

SPECIAL REPORT

THE FUTURE OF
TECHNOLOGY

Q&A WITH ECHO
CHAIRMAN & CEO
DOUG WAGGONER

inbound logistics

a THOMAS™ company

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

LICENSED TO SERVE

TOP 10 3PLS



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THE VOTES
ARE IN:

ECHO WINS AGAIN!



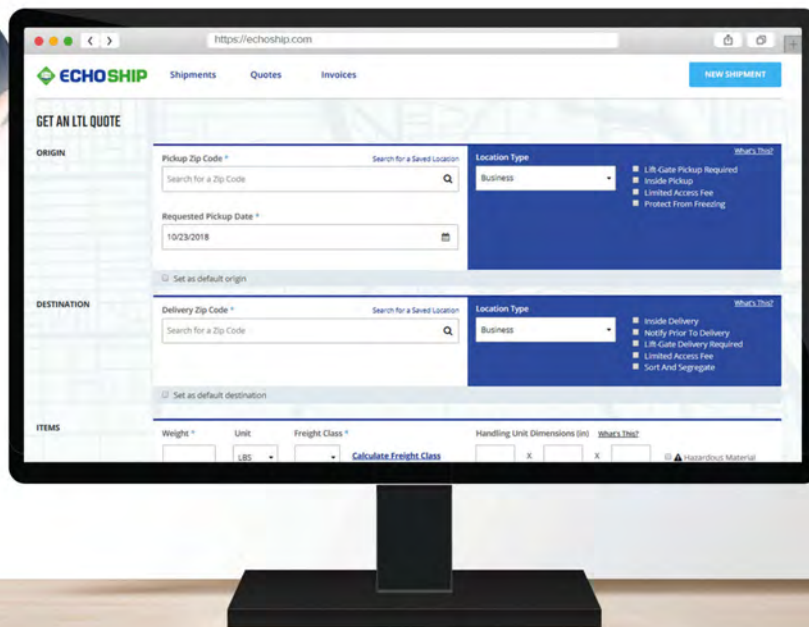
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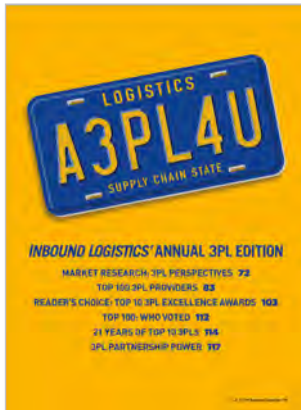
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OUR AUDIENCE HAS STAMPED IT LICENSE-PLATE OFFICIAL: THESE TOP-TIER THIRD-PARTY LOGISTICS PROVIDERS DESERVE ACCOLADES AND THE DISTINCTION OF BEING A TOP 10 3PL.

This year more than 18,000 ballots—an all-time high—were cast. The 3PLs garnering the most votes in our Readers’ Choice Top 10 3PL Excellence Awards survey received effusive praise, with voters listing the attributes that equate to excellence: attentiveness, reliability, flexibility, and ability to execute.

Being able to execute is key when the supply chain is dynamic and demanding. By handling a portion or all of a company’s transportation and logistics operations, 3PLs deliver the goods.

GETTING IT DONE

Says one voter of top spot holder Echo Global Logistics, “Without them, I could not get my job done.” With goods flowing and supply chains humming, companies can turn their attention to what they do best—customer service, production, and profitability.

3PLs also help shippers manage information, along with their goods. Our *3PL Perspectives* report underscores a key value they bring—technological expertise. They leverage technology to manage shippers’ operations and deliver efficiency-boosting insights, as well as provide IT solutions that customers can use in house.

Information management is crucial when shippers can’t afford to miss demand

signals and delivery deadlines. This applies to all verticals and links in the supply chain.

Nearly all facets of the supply chain are represented in our survey, which drew responses from varied verticals—consumer packaged goods, pharmaceutical, home appliances—and diverse job titles—from procurement to transportation management. (See About the Survey Respondents on the next page.)

Voters include supply chain decision-makers from well-known brands such as Avon, Best Buy, Costco, Dow Chemical, General Mills, Google, Macy’s, Nestle, Nike, Toyota, and Whirlpool.

SERVICE REIGNS SUPREME

Without question, shippers value service—80% of respondents rate service as more important than price. This is an increase from last year when 75% indicated they prioritized service over price. Only 20% say price is their main consideration. Forty-four percent rate poor customer service as the reason 3PL partnerships fail.

