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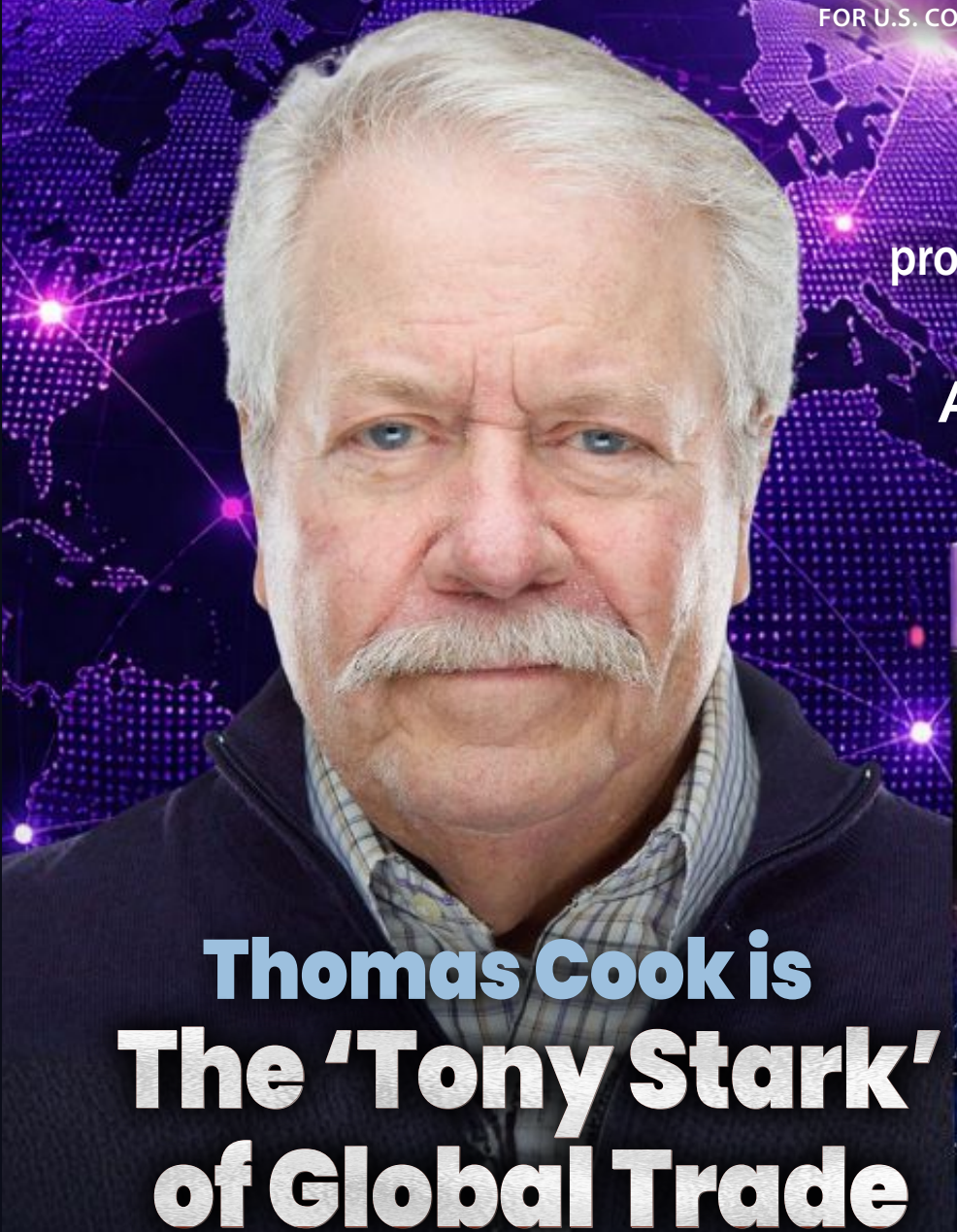

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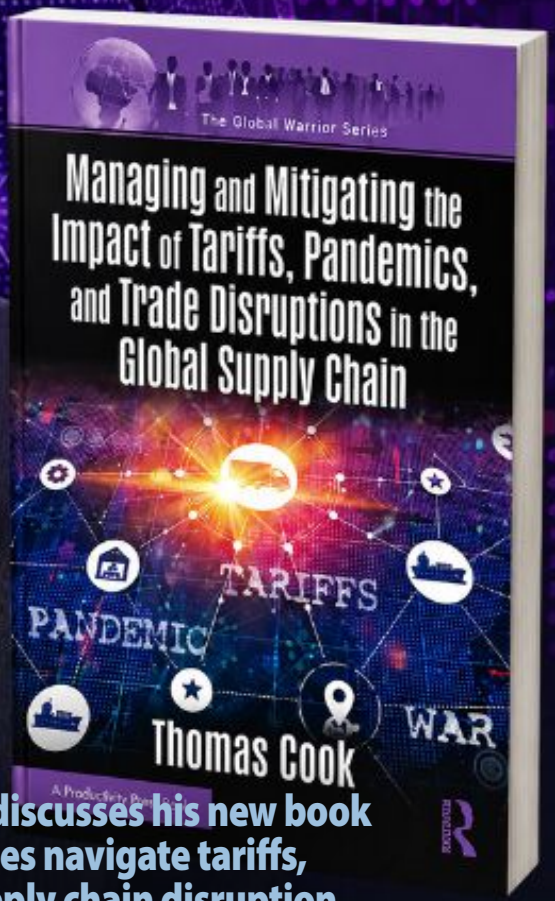

