

# THE MICKEY SPIRIT

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**“Relationships are very important to a family business. I do like the fact that Mickey, like George Hirn, is a family-run business.”**

— George Hirn

## New York, New York: If You Can Make It There ...

There are several brand icons that immediately conjure up an image of New York City and any one of its five boroughs: the Sabrett umbrella over a metallic hot dog cart; the interlocking NY emblem of the Yankees; yellow taxi cabs; and, of course, the renown black and red trucks of Boar's Head Provisions Co., Inc., the century-old maker of some of the finest deli meats and cheeses on the planet.

Those trucks are still built in Brooklyn, one of the aforementioned five boroughs, by a fifth generation body builder called George Hirn Company, which is now run by the

founder's great, great grandson, a fit and fair haired man in his 30s also named George Hirn, who might look more at home checking earnings ratios in a Wall Street brokerage house than he does in the back

of deli truck checking welds.

In fact, Hirn admits, back in his underclassman days at Bentley College in Massachusetts, “I could never see

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George Hirn Boar's Head truck, circa 1955'

## Remley Joins Mickey In Northeast Beverage Sales

Mickey has appointed Gary Remley Northeast Regional Sales Manager for the Beverage Division, responsible for the territory stretching from Maine to the District of Columbia. He is based in New Fairfield, CT and reports to Wayne Childress, VP of Sales.

Prior to joining Mickey, Remley was Regional Sales Manager Data2Logistics LLC, where he was responsible for business development of the freight audit, payment and logistics information management service from Maine to South Carolina. He was also charged with managing and expanding relationships with Fortune



Remley

## Mickey Taps Morgan for Van, Vending Sales in SC, TN

Jay Morgan has joined Mickey Truck Bodies' Van & Vending Division as District Sales Manager for the State of South Carolina, and Nashville and Chattanooga, TN. He is based out of Columbia, SC and reports to Jim Hiatt, Vice President of Sales for the division.



Morgan

A 2000 graduate of The Citadel with a degree in Business Administration, Morgan most recently worked for Carolina Idealease as a Rental Manger, responsible for lease proposals, billing, fuel and rental receipts and customer service. Before that he was with Washington Mutual Finance as a

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## George Hirn Takes A Bite Out of the Big Apple

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myself making a career out of this business. But in my senior year, I took a look at the job market and decided I could do worse.” Now, 12 full-time years later, Hirn will tell you, “I have the greatest job in the world. I definitely made the right choice at the fork in the road. Seeing the fruits of your labor every night before you go home is as good as a job can get. Making your own decisions. Making your own mistakes and learning from them. Plus, I get to work with and learn from my father.”

Hirn also gets to work with and learn from some other business partners – albeit non-family members. While the company has long manufactured its own refrigerated bodies primarily for the provisions market, a recent change in the competitive climate brought with it a shift in business strategy.

“In the mid-1990s the competition turned fierce and our market share within the provisions industry started to shrink,” explains Hirn. “Morgan entered the area with very aggressive pricing. So we picked up Kidron to augment our refrigerated capacity and went with Mickey to get us into dry freight, which was a whole new ball game for us. We were a premium refrigerated body manufacturer, so Kidron gave us another pricing tier. But Mickey gave us an entirely new revenue stream from which we could

grow our business beyond refrigerated provisions. We looked at a few different dry freight body manufacturers who we could partner with, but we definitely made the right choice. That’s for sure.”

Today, dry freight van bodies account for the lion’s share of Hirn’s unit sales, and Mickey is still its only manufacturing partner for these products. In turn, Hirn is the largest Mickey van body distributor.

More on the Hirn/Mickey marriage later, but first a little history lesson.

John Hirn, who built wooden delivery wagons for fruits and vegetables in Brooklyn not far from where the current facility stands today, formed George Hirn Company in 1892. The company built its first motorized body in the ‘20s, and in the 1940s became the first manufacturer of refrigerated bodies, which were used to haul provisions such as meat, fish and deli products to restaurants in the New York metropolitan area.

“Relationships are very important to a family business,” says Hirn. “I’m very close to Jim Hiatt [Mickey VP]. I can also pick up the phone and talk to Dean Sink [Mickey President] anytime I need to. I do like the fact that Mickey, like George Hirn, is a family-run business.”

He also likes the fact that the two companies have grown together and learned



*From left: George C. Hirn, Body Shop Foreman Frank Tuifel, and Paint Shop Foreman Romulo Chaca in front of new Mickey van body. Tuifel has been with the company through three generations of Hirns.*

from each other. “Mickey came into a geographical area that they were unsure of – as a matter of fact their penetration in this market was virtually nonexistent before us,” Hirn explains. “They have done well to learn about the roughness of the area, how the drivers load and unload their trucks in this environment, how potholes and traffic effect bodies. Together we have developed – as much as it can be – a bulletproof body. It’s been a give-and-take. They didn’t just come in here and say ‘we’re going to build bodies the way we always have;’ they studied our needs and I think they have taken many of the ideas we collaborated on and used them nationwide.”