Year after year, the IL 3PL survey reveals the key role customer service and execution play in shipper supply chains. The most laudable providers offer innovation, technology solutions, and the global connections necessary to keep shipments moving. ■

AND THE WINNERS ARE:

- 1**
ECHO GLOBAL LOGISTICS
- 2**
TRANSPPLACE
- 3**
HUB GROUP
- 4**
C.H. ROBINSON
- 5**
KENCO
- 6**
WERNER
- 7**
(tie)
DHL SUPPLY CHAIN GLOBALTRANZ
- 8**
SUNSET TRANSPORTATION
- 9**
(tie)
SEKO LOGISTICS
PENSKE LOGISTICS
- 10**
R2 LOGISTICS



4 ECHO GLOBAL LOGISTICS

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Echo Global Logistics offers accountability and personalized customer service. *CavClear*

WHY THEY WON:

Echo combines service and technology to create impressive, customized third-party logistics solutions for each of its customers.

“At Echo, we put a premium on technology and customer service in order to meet the complex needs of this highly competitive, rapidly expanding industry,” says Doug Waggoner, chairman and CEO.

“Our employees follow through on Echo’s promise to simplify transportation management, helping our clients become a shipper

of choice and continue to do what’s best for their business,” he adds.

Steven Judge, senior manager at Newell Brands, praises the 3PL for providing accurate, reliable, and profitable results. “Our relationship with Echo began with the goal of helping us simplify our transportation management and has grown to include a deeper analysis of our shipping operations,” he says. “Echo acts as a true partner, always keeping our best interest in mind. They come to us with ideas

for improvement in a truly consultative manner.”

Echo prioritizes ensuring high-quality customer service and results. “Echo sets itself apart by solving the complex challenges that shippers and carriers face in the market,” says Waggoner. “Whether that’s addressing a lack of visibility into their supply chain or providing more robust, data-driven reporting, the company ensures its customers have the tools and reliable support they need to meet their transportation management goals.”

Doug Waggoner
Chairman & CEO



CLIENT ROSTER:

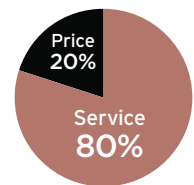
- Archway
- Culligan International
- Greenheck
- Johnstone Supply
- Monster Beverage
- Stonecrop Technologies
- Newell Brands
- Taraca Pacific

ABOUT THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

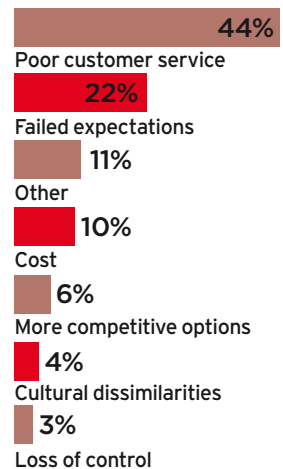
FUNCTION	
Corporate management	34%
Logistics/distribution	24%
Supply chain/purchasing/supply management	19%
Transportation management	12%
Operations	11%
INDUSTRY	
Retail/e-commerce/wholesale	44%
Manufacturing	38%
Services	18%
ANNUAL TRANSPORT/LOGISTICS SPEND	
\$10-\$49 million	46%
More than \$50 million	23%
\$1-\$10 million	21%
Less than \$1 million	10%

SERVICES READERS BUY	
Motor freight (TL/LTL)	82%
Third-party logistics (3PL), contract logistics	77%
Small package delivery, expedited freight, express services	72%
Warehousing and distribution	67%
Supply chain technology, software/systems	56%
Air freight	48%
Rail, rail intermodal	46%
International shipping, freight forwarding	45%
Ocean, ocean intermodal	38%
Materials handling systems, equipment, forklifts	35%
Site, port, or facility selection	29%
Fleet operations, dedicated contract carriers	26%
Transportation equipment	20%
Packaging/labeling systems	10%

WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT?



WHAT IS THE #1 REASON 3PL RELATIONSHIPS FAIL?



LEADERSHIP

Conversations with the Captains of Industry

The Future of Logistics Technology



Recently, *Inbound Logistics* sat down with Doug Waggoner, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer at Echo Global Logistics for a Q&A.

IL: What is Echo's perspective on technology for logistics?