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Who Knew? Shipping Containerization Born at Port Newark 70 Years Ago

In the article "Shipping Containerization, Born at Port Newark, Marks 70 Years," writer Steve Burns of the Port Authority's Media Relations staff argues that the humble shipping container is perhaps the most impactful invention of the modern world. While people often cite the lightbulb or the smartphone as society's greatest breakthroughs, Burns points out that these items—along with the clothes we wear and the food we consume—would likely never reach us without the efficiency of the shipping container.

Marking a 70-year milestone, Burns traces the birth of this logistical revolution back to the shores of Port Newark. Before containerization, maritime trade relied on a process that had remained unchanged for centuries. Known as "break-bulk" shipping, it required workers to manually haul individual crates, barrels, and bales from ship to shore. This labor-intensive method took days to complete, cost a fortune, and was frequently subject to cargo theft.

The catalyst for change was not a maritime executive, but a frustrated truck driver from North Carolina named Malcom McLean. While sitting in his truck cab at the docks, McLean grew impatient watching the "lumbering dance" of manual loading. He realized that the entire process could be streamlined if, instead of unloading individual items, the entire truck trailer could simply be placed onto the ship.

This "common sense" realization eventually led to the world's first container ship service, which launched from Port Newark in April 1956. By standardizing the transport of goods, McLean's innovation drastically lowered shipping costs and increased speed, ultimately reshaping the global economy and the landscape of international ports.

Through Burns' account, the shipping container is revealed as the essential, yet often overlooked, backbone of the modern globalized world. Read his fascinating story here: https://tinyurl.com/2c2c2rpb

GEODIS ACES MOVING HISTORY PROJECT: What does it take to move 126 tons of history across the globe? Leading global logistics provider GEODIS recently completed an exceptional transport project: moving 36 authentic pieces of the Berlin Wall from Denmark to a U.S. museum.

Each individual concrete block weighed nearly 3,500 kg, requiring a coordinated effort that took five months of administrative and technical planning.

The shipment, which occupied seven 40-foot containers, was overseen by the GEODIS Ocean Freight Export team to ensure the historical integrity of these irreplaceable pieces throughout the journey.

Reflecting on the operation, Christian Hansen, GEODIS Ocean Export manager, noted: "It's not every day we get to move such powerful pieces of history."

HONORIFICS: DHL reached a milestone in April with Transported Asset Protection Association certification for its new facility in New Jersey. The global logistics powerhouse has now surpassed 500 locations with TAPA certification, which is considered the "gold standard" for security and supply chain resilience in the logistics world. … South Plainfield, NJ-based Bettaway Beverage Distributors has been named a 2025 Carrier of the Year by Arrive Logistics. Headquartered in Austin, TX, Arrive ranks among North America's largest truckload brokerages. … Chicago-based 3PL TRAFFIX was named a Premier Carrier by FourKites, a leader in AI-driven supply chain transformation. The award recognizes carriers that meet defined performance standards for data quality, operational consistency, and shipment transparency within the FourKites network. … Vista, CA-based Flux Power Holdings, a developer of advanced lithium-ion energy storage solutions and software for material handling and industrial applications, won the Innovation in Sustainability Award at MODEX 2026. … ABF Freight, by receiving the 2025 American Trucking Associations' Excellence in Security Award, became the first carrier to earn the award 12 times and the only one to receive it three consecutive years. The less-than-truckload carrier is owned by Fort Smith, AR-based integrated logistics company ArcBest. … Port Freeport (TX) Chief Executive Officer Phyllis Saathoff was honored as Outstanding Woman of the Year by the Brazosport Area Chamber of Commerce. She has been with Port Freeport since 1992 and CEO since 2016. … Oxnard Harbor District Commissioner Celina Zacaraias is the 2026 Trailblazer, according to Women's Economic Ventures. The district sets policies and guides activities at the Port of Hueneme (CA). … Pacific Harbor Line President Otis Cliatt II was honored with the Black History Month Trailblazer of the Century Award by Rep. Nanette Barragán (D-San Pedro). Cliatt was singled out for his leadership in sustainable rail operations in the San Pedro Bay port complex that includes the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. …Congressman Nick Langworthy (R-NY) received the 2026 Champion of the Great Lakes Award from the Chamber of Marine Commerce. The award honors U.S. elected officials who demonstrate a special commitment to enhancing economic growth and supply chain strength by supporting marine shipping on the Great Lakes. … The Truckload Carriers Association, the only trade organization dedicated exclusively to the truckload segment of the motor carrier industry, set a historic milestone in April by awarding a record-breaking $182,000 to 64 deserving students nationwide as part of its 2026–'27 TCA Scholarship Fund. Since its founding in 1973, the TCA Scholarship Fund has supported the educational goals of students connected to the trucking industry. …Hiroshi Fujiwara, executive director of the Japan Robot Association, and Robert Little, co-founder of ATI Industrial Automation, are winners of the 2026 Joseph F. Engelberger Robotics Awards, the world's most prestigious robotics honor, according to the Association for Advancing Automation (A3). Fujiwara will be presented the Leadership award and Little the Application honor on June 24 during Automate 2026 in Chicago.

