

**EXPORTER
OF THE YEAR**

**BRIAN
SUZUKI**

HAWAII AIR CARGO

**SPONSOR: Mike Lau
Hawaii National Bank**

BRIAN SUZUKI HAS HAD A SIMPLE MANTRA for the 38 years he's headed Hawai'i Air Cargo. Keep your employees happy and they'll keep your customers happy.

"Our customers can feel that warmth. We're a small company and compete against big companies like FedEx and UPS, and we have loyal customers. We treat them like they're friends. They get the lowest rates and best service."

Suzuki says he spares no expense in taking employees on training trips to spots in Asia, the Mainland and Canada's west coast. A recent trip included 48 people - half employees and half family. They were two groups in order to keep the offices open and operating.

"I like to teach them the lay of the land and some history (of the places they ship)," he explains. "We try to travel as often as we can. It's a system to have people work together and learn about the world." Employees have been to Australia, China, Japan, Mexico, Canada and several U.S. Mainland destinations.

Hawai'i Air Cargo is eligible for the SBA's Exporter of the Year award because of its overseas shipping and Mr. Suzuki's classes on "How to Export" and "How to se-

lect your cargo carrier" with the District Export Council.

Suzuki has worked in the cargo industry at Honolulu's airport for 52 years, starting with Pan Am. In 1982 he took over Hawai'i Air Cargo and built a small company into a powerful player in the cargo industry.

"Our customers become our best salespeople," he says.

His company is known for going above and beyond. Suzuki remembers a few years ago when a Hawai'i company, the French Gourmet, shipped its products to a trade show in Beijing. Arrangements had been made for the hotel adjoining the foreign trade zone to bake the products, but Suzuki was stopped with his handcart of dough before he could reach the hotel. Security officer said the dough hadn't properly cleared customs.

Suzuki returned to the trade show area where employees of another company were setting up pizza ovens and he talked with them. The next morning at the opening of the trade show, the whole place was filled with the aroma of pastries freshly baked in those pizza ovens.

"Your nose took you right up to the U.S Pavilion on the fourth floor," says Suzuki who helped out at that booth and several others as well. "We had the longest lines. After the first day the organizers came up and said, 'We want you back next year. We'll give you the best booth.'"

Michael Lau, the relationship officer at Hawaii National Bank at Kamehameha Shopping Center in Kalihi, says Suzuki goes the extra mile for both employees and customers which sets him apart.

"Brian's been a pioneer in the cargo business and he's been very humble," Lau says. He's genuine and honest and people respect him for that."

BY BEVERLY CREAMER



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