At Echo, we believe in technology's potential to simplify transportation management and continuously improve efficiency. That's been our goal since we rolled out our technology 15 years ago. When we were founded in 2005, the industry was extremely fragmented. As an innovator, Echo has set ourselves apart by offering best-in-class technology to allow transparency and visibility for shippers. We're constantly looking for ways to continue to disrupt the shipping world for shippers, carriers, and our employees. Today we continue to have technology at the core of everything we do.

IL: What are the key benefits of Echo's technologies?

Echo's technological advancements over the last 15 years enable us to serve shippers and carriers in new and better ways with improved productivity, predictive analytics, and enhanced freight visibility. Our multi-modal capabilities allow us to serve small and medium-sized businesses, as well as Fortune 500 shippers, across the U.S. In addition, our strong relationship with our carrier network provides reliable access to capacity to serve our shippers' needs.

IL: What technology does Echo offer?

Our latest technology platform, EchoAccelerator, supports over 16,000 shipments a day and is the proprietary architecture that powers EchoShip, our self-service shipping platform, and EchoDrive, our carrier facing web portal and mobile app. We're simplifying the freight marketplace with solutions that address our clients' and carriers' needs, while increasing the productivity of our employees.

IL: Tell me about EchoShip for shippers?

EchoShip, our online shipping portal, consolidates and simplifies shipping by enabling customers to build loads, store frequently used shipment information, and track shipments in real time. Shippers can also search, view, and pay all invoices using EchoShip.

IL: Tell me about EchoDrive for carriers?

EchoDrive, our dispatcher portal and driver app, gives carriers real-time access to search, bid, manage, track, and

get paid on available loads. It gives dispatchers the ability to manage loads and drivers from one centralized location, while letting drivers provide real-time tracking and submit documents quickly, allowing for faster payment.

IL: Is Echo a tech company or a broker?

As I like to say, we are a technology company that happens to be in logistics. Our roots were in technology. This has helped us evolve to keep up with the changing landscape and we continue to invest in our technology development.

IL: Is Echo a digital freight marketplace?

I think that Echo, along with a couple other companies, was one of the first digital freight marketplaces. There are a few large competitors in our space, and all of us have been investing in technology for a long time. We built a lot of scale, which matters in this business, as does lane density. We have big IT and data science budgets. Everyone is enamored with these new start-ups and that is fine, we were once a start-up, too. But to get overly enamored and think that some of the big companies in our space are not applying massive amounts of technology and data science to an existing marketplace that has tens of thousands of participants is a huge oversimplification.

IL: What are your thoughts on the new entrants to the space?

Here is the problem with 'build it and they will come' – it is a very big and fragmented space, with hundreds of thousands of shippers and carriers. No one company is going to capture and become the de facto market standard. In our case, we have 35,000 shippers and 50,000 carriers, and that only reflects a portion of the market. Our shippers are using multiple forms of transportation partners and almost all of our carriers are hauling freight for multiple shippers. It is not feasible that one company is going to create a mobile app and website and have everyone come running to them.

IL: What role do people play in addition to your technology offering?

I like to say we offer technology at your fingertips...experts at your side. In our business, relationships matter. Having a relationship with a shipper and solving their problems and coming through for them when they are in a pinch matters. The same thing happens for trucking companies. We think

What Sets Echo Apart?

The Echo Brand Promise. We simplify transportation management, handling crucial tasks so clients can focus on what they do best. Clients, carriers, and Echo team members enjoy an exceptional experience grounded in the Echo Way.

Better Technology. The heart of our offering is our proprietary technology—quickly adaptable, highly scalable, and uniquely easy to use for clients and carriers. Through efficiently integrated portals, we ensure better data collection and transmission, seamless communication, comprehensive reporting, and real-time visibility.

Expert Logistics Professionals. Echo has the best people in the business, a team of energetic, enthusiastic, expert logistics professionals determined to deliver the highest quality service experience. With outstanding coverage, we help ensure your goods arrive where and when you need them, whatever the mode.

Exceptional Service. Above all, Echo values exceptional service in every client interaction. We recognize that one solution does not fit all, so we evaluate your transportation needs, discover efficiencies, and deliver the best value for your spend. Echo ensures you get the transportation management solution that's right for you.

the success of our model and other companies like us is, in part, due to the people component of our model and the relationships we built, and the service and solutions we provide. That's why we invest in our 2,300 employees in 30 branch offices throughout the US. At the same time, because of the critical scale we have with size and density, our buying power lets us be much more efficient.