How Do We Know We're Doing It All Right & Minimizing Risk?

Global Supply Chain Audit: Best Practices for the Best Outcome

BY **THOMAS COOK,** MANAGING DIRECTOR, BLUE TIGER INTERNATIONAL

At a time when chaos, disruption and uncertainty are increasing threats to resilience and stability, supply chain management teams are assessing how their supply chains operate and how best to assess where risk and spend can be better managed and business processes improved.

You know it's time for a global supply chain audit when senior management asks the question, "How do you know we are doing everything right and have we minimized all areas of risk and cost along with business process and technology enhancements?"

The question then is how to best conduct a thorough introspection with minimal disruption. In-source or out-source?

We have been creating supply chain assessments for more than 40 years and see mutual benefits and arguments for handling the assessment internally or for outsourcing the work to a third-party expert.

A company that is well managed with experienced personnel may consider handling the assessment in-house as they may believe they know the operations better than anyone else and have a good idea where change may be required.

However, one might question this theory: If they had no issues when they were managing the operation then why are they having concern now? Additionally … can they be subjective in areas for which they have responsibility?

The benefits of an external third-party assessment professional are as follows:

- They act independently and do not get caught up in internal politics or legacy issues.
- They bring a perspective of what

READY FOR YOUR AUDIT?

The assessment process will vary in time from company to company. Credit: fotos on Unsplash

might work or doesn't work from other companies they have worked with.

• They are likely to have access to multiple areas of expertise, skill sets and wherewithal that they can bring to your advantage.

• They are likely to have multiple methodologies for implementation of new strategies that are less disruptive to operations when implementation takes place.

• Technology is often a central part of an assessment where changes are likely to happen, particularly as AI plays a more important role in supply chain management. They may have a better perspective and more experience in evaluating technology changes and upgrades.

The downside of accessing external expertise is the sharing of privileged information and cost. Information exposure can be managed through strong non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). Cost can be justified where you are assured of obtaining "value for your spend."

Go through robust vetting, set clear deliverables and understand and obtain alignment with their assessment process. Finally, make sure of the background, experience and capabilities of the specific consultants who will be assigned to your account.

THE PRIMARY AREAS IN A GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN ASSESSMENT

• Procurement and Sourcing Management • Supplier Management & Diversification • Personnel allocation, skill sets and capabilities • Major Challenges and Weaknesses • Logistics • Service Provider Performance & Oversight • Costing Analysis • Risk Profiling • Manufacturing, Operations & Distribution • Technology Utilization • Resilience, Sustainability & Stability • Tariff Mitigation Strategies • Trade Compliance Management • Management of Outsourced Services • Interface with internal silos • Benchmarking to like and similar companies

Recognize that the list above is a generalization and that each individual supply chain should use this as a starting point and customize it further as circumstances warrant.

Once the assessment process begins, a meeting of all impacted parties and stakeholders is held to prioritize the initiatives and discuss any areas of exposure that need immediate attention.

> An assessment can become like a living organism and as it evolves and moves forward, it will be okay to stop and implement certain changes that have been founded and vetted. Act on these immediately, then continue on with the assessment process.

The assessment process will vary in time from company to company, but our experience shows that allowing from 60–90 days and even up to 180 days is a reasonable time frame.

As the process moves forward, some findings will cause the initiative to turn in a different direction, as circumstances dictate. It is okay for the assessment process to evolve and morph as it moves along and as rocks are overturned; what lies beneath may cause a change in direction.

Surprises may develop along the way, both good and bad, and should be handled as the situation warrants. We suggest that you do not overreact and do further investigation to obtain a full picture before deciding the best course of action.

Updates to the assessment team and senior management should be made on a regular basis with a simple and brief synopsis of where you are and outline any significant findings and actions taken.

As you get closer to finalizing the assessment, a brief should be written that outlines the process, the findings, action(s) that were taken and others where recommendations are being made.

A summary should be the final piece of the assessment, which outlines recommendations, prioritized, with costs and benefits and individuals now responsible for moving the recommendations forward.

We would argue that the question "How do you know we are doing everything right?" would be a difficult one to answer without conducting a global supply chain assessment, which should be a "Best Practice" conducted annually or every two to three years for most business models.

