

James Wise's Fed-Ex Story

The Fed-Ex Fiasco, September 25, 2010

I should start off by saying that I tend to ship a fair amount of packages out of Fed-Ex in Portland, Maine, so much that last time the Fed-Ex representative, said I was the rule breaker, because somehow I get away with odd boxes or using duct tape or forms that most people don't. It usually says something if they remember you at a store, as to how much you go.

Saturday started with wake up early (7am haha), wait for packages containing biopsies and cells and water samples from the Odyssey from the Gulf of Mexico. This would our first shipment of samples from the gulf so it was curtail that I wake up on time and sign for the packages and drive them immediately to the lab to meet Amie, Hong and Juli. 10am rolls around one box that was shipped separate than the other five has arrived. Interestingly... Suddenly on Skype and Facebook with Sandy (mom) and I realize that the other five boxes, which contain the cells and the biopsies (all temperature critical items), are not schedule to be delivered to the house until Monday morning. Panic!

Sandy and I were freaking out, the samples were paid for Saturday delivery, the will not last until Monday, and they will perish. Being the one near access to a telephone, I call Fed-Ex, after a long time on the phone, learn Iain has to call in and request to expedite the boxes to a Portland Fed-Ex for me to pick up. The hope being they will arrive before 5pm. Mom gets in touch with Iain, who is at his daughter soccer game, and I am told we will let you know once we get the expedited and to what location.

Meanwhile, I go to Cathy's (sister) soccer game with Johnny's (brother) girl. Cathy's team (University of Southern Maine Women's Soccer team) wins 5-0, Cathy scoring two of the goals. I arrive back at home, worried, it is 4pm and there is no change in the boxes location, no one has contacted me from the boat or the lab to let me know if they were being expedited. Finally reach Sandy on the boat, the boxes are supposed to be headed to Portland and be there in the next hour, and I am supposed to be called if they will or will not be there.

Alarmed, because I have received no call, I call Fed-Ex and find out the samples are in Memphis, Tennessee. I then get in touch with mom and remembered I have a friend in North Carolina and that Tennessee borders North Carolina, not realizing until 10 minutes later that she lives 12 hours from Memphis and 12 hours from me.

After realizing having someone get to Memphis was unrealistic I needed to call Fed-Ex again. After countless time on the phone pestering with Fed-Ex I discover that there is no way to get the samples to Portland, ME before Sunday or even on Sunday. So I tell them I do not care about Portland, get them to me tonight, I want them at Logan Airport in Boston as soon as possible (for those that do not know, Logan Airport is two hours away). Meanwhile, Dr. Wise (dad) keeps calling me on the satellite phone from the boat worried

out of his mind about the samples; I should note they are irreplaceable and priceless. So, while on hold with Fed-Ex I am using the Gmail phone to call the boat back, call Chris, Amie, Hong and now Matt's dad whom all are worried about figuring out how to get the boxes.

Ahh relief, I find someone at Fed-Ex who is going to talk to Memphis to get them to Boston. They sent over a note saying get the samples to Boston as quickly as possible, but to speak to me directly before making any decisions. Well I inform Dr. Wise, who says call back and ask to talk to the branch in Memphis.

Uh oh! Fed-Ex says Memphis put the samples on a plane, but will not tell where the plane is headed or when it is landing, so I am told wait an hour and check the tracking number. More bad news, an hour goes by no notice. Meanwhile, I am frantically trying to get Cathy to take over the fundraiser concert at Binga's Stadium, because I may have to drive to Boston. Well, I call Fed-Ex again, meanwhile continuing to deliver bad news to Dr. Wise.

Finally I reach someone reasonable at Fed-Ex who is trying to find out where the plane is headed. While on hold, I call down to Washington, D.C to my mother (Dawn) to ask her if the boxes wind up in DC will she pick them up and meet me in New York City. She agrees, thankfully neither of us had to drive to NYC. Now off hold, the Fed-Ex lady is trying to get me the boxes tonight into Boston, and has said she will spend her last two hours from 7:30pm-9:30pm trying to hunt down where this plane with our samples is headed, and if they actually made it on the plane. Apparently no one at Memphis is picking up and they can tell you where your box on a plane is headed if you ask the right person, so she was fearful they were still in Memphis.

Running out the door to set up at Binga's Stadium, I call everyone to let them know the case and that I will inform them once more information is presented. I get to Binga's, find the band and promoter, and explain to both that Cathy will be running the show after I take off for hopefully "Boston". Poor Cathy is so lost and I am outside once again arguing with Fed-Ex, who was supposed to have the boxes to me that morning. Cathy is freaking out and pestering me in one ear, and Dr. Wise in the other and Fed-Ex in the third (?). Poor Cathy got gripped at by a few people, because we were all having issues with the boxes, sorry Cathy. Luckily the drummer of the band is a friend of Johnny's and stepped in to help Cathy out while I was outside on the Phone.

At last, luck, the boxes are at Logan Airport in a plane. Now, to convince Fed-Ex my boxes have priority over all the others. Somehow this is achieved through multiple phone calls. The lady from earlier calls back and says she has a guy at the East Boston branch, looking for them on the plane and he will set them aside and call me once he has, so I can go get them.

Almost 11pm, I get a call; they have the boxes and will keep someone there past closing to insure I get them in 2 hours. So I cruise down to Logan Airport. There was no one to be found at Fed-Ex, trucks on, no people, a cat even, but no people. After yelling at Fed-Ex that I do not care what they do, that they better give me my damn boxes, I was a little

testy with them at this point. I decided to stand in front of the security camera, finally some guy comes out, ask what I am doing, I explain "I am here for some boxes that got left for me to pick up tonight".

He responds "hold on". What felt like twenty minutes later returns with the boxes. Finally! I sign for them, let Iain and Dr. Wise know I have the boxes and head back to Portland. I call Amie along the way to meet with me at the lab to put the samples and cells away. It is 3am by the time I reach the lab. Amie sends me home after the samples were put away and insists that she will do the cells, and does not need me, and that I need to go home and sleep.

So after a full day of trying to sort out where the heck the boxes are and how to get them to the lab, it is achieved. I have been told that once I decide I want something done, I do not stop till it is finished.

James