IL: Any final thoughts?

We've talked a lot about our technology, but it's really our employees, whether they are building the technology or using it, who simplify transportation management for our shippers and carriers.

EXPERTADVICE

Tapping into Echo's knowledge and expertise

5 Reasons Outsourcing Transportation Management Will Improve Your Logistics Operation

By Mike Mobley, Senior Vice President of Operations, Echo Global Logistics

Is your logistics department ready for growth? Optimizing your transportation operation involves much more than moving freight at the lowest price. To drive real innovation and long-term value for customers, many shippers have turned to Managed Transportation services and are seeing great success.

So how can outsourcing to a qualified third-party logistics provider (3PL) help keep you moving in the right direction?

1. GET GREATER FLEXIBILITY AND TECHNOLOGY

3PL partners give customers access to their resources, which means you'll benefit from a more extensive technology and logistics operations infrastructure. As one significant example, top 3PL providers are already invested in a Transportation Management System (TMS) or have developed their own to support a shipper's logistics operations. This gives their customers access to logistics technology most could not afford on their own.

2. FOCUS ON OTHER PARTS OF THE BUSINESS

With Managed Transportation, customers get the best of all possible worlds. You gain access to knowledgeable, experienced supply chain professionals with specific areas of expertise around industry regulations, modes, carriers, and more. Resources and time once spent trying to do everything can now be spent on production, marketing, establishing customer relationships, and developing new ideas. In other words, leave logistics to the professionals so your people can focus on building and running your business.

3. MINIMIZE OVERALL COSTS

You might think outsourcing is more expensive than hiring and attempting to handle all logistics functions internally. But companies can lower overall costs by leveraging the capabilities of a 3PL. This ROI can come from the provider's expertise at optimizing transportation planning, sourcing capacity, negotiating more favorable rate agreements with carriers, and reducing workload for employees through process automation. Armed with the latest technology, 3PL providers can leverage the power of analytics and reporting to understand drivers of transportation spend to be able to spend smarter. 3PL providers can also help reduce infrastructure investments otherwise necessary in software, personnel, equipment, and facilities.

4. ENJOY ECONOMIES OF SCALE

On their own, many shippers typically don't have much negotiating leverage with carriers—at least not on the scale of a 3PL. With a Managed Transportation partner, shippers should expect to benefit from their collective buying power because the 3PL can secure not just lower rates, but capacity at crucial times when the market is tight. Confident knowledge of the market and its daily

fluctuations, consistent freight prices, carrier qualification, and technology to improve carrier communications (such as real-time track-and-trace capability) are some of the other ways 3PLs can leverage their own scale to reduce costs and ensure greater capacity for the benefit of their customers.

5. IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Since every shipper's main goal is a high level of service for their end customer, this too needs to be a focus for any 3PL they work with. An experienced 3PL will build and execute a strategy to help overcome the challenges of delivery speed, information flow, visibility, and delivery accuracy. This can extend to service reporting and the availability of data analytics for use in tools like Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and vendor performance scorecards.

As more shippers lean on logistics service providers to deliver quality, value, and customer service, 3PL partnerships are built on lifelong strategy, rather than a short-term fix. Doing your research and hiring the right Managed Transportation service provider will help you get more things done and raise customer satisfaction, drive higher profit margins, and fuel the growth of your business.

5 Things Your 3PL Rep Should Be Doing For You

By Sean Burke, Chief Commercial Officer, Echo Global Logistics

You should expect exceptional service from your third-party logistics (3PL) provider, but how do you know you're getting it? Your 3PL representative's main job is to help ensure your supply chain runs efficiently. However, without the right communication and technological tools, he or she might not be able to help you avoid costly or otherwise preventable disruptions.

Echo's approach to transportation management was voted #1 by readers of *Inbound Logistics* in the 2018 Top 10 3PL Excellence Awards for the second year in a row. Take it from the experts: your 3PL rep should simplify transportation, not complicate it. To help select the best transportation providers for your business, we narrowed down the top five services your rep should be performing for you.