The "Best Outcome" would be significant changes in managing the operation more efficiently, reducing risk and obtaining the best value for your spend, with a risk management approach creating a higher degree of resilience and stability.

Thomas A. Cook is a seasoned global supply chain professional, author of more than 20 books on global trade and managing director of Blue Tiger International. He can be reached at tomcook@bluetigerintl.com or (516) 359-6232.

DATEBOOK

Elevate TMSA Conference

JUNE 7–9

Inverness Golf Resort & Spa, Denver, Colorado

tmsatoday.org

The Transportation Marketing & Sales Association invites sales and marketing teams in logistics to main stage sessions, track sessions and peer connections.

TCA Safety & Security Meeting

JUNE 7–9

Omni Oklahoma City, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

tcasafetymeeting.com

Truckload Carriers Association presents sessions that focus on a 360-degree safety environment model for professionals in safety, security, risk management and workforce operations.

Black Sea Ports & Logistics 2026

JUNE 9–11

DoubleTree by Hilton Istanbul, Piyalepasa, Türkiye

transportevents.com

Yilport hosts this annual event that connects international trade and investment between the Caspian Sea and Europe—The Middle Corridor.

Forklift Safety Day

JUNE 9

National Press Club, Washington, D.C.

indtrk.org

Industrial Truck Association's 13th annual event highlights safe use of forklifts, the value of operator training and the need for daily equipment checks.

2026 IHMA Congress

JUNE 9–12

Theater Zuidplein, Rotterdam, Netherlands

harbourmaster.org

The 15th International Harbour Masters Association Congress, "Connecting Horizons: Building Future Resilient Ports Together." Port of Rotterdam co-hosts.

Apna Truck Show

JUNE 13–14

Tradex Centre, Abbotsford, Canada

apnatruckshow.com

Key figures from trucking companies and industry experts showcase the latest in equipment and parts manufacturing and current market trends.

ENCY World Conference 2026

JUNE 15–18

St. Raphael Resort & Marina, Limassol, Cyprus

encycam.com

"Formula CAD/CAM" is ENCY Software's theme, combining software, machines, robots and people into a setup that runs at race speed.

Breakbulk Europe 2026

JUNE 16–18

Rotterdam Ahoy, Rotterdam, Netherlands

europe.breakbulk.com

The world's largest event for the project cargo and breakbulk industry features networking, exhibitions and conferences for over 11,000 industry professionals.

AUTOMATE 2026

JUNE 22–25

McCormick Place, Chicago, Illinois

automateshow.com

North America's largest robotics and automation trade show expected to bring together upwards of 50,000 automation pros from manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, energy and other sectors.

Supply Chain USA 2026

JUNE 23–24

Marriott Marquis, Chicago, Illinois

reutersevents.com

Solution providers meet existing customers, strengthen relationships, position their brands as thought leaders and network with decision-makers and prospects.

Transport Logistics China

JUNE 24–26

New International Expo Centre, Shanghai, China

messe-muenchen.de

Asia's leading trade fair for logistics, mobility, IT and supply chain management, held concurrently with Air Cargo Shanghai and Project Cargo Shanghai.

ASEAN Ports & Logistics 2026

JULY 7–9

Sofitel Kuala Lumpur, Damansara, Malaysia

transportevents.com

Port Klang Authority hosts possibly the largest annual ports and logistics trade event for the ASEAN region, where industry leaders exchange ideas on the latest global and regional developments.

IFT First 2026

JULY 12 – 15

McCormick Place, Chicago, Illinois

ift.org

IFT FIRST is the leading food science and innovation expo, bringing together researchers, suppliers, and decision-makers across the global food ecosystem. Explore 1,000+ exhibitors and science-driven programming focused on food safety, ingredient innovation, and supply chain optimization—connecting manufacturers and exporters with solutions and partners that strengthen resilience and accelerate growth.

Supply Chain AI Symposium

JULY 15

The Old Post Office, Chicago, Illinois

live.freightwaves.com

AI has officially moved from hype to being embedded into every mile of the supply chain. Freightwaves cuts through the noise to showcase real-world applications for predictive analytics that drive actual ROI.

SAPICS Conference

JULY 19-22

Century City Conference Centre, Cape Town, South Africa

conference.sapics.org

The 48th conference and expo explores how supply chains can lead responsibly—balancing purpose and performance, technology and humanity, efficiency and equity.

TCA Refrigerated Meeting

JULY 22-24

Sheraton Grand Downtown, Nashville, Tennessee

tcarefrigerated.com

Truckload Carriers Association welcomes industry experts discussing key issues and emerging trends impacting refrigerated carriers.

WITA/WITF Annual Dinner

JULY 22

Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center, Washington, D.C.

wita.org

The Washington International Trade Association and sister organization Washington International Trade Foundation co-present the so-called "Trade Prom" that attracts experts, decision makers and policy shapers when it comes to global trade.

