."