1. OFFER ROBUST, CUSTOMIZABLE TECHNOLOGY

The technology your 3PL representative utilizes must be robust enough to handle your most complex transportation needs. Preferably, it should be built in-house rather than taken off the shelf so it can be customized to your specifications. The technology should allow your 3PL to analyze your transportation practices and identify inefficiencies for improvement. It should measure your performance against key performance indicators (KPIs), support real-time tracking, and deliver accurate reporting. Most importantly, the technology should drive continuous improvements to your supply chain and help make managing your business a lot easier.

2. PRIORITIZE COMMUNICATION

You should be able to reach your 3PL any time—even if it's 9 p.m. on a Friday. Your rep should be proactive in communicating with you about tracking updates, load deliveries, and any critical

information regarding your shipment. Going above and beyond is a sign of a great 3PL and a great rep. Whether that means having afterhours support in place or being available through email or phone, your rep should be ready to answer your questions day and night, so that if you encounter any issues with your supply chain, they can be resolved quickly.

3. SOLVE PROBLEMS QUICKLY

Timing is everything in logistics. The success of the transportation industry hinges on many parties adhering to a tight schedule. Your provider should be prepared to handle unforeseen issues. Trucks break down, inclement weather surprises everyone, and traffic is anything but predictable. Your 3PL rep has been through this before and should be equipped to offer you the support you need to navigate any disruption quickly. If a load is delayed or a shipment is damaged, your rep should be in contact not just to let you know, but also to offer potential solutions.

4. BE AN INDUSTRY EXPERT

The transportation industry is constantly impacted by factors outside your control such as state and federal regulatory changes, weather disruptions, and driver capacity issues. For example, we saw Hurricane Florence affect whole communities in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic, causing road and terminal closures and extensive damage to infrastructure. Your 3PL rep should have a knowledge base that's a mile wide and a mile deep. In other words, your rep should be an expert who offers advice concerning any developments that might affect your business.

5. PROVIDE BETTER OPTIONS

There's an ideal mode for every shipment, and it may not be what you were expecting—in a good way. Your 3PL rep has access to a wide range of transportation resources. But providing options is more than offering different modes.

Your 3PL rep should understand your business, including how much flexibility you have regarding pickup and delivery dates as well as whether your delivery location is open on weekends, has preferred carriers, or offers extended hours of operation. Based on this understanding, he or she should seek a balance between the range of cost and service options available and provide unique carrier or modal solutions that exceed your expectations. All of this is part of your rep's job and should be included in the services you have come to expect from your 3PL provider.



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PROVIDING INNOVATIVE AND RELIABLE SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS, THESE THIRD-PARTY LOGISTICS PROVIDERS DRIVE HOME THE GOODS. PRESENTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER, THESE ARE THE 100 3PLs INBOUND LOGISTICS EDITORS SELECTED AS THE BEST OF THE BEST.

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MARKETS SERVED: Transportation

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TRANSPORTATION SERVICES: TL, Intermodal, Fleet Acquisition, Equipment/Drivers

SPECIAL SERVICES: Consulting, Sustainability

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES: CRM/SRM, EDI, ERP Integration, GTM, Optimization, Predictive Analytics, Supply Chain Design, TMS, Visibility

CRM/SRM Customer/Supplier Relationship Mgmt	JIT Just in Time	TMS Transportation Management System
DCS Dedicated Contract Carriage	LLP Lead Logistics Provider	VMI Vendor Managed Inventory
ERP Enterprise Resource Planning	LTU Less Than Truckload	WMS Warehouse Management System
GTM Global Trade Management	PLM Product Lifecycle Management	
	TL Truckload	



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 ALLIANCE SHIPPERS
 AMERICOLD
 APPROVED FREIGHT FORWARDERS
 ARMADA
 ASCENT GLOBAL LOGISTICS
 ATLANTA BONDED WAREHOUSE CORPORATION
 AVENGER LOGISTICS
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 CRST SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION
 CT LOGISTICS
 CTSI-GLOBAL
 DF YOUNG
 DHL SUPPLY CHAIN
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 DSC LOGISTICS
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ECHO GLOBAL LOGISTICS
 ELM GLOBAL LOGISTICS
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 EVANS DISTRIBUTION
 FEDEX SUPPLY CHAIN
 FIDELITONE