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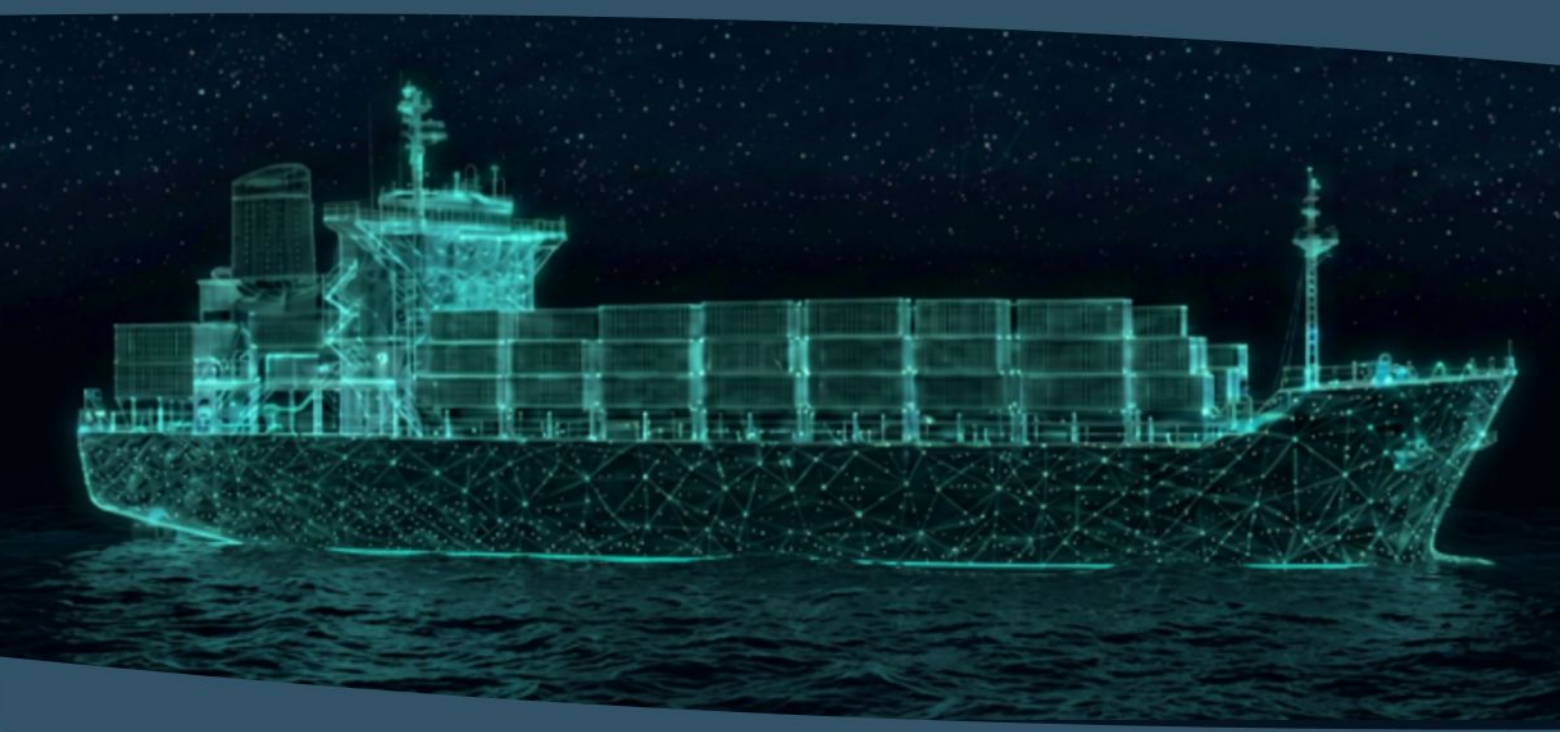
America's Top 50 Container Ports