One of the biggest market-driven innovations in the Mickey/Hirn body has been a “beefed up” rear frame designed to “withstand the rigors of the roads in the New York metro market. Basically,” says Hirn, “we added gussets in areas to strengthen the rear end. We are where we are today through trial and error, and Mickey has always been very eager to continuously improve. We’ve also worked on the under carriage together to make that stronger.

“The key to the dry van body market here is durability,” Hirn continues. “A large portion of my market is the leasing companies, and a leasing body has to last the life of the term, which is typically five or six years. Leasing companies don’t want to know about breakdowns – breakdowns cost them money. Breakdowns mean downtime. The more breakdowns occur, the less chance I have of getting a reorder. You have to make a body as bulletproof as possible for the five or six years it’s going to be on the chassis. That’s why relationships are so important in this business. Relationships between us and our body suppliers, our leasing companies and between the leasing companies and their customers. A lot of trust has to come into play. We back up every claim and Mickey trusts us to do that honestly. I think trust is more prevalent among family-owned companies than it is among big conglomerates. We are both on the same page – we are dealing with owners and families and so is Mickey. We’re all in the same boat. I think you can also foster more trust in a relationship when

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***“The key to the dry van body market here is durability ... A leasing body has to last the life of the term, which is typically five or six years.”***

**— George Hirn**

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## Business in Brooklyn: 'Every Day It's An Adventure'

*(From opposite page)*

you can put a face behind a name. We're friends. And the most important thing is that we want each other to be successful. To be profitable."

One of the "main assets" George Hirn Company brings to the table for its customers – in addition to his honest approach – is its full service, turnkey mentality. "We not only sell you the body, we're there for the service after the sale. That's what we have built our business around. It's not just selling a truck and forgetting about it, it's a matter of selling it and taking care of any problem that may arise after the sale. That's why we also offer full reconditioning and repair services right here from our Brooklyn plant. We never want to say 'no' to the customer."

All that service – from manufacturing to recon and repair to painting and decaling – makes for some very tight space constraints on the already real estate-restricted Brooklyn block. As it stands, George Hirn operates about 30,000 square feet spread over both sides of a narrow city street. "The day starts every morning with a flat bed from High Point, NC with a Mickey body, or a chassis coming from another manufacturer," relates Hirn. "The driver is on the phone asking for directions, and his next question is: 'is it safe?' Then he wants to know about parking. There is definitely a stigma you have to deal with. Then we have to deal with the fact that we always are at maximum capacity on body and chassis inventory. You have the

police, who have to do their jobs to manage the flow of traffic around our plant; you have fire trucks that have to get through on streets that would be congested even without a truck maker in the neighborhood. You have limited parking. Every day it's an adventure. It's hard, but we have a system in place that works. It has to work because we don't have a choice."

Traffic was particularly tight in the wake of the 9-11 catastrophe, an event "that brought the difficulty meter up a notch," says Hirn. Security was tightened to a choke hold as the bridges and tunnels leading into and out of The Bruised Apple were under tremendous scrutiny.

"There were delays. Tension was high. We had a lot of trouble getting deliveries for

two or three months after 9-11," says Hirn. "Our business took a hit and we are still not back to the pre 9-11 levels. Our business revolves around the consumer feeding industry in the city – delis, restaurants. Restaurants have gone out of business left and right. We tightened our belts, but we didn't have any layoffs. Being a family business, that's the last thing you want. We did not cutback pay. In fact, in the last three years we only lost two employees through attrition. We're not going to move. Brooklyn is our home, our heritage. It's where all the action is, and that makes it our best advertising. A potential customer drives by and sees our guys out working on a Boar's Head truck, we're going to get a customer."

And chances are, another friend.

## Great Reviews for A-B Show and Mickey's Refrigerated Combo

**F**our Mickey beverage division Sales Managers attended the annual Anheuser Busch Wholesaler Show last month in New Orleans, and to a man, the reviews were all of the premium nature.

### **T.J. DoVale, Southeast Regional Sales Manager**

It was a great show. There were approximately 5,000 attendees representing every AB wholesaler in the country. Our refrigerated combo trailer was a big hit at the show. I'm seeing the AB wholesalers, as a whole, going more and more to the combo style unit. Most are currently sending two separate trailers to each of their on-premise accounts – one for packaged beer and one for draft. With the combo, they can send both package and draft on the same truck, which reduces the number of

stops as well as the delivery time and man-hours. It also reduces fuel costs immensely.

### **Steve Mason, Midwest Regional Sales Manager**

I have attended hundreds of beverage shows over the years and this was definitely one of the best.