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 HOLMAN LOGISTICS
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 INGRAM MICRO COMMERCE & LIFECYCLE SERVICES
 J.B. HUNT TRANSPORT
 JOHANSON TRANSPORTATION SERVICE
 KAG LOGISTICS
 KANE IS ABLE
 KDL (KEYSTONE DEDICATED LOGISTICS)
 KENCO
 KNIGHT-SWIFT LOGISTICS
 LANDSTAR SYSTEM
 LEGACY SUPPLY CHAIN SERVICES
 LOUP LOGISTICS
 LYNDEN
 MALLORY ALEXANDER INTERNATIONAL LOGISTICS
 MATSON LOGISTICS
 MD LOGISTICS
 MGN LOGISTICS
 NFI
 ODW LOGISTICS
 ODYSSEY LOGISTICS & TECHNOLOGY
 PENSKE LOGISTICS
 PERFORMANCE TEAM
 PHOENIX LOGISTICS
 PILOT FREIGHT SERVICES
 PLS LOGISTICS SERVICES
 PORT JERSEY LOGISTICS
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 PUROLATOR INTERNATIONAL
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REGAL LOGISTICS
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 ROMARK LOGISTICS
 RUAN
 RYDER
 SADDLE CREEK LOGISTICS SERVICES
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 SHIPPERS GROUP
 SUNLAND LOGISTICS
 SUNSET TRANSPORTATION
 SYFAN LOGISTICS
 SYNCREON
 TAYLORED SERVICES
 TOLL GLOBAL LOGISTICS
 TOTAL QUALITY LOGISTICS
 TRANSGROUP GLOBAL LOGISTICS
 TRANSPACE
 TRANSPORTATION INSIGHT
 TUCKER COMPANY WORLDWIDE
 UNIVERSAL LOGISTICS HOLDINGS
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 UTXL
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 VOLTA LOGISTICS
 WAGNER LOGISTICS
 WEBER LOGISTICS
 WERNER LOGISTICS
 WSI (WAREHOUSE SPECIALISTS, LLC)
 XPO LOGISTICS

WHETHER BRAND NEW, SOLIDLY UP AND RUNNING, OR DECADES OLD, SHIPPER-3PL PARTNERSHIPS THRIVE ON OPEN COMMUNICATIONS, FLEXIBILITY, AND TRUST.

3PL POWER

BY MERRILL DOUGLAS

A strong connection with a third-party logistics (3PL) company can make all the difference in your supply chain operations. When shippers and 3PLs function as partners, they jointly tackle challenges, devise innovative strategies, spot new opportunities, and respond nimbly to the ups and downs of daily operations.

Partnerships evolve over time. At each stage, there's something to learn about how to work together to achieve the best results.

LOYALTY THROUGH THE YEARS

David Wozniak and Andy Hafertepe have worked together for about 20 years. Wozniak is marketing director at Taraca Pacific, a small firm based in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and San Francisco that imports and sells plywood. Hafertepe is divisional vice president at Echo Global Logistics in Chicago. But when he and Wozniak first met, Hafertepe and his group worked for a company called American Backhaulers.

The two stuck together through several mergers and acquisitions, most recently when Echo acquired Command Transportation in 2015.

Behind this long partnership is a set of close personal relationships. “When somebody knows your business and what your needs are, they cater to that,” says Wozniak. “Andy and his group have always done that.”

Echo’s main job for Taraca today is to manage distribution to a large home center retailer with locations throughout the United States. Echo holds the inventory in third-party warehouses located around the country. “And then they manage the trucking out of each of those locations,” Wozniak says. “We have an inventory set up, we carry backstock, and we ship daily to our large retailer as well as to other customers.”

The 3PL team developed and improved that distribution network over time. “We started getting the rates down and getting the best carriers,” Hafertepe says.

When Hafertepe’s team became part of Echo, one big change Taraca saw was access to Echo’s in-house information technology. “That allowed us to have more controlled inventory management, and a system whereby we could order trucks right through their website,” Wozniak says. Taraca and Echo also started using electronic data interchange (EDI).

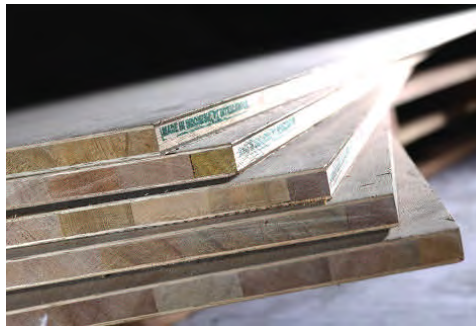
Recent trade conflicts have posed new challenges for the Taraca-Echo partnership. Taraca has traditionally sourced plywood from China. When the United States imposed tariffs

TARACA PACIFIC

+

ECHO GLOBAL LOGISTICS

Taraca Pacific manufactures and distributes lumber, plywood, and millwork. A long-term partnership – and friendship – with 3PL Echo Global Logistics is a key element of success.



on goods from that country in 2018, Taraca began to develop sources in other countries. It asked Echo for help with its evolving supply chain.

