

Cavalier expands European footprint from Feltham

With the coronavirus pandemic slowing global trade and Brexit looming large on the horizon, you'd be forgiven for thinking that this is a desperate time for UK logistics firms. David van Turton, however, is looking at the situation as an opportunity rather than a threat.

David, a director of Cavalier Logistics UK in Feltham, says: "It is a challenging situation, there's no doubt about that, but goods are still being shipped around the world – particularly pharmaceutical and medical products that are in high demand for obvious reasons.

"Everybody is talking about the Brexit cliff edge but many companies are planning for it and getting their house in order. Naturally, nobody knows whether the UK and EU will have thrashed out a deal by January 1 but there are things you can do in terms of getting your customs documentation in order; this will be required regardless of what sort of deal is on the table.

"The interesting thing about being in this sector is that it's influenced by a whole host of other sectors. For instance, the severe downturn in the aviation industry has pushed up air freight prices so more companies are using the sea freight route instead. They're sending large amounts of freight less often to bring their costs down. We've adapted by setting up an ocean freight division to cater for increased demand for sea freight worldwide."



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David has spent more than 20 years in the transport network and logistics sectors, embarking on an exciting career journey that took him to Cavalier Logistics in 2016. A veteran-owned company that was founded in the US in 1985, Cavalier provides full-service logistics solutions to meet today's demanding environment in the commercial and public sectors. David was hired to build Cavalier's European presence from its Feltham base, with particular emphasis on providing logistics solutions that support the European pharma and healthcare industries.

He says: "The US directors saw the UK operation as a route into the European market. To service Europe you really need to have a base in London, which is still viewed by many as the centre of European business. There are lots of good London-based firms in the logistics supply chain and we've made some great connections locally in the last four years, helping local firms to do business internationally.

"Having traded outside of Europe, we know how to deal with customs and comply with customs legislation on imports and exports – an area which some UK SMEs are not too familiar with."

David manages a team of 12 at the Feltham operation, which has built a strong reputation as



David van Turton
Managing Director
Cavalier Logistics

a trusted and critical service provider for companies engaged in the movements of pharmaceutical and life science products.

"We're experts in the global shipping of time and temperature-sensitive drugs, clinical trial supplies, vaccines, medicines and dangerous goods," he says. "If you transport a medicine at the wrong temperature, a lot could go wrong. You need to make sure that the equipment is properly calibrated and sent in accordance with legislation."

Around 70% of Cavalier's UK business involves the shipping of pharma and healthcare products. One fifth is made up of the transportation of time-

sensitive products, such as car parts for a vehicle manufacturing factory, and the remaining 10% is general freight. It appears that the business is well positioned for future growth – a view to which David subscribes.

"We've done the groundwork and we've built up some great relationships, both locally and in Europe," he says. "The COVID-19 situation makes things uncertain but one thing's for sure: business doesn't just stop. People and companies will still need products – pharma and healthcare goods in particular – so we're well placed to take this business forward."

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The inside track: David van Turton

Favourite food – It's a little tricky as I eat in line with the seasons, my favourite meal at this time of year would be a beautiful organic Sirloin steak, cooked medium to rare, creamed mash potato's & a big helping on Green vegetables, homemade chimichurri

Favourite tittle – Argentine Malbec

Favourite holiday? Dipping in & out of the sea at Illetes, Majorca by day, Tapas in Palma Old Town by night, wandering back under a full moon.

Describe your family life? Full of energy, laughter & Fun

How do you spend your downtime? Cooking for friends, Good Movie, Good Book, Great Conversation.

What are your key strengths as a manager?

Providing a working environment where everyone can thrive, develop & hone their skills to fully release their true potential, trusting my colleagues to make the right decisions & supporting them whatever the weather, Macro manage not Micro manage is the key I like to think

And your limitations? Forgetting sometimes to stand in other peoples shoes & look at the world through their eyes

Best thing about doing business in the borough?

I have found the level of cooperation & unity with fellow businesses in the borough a shining example of how business should be done nationwide, this has been amplified of late during the current situation

Famous person you'd most like to spend dinner with? Nelson Mandela. What more can I say!!!

Most interesting fact about yourself? I once ran over Michael Caines foot with a trolley in Marks & Spencer on the Chiswick High Road.... "Not a lot of people know that"