One the most important things on the collective AB wholesaler agenda is maintaining keg delivery temperature requirements established by the breweries. That's why the Mickey Thermal bear units have been so popular. It gives you the ability to cool certain bays for kegs while keeping the remaining bays at ambient temperatures for packaged beer. This unit was one of the highlights of Vendor Village.

### **Jim Thomas, National Accounts Sales Manager**

We had three days of



*Team Mickey in New Orleans, from left: Steve Mason, T.J. DoVale, Jim Smith, Jim Thomas.*

excellent conversations with our customers and prospects, with approximately 300 booth visits and many favorable comments on Mickey's quality and design. The convention was well attended by AB distributors from all parts of the country. Our special thanks to Premium Beverage of Oklahoma City for allowing us to build and display their 2003 Mickey Thermal Bear.

### **Jim Smith, Southwest Regional Sales Manager**

AB really knows how to put on a show.

In general the mood on the show floor was spirited, and why not? The business has been good for the King of Beers. Although I am relatively new to Mickey and to the beer business, I was impressed with the number of AB associates that came by our booth looking for old Mickey friends. There are many long-term relationships between the AB wholesaler community and Mickey.

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## **IN-'SINK'**

# **Only in America; Only In New York**

*By Dean Sink, President*

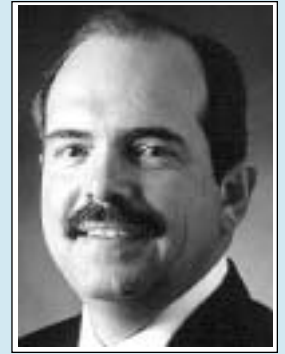
**C**onducting business these days efficiently, productively and profitably — yes, all at the same time — is no easy task for any company anywhere. But somehow, I just have the idea that running a business, a business that manufactures a product as large as a truck body, is a little more difficult in New York City than in most other places in the world.

Especially that is, if you are running that business efficiently, productively and profitably all at the same time. That is exactly what George Hirn Company, Inc. has been doing for 113 years in Brooklyn, NY.

George Hirn, like Mickey a family-owned and operated business for all of its existence, should serve as a lesson to all manufacturers because they have always managed to get the most out of their limited space (about one-tenth of the manufacturing space we have here in High Point), and the most from their relatively small team of employees to deliver the most value to its long list of prestigious end user customers and leasing partners.

We are also very proud to have George Hirn as our distributor partner for the Northeast U.S., for all of the above reasons. From a manufacturing “complex” no larger than most city brownstones, this company is able to deliver on about 400 premium quality van bodies a year, offer a full package of reliable after-sales support, and even provide turnkey reconditioning and repair services to its customers in the NY metro area. All this while it abides by the incredibly tight traffic restrictions and manufacturing regulations of New York City. All of this even in the wake of the 9-11 tragedies, which slowed its business but could not cripple it, even though traffic coming into and out of the city in the weeks that followed was limited to a snail's pace.

Please take the time to read the story of this remarkable company beginning on page one of this issue of The Mickey Spirit. I personally know George Hirn, the great, great grandson of the founder, who is now running the company, and I absolutely believe him when he says, “I have the greatest job in the world.” That only makes me respect the man and his company even more. Because not only is he running a business that is efficient, productive and profitable in one of the toughest and most demanding markets in the world, he is also having fun in the process. That's the best part of the story.



## **Remley Named in Beverage Sales for Northeast Region**

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1,000 customers within a multimillion dollar territory.

Before that, Remley was with Penske Truck Leasing as a Lease Sales Representative for New York and New Jersey. In that post he was recognized for exceeding quota goals four consecutive years beginning in 1996. He was responsible for selling the full service truck leasing product line, and was involved in all aspects of the sales process including prospecting, qualifying, presentations, account management, pricing and direct mail.

Remley also put in a stint with DHL Worldwide Express

as Account Executive.

A 1983 graduate of Bryant College in Rhode Island with a BSBA in Marketing, Remley, in his spare time, coaches youth softball and basketball,

and follows all sports on TV, especially football and college basketball. He and his wife Lisa have four children: Marisa, Christina, Jessica and Michael.

## **Morgan Takes Mickey Post in Van Sales**

*(From page 1)*

Credit Manager of loan origination and collections.

In his spare time Morgan enjoys watching sports, spending time with family and friends, and boating on nearby Lake Murray. He also likes to play with Dawson Santee Morgan — his three-year-old yellow Labrador retriever.

“I am excited about the opportunity that exists in this

sales territory,” says Morgan. “Although the truck body business is very competitive here, I feel with hard work and dedication I can continue to help Mickey stay a cut above our competition. I am looking forward to growing our business with existing customers while developing long lasting and professional relationships with new customers.