Echo quickly helped Taraca find additional, reasonably priced storage in ports where it was needed. “A lot of our changes had to be made on the fly,” Wozniak says. “The information was coming in the middle of the night from the White House, so we didn’t always know exactly what was going to happen when.”

Hafertepe’s team has also helped with simpler challenges. Once, a large customer told Taraca it wanted to add 4x4-foot panels to go with the 4x8-foot panels that Taraca currently supplied. To get that program going sooner, with a large inventory of the 4x8-foot product already in the United States, the logistics team brought saws to five warehouses and got to work.

“We took Taraca’s 8-foot SKU, cut the sheets in half, labeled and repacked them, and Taraca was in business a lot sooner,” Hafertepe says.

According to Wozniak and Hafertepe, two keys to a successful shipper-3PL partnership are communication and trust. Those values are critical, for example, when discussing freight rates. Prices rise and fall with market conditions, Wozniak says, and he trusts Echo to give him the best rates available at the moment.

“We do check—we look elsewhere from time to time,” he says. “I’ve never found Echo not to be up to date on the market situation.”

All customers call around to spot-check prevailing rates on occasion. “When I go to sleep at night, I want to know that if Wozniak calls five other carriers for rates, that I’m within \$50,” Hafertepe says.

Open communication and a sense of loyalty have deepened the relationship between the shipper and 3PL teams over the years. “We’re friends now,” says Hafertepe. “If you can get to that point as a customer or a 3PL, it makes work so much easier.”

THE EVOLUTION OF SUPPLY CHAIN TECHNOLOGY

by **Doug Waggoner**,
Chairman and CEO,
Echo Global Logistics

1 How have consumer expectations of retailers changed over the past five years?

Consumer expectations of retailers are changing rapidly. Consumers used to have standard expectations about competitive pricing and quality customer service. But nearly every industry has grown quickly over the past five years, and business models have evolved, so it's not surprising that retail is experiencing major changes as well.

Today's consumers have higher expectations—they want connected omnichannel experiences, personalized interactions, and nearly immediate shipping options that cater to shoppers' convenience.

2 How important is the supply chain for meeting customer expectations?

The supply chain is often a forgotten factor, but it plays the largest role in meeting modern customer expectations. Building a better supply chain boosts customer satisfaction because it has a direct impact on two of the most critical customer expectations: price and delivery. An efficient supply chain allows retailers to cut costs, which allows the business to lower prices, and it improves the company's overall profitability.

In today's retail market, fast fulfillment is an absolute must for many consumers. A high performance supply chain means you'll be able to meet—or exceed—customer expectations on delivery timing, and that drives higher customer satisfaction and repeat business.

3 How has supply chain technology evolved?

Technology has completely transformed the supply chain, changing the entire structure of how we work, from internal communications to physical processes. 14 years ago, when Echo launched our technology, it was a highly fragmented industry and Echo was at the forefront. Today, we continue to develop and evolve our Digital Freight Marketplace to keep us in that position, most recently launching EchoAccelerator, our flexible and robust proprietary architecture that supports shipper, carrier, and managed transportation systems.

Technology has made supply chains more transparent than ever before, giving the customer full visibility and immediate answers about delivery status. Take for example, EchoShip, our self-service shipping platform that consolidates and simplifies shipping by enabling customers to build loads, store frequently used shipment information, and track shipments in real time. Shippers can also search, view, and pay all invoices using EchoShip.

EchoDrive gives carriers the ability to book, manage, and get paid on freight hauled for Echo. The platform's load management tool and document upload capabilities streamline operations, keeping dispatchers organized and helping drivers get back on the road faster. EchoDrive users get real-time access to search, view, and bid on available freight, reducing the effort associated with finding freight for their available equipment.

Modern supply chain software is much more efficient, which expedites processes. Thanks to greater transparency, we can identify potential errors more easily, which means supply chains can adapt more quickly and complete processes more rapidly.