A GLOBAL TRADE SUPPLEMENT



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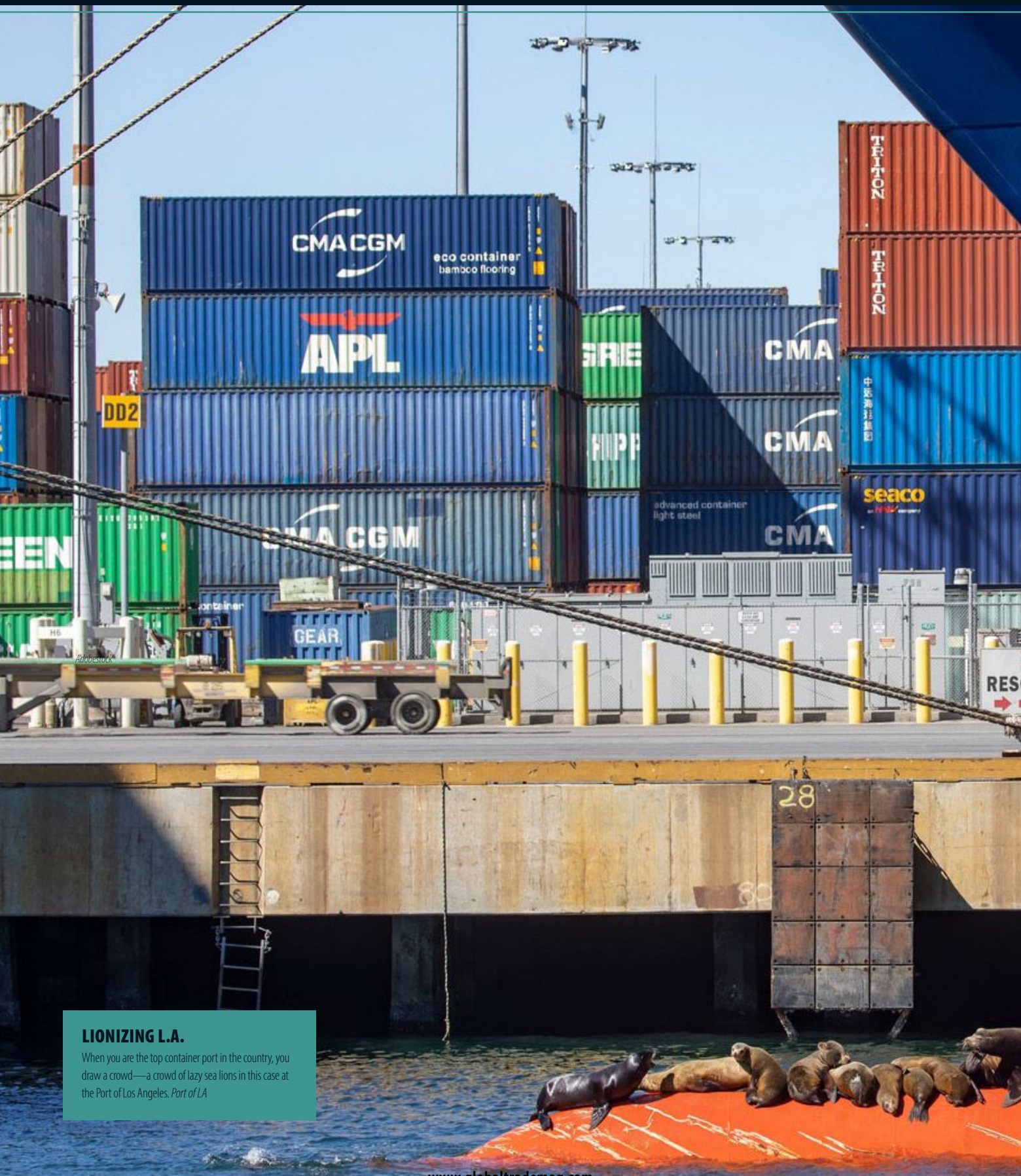

LIONIZING L.A.

When you are the top container port in the country, you draw a crowd—a crowd of lazy sea lions in this case at the Port of Los Angeles. *Port of LA*

THE STEEL PULSE OF TRADE

AMERICA'S TOP 50 CONTAINER PORTS

BY **TODD MATHEWS**

In the grand theater of global commerce, the shipping container is the undisputed star. These uniform steel boxes—standardized to the last millimeter—are what allow a smartphone manufactured in Vietnam to arrive on a shelf in Ohio with surgical precision. A container port is the specialized stage where these boxes are exchanged between the massive "motherships" of the ocean and the trucks and trains of the domestic "land bridge."

The industry measures this activity in TEUs, or Twenty-foot Equivalent Units. A single 20-foot container equals 1 TEU, while the more common 40-foot "high-cube" containers count as 2 TEUs. This metric is the heartbeat of a nation's economic health; when TEU counts rise, it signals robust consumer demand and industrial growth.

To determine the 2026 leaders, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Port Performance Freight Statistics utilized a rigorous methodology that tracks not just raw volume, but terminal capacity, crane productivity and intermodal connectivity. By analyzing data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) and the Census Bureau, this list highlights the 25 hubs that serve as the primary valves for the American economy.

BACK IN THE FLOW

A cargo ship moves through open water, echoing the Port of Baltimore's return to full strength after the Key Bridge channel recovery and a record-setting 2025 at Seagirt Marine Terminal. *Adobe Stock*

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THE 2026 TOP 25 CONTAINER PORTS BY TEU

Port of Los Angeles (CA): Long the "Western Gateway," the port is currently undergoing a massive bridge and infrastructure overhaul on Avalon Boulevard to streamline the flow of its record-breaking container volumes.

Port Authority of NY/NJ: Serving as the premier Atlantic hub, this port has recently dominated the East Coast by focusing on high-value, high-velocity imports for the nation's largest consumer market.

Port of Long Beach (CA): A pioneer in "Green Port" initiatives, Long Beach now features a fully automated, near-zero-emission terminal powered by one of the largest on-dock solar arrays in the maritime world.

