



Fast, No-Sweat Financing Helps Drive Crane Sales for Giuffre

When the owner of a Boston trucking company went looking for a new truck-crane a year ago, it wasn't a local dealer that met his needs.

Rather, Matt Gunn, who rents his truck-crane services to heating, air conditioning and roofing contractors, came all the way to Oak Creek to make a purchase from Giuffre Brothers Cranes, Inc.

Gunn went halfway across the country "because Giuffre is easy to buy from."

"A friend of mine in the roofing supply business told me about Giuffre," Gunn says. "I had already contacted two or three crane dealers, but I bought from Giuffre because they made it so easy – like one-stop shopping."

Being easy to buy from is a reputation Giuffre Brothers has earned over the company's 35-year history.

"About three years ago we established a separate finance company for our truck-cranes," explains president Frank Giuffre (pronounced ju-free).

Giuffre originally attempted to handle the finance company, called Heartland-Wisconsin Corp., on his own, but the operation proved so successful that the demands were too great. So he appointed former national accounts representative Scott Blair to be executive vice president and general manager of Heartland-Wisconsin. The exclusive arrangement between Heartland-Wisconsin and Giuffre Brothers is unique in the capital equipment business.

No other truck-crane assembler offers a complete package from off-the-lot availability to financing of the sale.

Where most other truck-crane dealers sell to the regional markets, Giuffre sells nationally. The company puts together a standard truck-crane unit it calls the Dino 1500. Hundreds of these all-purpose Dino 1500s sell to companies in the construction business for \$76,900, which is \$15,000 less than a comparable unit from one of Giuffre's competitors.

The standard Giuffre Brothers Dino 1500 comes equipped with a 14.4-ton crane and a 114-foot boom, both mounted on an International-Harvester 4700 series truck frame.

Other dealers customize each unit, which is substantially more expensive than buying in multiples of component parts, as Giuffre offers. As a result, Giuffre's costs are lower than the competition, allowing them to sell for less.

The arrangement also lessens the risk to Giuffre Brothers if the original buyer falters.

"Most finance companies want to make sure the buyer of a truck-crane holds that piece of equipment until the final payment is made," Giuffre says. "They don't want to repossess an 18-month-old truck-crane. What are they going to do with it? They're in the finance business, not the truckcrane business. With Heartland-Wisconsin financing, if the deal falters, Giuffre Brothers has a built-in secondary market for the used equipment. We'll make money on the used crane, which lowers the financial risk."

For new businesses, some of which start with limited capital, an \$80,000 investment in a truck-crane can make the difference in the kinds of jobs they bid. Roofing work requires a heavy mobile crane like the Dino 1500.

A year ago, Billy Simmons of Decatur, Ala., started Simco Construction with little more than three dump trucks. To bid on

commercial roofing contracts he needed a truck-crane.

"It's extremely tough to get financing for a new business in the competitive construction industry," Simmons said.

"Maybe the banks would have loaned me the money. I don't know. But I got 60 months' financing at a competitive interest rate from Heartland-Wisconsin on a Giuffre Brothers – Dino 1500. Without that truck-crane I might not be in business today."

Blair, general manager of Heartland-Wisconsin, says the financing of Giuffre Brothers' truck-cranes is a capital-lease arrangement, where the company retains title of the equipment until the final payment is made.

Small Business Times
November 1997
By John L. Campbell

**Gunn went halfway
across the country
"because Giuffre is
easy to buy from."**