Ultimately, supply chain technology allows businesses to integrate processes across their organization.

4 Are smaller businesses at a disadvantage?

Building an efficient supply chain is a major investment of time, money, and human resources. It's a challenge for businesses of all sizes, but smaller businesses often are at a disadvantage, mostly due to a lack of investment power, modest IT budgets, and limited access to supply chain/logistics professionals.

In particular, smaller businesses tend to have a trickier time achieving supply chain visibility, building and maintaining critical supplier/partner relationships, and staying up to speed as technology evolves. This is where the power of a 3PL partner like Echo really comes into play.

Quality 3PL partners, such as Echo, often provide logistics technology as part of their service, and at no additional cost to the shipper. Most provide access to rates a shipper could not negotiate on its own which helps to level the playing field.

5 What can smaller businesses do to improve their logistics processes?

Improving your supply chain and logistics processes doesn't always have to mean a large-scale overhaul that takes a lot of time and money to implement. Smaller businesses looking to improve their logistics processes should focus on four things:

- Choose suppliers/partners that are of a similar size and operating on a similar scale to build and maintain resilient supplier/partner relationships.
- Increase your supply chain visibility, which benefits your organization and your supplier. Internally, it allows employees to access vital information that can help them strategize more effectively. Externally, supply chain visibility allows your suppliers to check your inventory in real time so they can serve you better.
- Engage your IT department to learn about new software that can potentially streamline supply chain processes.
- Partner with a 3PL like Echo to leverage their robust buying power and advanced technology, ultimately simplifying your transportation management and allowing you to focus on what you do best.



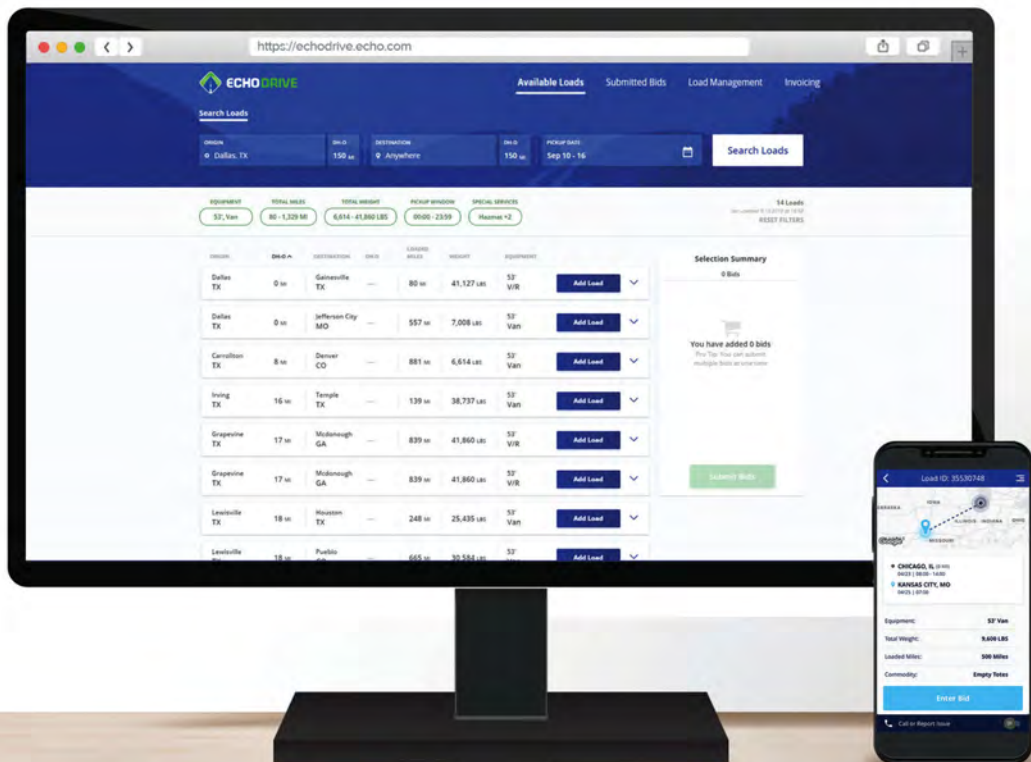
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- ◆ Full fleet mode with ability to manage all loads and drivers
- ◆ Document upload capabilities
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www.echo.com/echodrive



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