Port of Savannah (GA): The Port of Savannah has leveraged its massive Garden City Terminal to become a "model of inland connectivity," linking the deep-water harbor directly to the Appalachian regional "dry ports."

Port of Houston (TX): With the completion of "Project 11" dredging, Houston is now the undisputed Gulf leader, capable of handling the newest generation of neo-Panamax vessels carrying petrochemical exports.

Port of Virginia (Norfolk, VA): Renowned for its "semi-automated" efficiency, Virginia offers the most robust rail-to-ship connection on the East Coast, reaching 75% of the U.S. population within two days.

Port of Charleston (SC): To solve regional labor shortages, Charleston has launched an innovative "maritime talent pipeline" to staff its newly expanded Leatherman Terminal.

Port of Oakland (CA): Oakland remains a vital export hub for American agriculture, utilizing inland rail hubs like Fernley, Nevada, to keep cargo moving even during severe winter weather.

Port of Tacoma (WA): As a core pillar of the Northwest Seaport Alliance, Tacoma excels in the "complex cargo" niche, managing a high-frequency mix of containers and oversized industrial machinery.

Port of Jacksonville (FL): JAXPORT recently completed a historic 47-foot harbor deepening project, allowing it to serve as the "primary clinical gateway" for Florida's booming pharmaceutical trade.

Port of Miami (FL): PortMiami recently set a 2026 record for berthing 11 massive vessels in a single day, proving its ability to manage extreme surges in both cargo and cruise traffic.

Port of San Juan (PR): This facility serves as the island's indispensable lifeline, holding a 30-year exclusivity agreement that ensures a steady flow of 80% of Puerto Rico's essential food and medical supplies.

STACK 'EM HIGHER

The Port of Baltimore's container business is being enhanced by completion expected this year of the $518 million CSX Howard Street Tunnel Project, which will mean even more stacked boxes. Port of Baltimore

Port of Seattle (WA): Working in tandem with Tacoma, Seattle's modernized Terminal 5 is now a primary destination for the Pacific Northwest's high-tech and aerospace imports from Asia.

Port of Baltimore (MD): Following the heroic recovery of the Key Bridge channel, Baltimore's Seagirt Marine Terminal set a 2025 record for TEU throughput, marking a full return to global prominence.

Port of Honolulu (HI): As the sole deep-draft facility in the state, Honolulu is the ultimate "point of failure" hub, where a three-day disruption can threaten the entire state's food security.

Port of Philadelphia (PA): The Packer Avenue Marine Terminal has transformed Philly into a high-tech hub, specializing in "high-touch" logistics for refrigerated perishables and consumer electronics.

Port Everglades (FL): Known for "speed to market," Everglades is the primary South Florida engine for North-South trade, linking the U.S. to more than 70 countries across Central and South America.

Port of Mobile (AL): Driven by the "Southern Automotive Corridor," Mobile has become a critical link for the high-tech component supply chains of major Alabama-based manufacturers.

Don Young Port of Alaska (AK): Located in Anchorage, this port handles half of all Alaska's inbound freight, designed specifically to remain operational even through extreme seismic events and 40-foot tides.

Port of New Orleans (LA): The upcoming Louisiana International Terminal (LIT) represents a historic public-private partnership aimed at modernizing the Mississippi River's connection to the global market.

Port of Wilmington (NC): Strategically positioned within 700 miles of 70% of the U.S. industrial base, Wilmington is a master of the "short-haul" regional supply chain.

Port of Boston (MA): As New England's only full-service container terminal, Conley Terminal recently installed new ship-to-shore cranes to handle the largest vessels now calling the Atlantic coast.

Port of Wilmington (DE): The Diamond State Port Corp. has secured federal permits for the landmark Edgemoor Container Terminal, a project set to re-establish Delaware as a leading global competitor.

Port of Hueneme (Oxnard, CA): Known as "the port that farmers built," Hueneme boasts the largest on-dock cold storage facility on the West Coast, specializing in fresh produce and time-sensitive cargo.

South Jersey Port Corp (NJ): Centered on the Paulsboro Marine Terminal, this hub is a niche powerhouse, recently processing record volumes of steel slabs and intermodal materials for the regional manufacturing sector.

#26-50: THE REGIONAL LIFELINES

Continuing the journey through America's maritime network, we move beyond the major hubs to the specialized gateways that form the "Long Tail" of the U.S. supply chain. While the Top 25 ports handle approximately 96% of all containerized cargo, ports 26 through 50 serve as vital regional lifelines, supporting specific industries—from cruise and aerospace to island commerce and local agriculture.

The following ports represent strategic redundancy. In the event of labor strikes or severe congestion at "mega-ports" like Los Angeles or NY/NJ, these smaller gateways provide the necessary flexibility to keep regional economies moving. They are often "niche experts," perfected for handling specific commodities such as Dole bananas in Gulfport or aerospace parts in Pensacola.

The rankings for ports 26–50 are derived from the BTS 2026 Annual Report data tables, which track all ports handling over 1,000 TEUs. While the report focuses its detailed port profiles on the Top 25, the underlying datasets allow for a comprehensive ranking of the nation's remaining 100+ active container facilities.

Port of Gulfport, MS – The "Banana Port" of the South, recently fell just outside the top 25 but remains a critical entry point for Central American produce.

Port Tampa Bay, FL – Rapidly expanding its container capacity to serve the growing I-4 corridor; recently welcomed its largest-ever vessel (11,900 TEU).

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READY TO RUMBLE

Port Freeport's Velasco Terminal, which serves container, ro-ro and multipurpose vessels, has undergone dramatic transformation over the past two decades, with distinction arriving this year as the deepest container terminal on the U.S. Gulf Coast. Port Freeport

Port of Palm Beach, FL – A high-frequency hub for trade with the Bahamas and the Caribbean.

Port of San Diego, CA – Specializes in refrigerated containers for fresh fruit and serves the regional manufacturing nexus in Southern California.

Port Authority of Guam (Apra Harbor), GU – The primary lifeline for the Western Pacific, handling nearly all containerized goods for the island's civilian and military populations.

Port of Portland, OR – Rebounded with the return of weekly trans-Pacific service at Terminal 6, supporting Pacific Northwest agricultural exports.

Port Freeport, TX – One of the fastest-growing ports on the Gulf Coast, benefiting from proximity to the petrochemical and plastics manufacturing belt.

Port of Ponce, PR – Puerto Rico's "southern gateway," providing a secondary entry point for domestic and international goods.

Port of Stockton, CA – An inland deep-water port serving the Central Valley's massive agricultural and food-processing industry.

Port of Richmond, VA – Operates a successful container-on-barge service from the Port of Virginia hubs, reducing truck traffic on the I-64 corridor.

Port of San Francisco, CA – Focuses on specialized container shipments and serves as a backup to the larger Oakland hub.

SeaPort Manatee, FL – The closest U.S. deepwater seaport to the expanded Panama Canal, focusing on niche container services for produce.

Port of Panama City, FL – A regional leader in forest products and copper, with growing containerized trade with Mexico.

Port of Saipan, MP – Critical infrastructure for the Northern Mariana Islands.

Port of Pago Pago, AS – The main maritime gateway for American Samoa.

Port of St. Thomas (Crown Bay), VI – Primary entry point for consumer goods in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Port of St. Croix, VI – Supports the island's industrial and energy sectors.

Port of Brownsville, TX – Primarily a tonnage leader for steel and energy, but handles containerized components for the Rio Grande Valley.

Port of Morehead City, NC – A major exporter of phosphate and forest products, with specialized container handling for bulk-related goods.

Port of Pensacola, FL – Serves the regional aerospace and wind energy sectors.

Port Tampa Bay: A Gulf Coast Gateway Built for Resilient Supply Chains

PORT TAMPA BAY'S CARGO DIVERSITY, LOCATION AND INLAND ACCESS MAKE IT A KEY HUB FOR U.S. AND GLOBAL TRADE.

Port Tampa Bay continues to strengthen its role as a reliable and flexible gateway, offering efficient inland access as global trade routes adjust to congestion, cost pressures and operational risk. As Florida's largest port by tonnage and one of the most cargo-diverse in the United States, Port Tampa Bay has emerged as a critical Gulf Coast gateway positioned to meet those demands.

A major economic engine for Florida, the port generates an annual economic impact of $34.6 billion and supports approximately 192,000 jobs. Its role in facilitating global trade underpins supply chains across manufacturing, energy, construction and consumer goods throughout Florida and the broader Southeast.

Port Tampa Bay's strength lies in intentional diversification. The port handles a broad mix of cargo, including containerized freight, breakbulk and project cargo, bulk commodities, roll-on/roll-off cargo and energy products.

"Supply chain resilience today is about flexibility and Port Tampa Bay is the port that provides it," said Port Tampa Bay President and CEO, Paul Anderson. "Our customers need ports that can support multiple cargo strategies and move freight inland efficiently and reliably."

Containerized cargo remains a focus for Port Tampa Bay as importers and exporters seek alternatives to congested ports. Last year, the port handled a record nearly 263,000 TEUs, supported by terminals designed to prioritize vessel access, truck productivity and schedule reliability. Since 2018, container volumes have grown more than 300%, reflecting the port's expanding role in regional distribution and niche container markets. Ongoing investments position the port to scale to 1 million TEUs annually, continuing a disciplined approach that emphasizes efficiency and customer demand to guide sustainable growth.

Location is a key driver of that efficiency. Situated on Florida's Gulf Coast and minutes away from Interstate 4, a major corridor stretching from Tampa to Daytona Beach, Port Tampa Bay provides direct access to one of the fastest-growing distribution regions in the country. The I-4 corridor encompasses more than 550 million square feet of distribution and logistics space, enabling faster cargo velocity, reduced drayage costs and simplified last-mile delivery for beneficial cargo owners serving Florida and the broader Southeast.

While containerized cargo continues to expand, Port Tampa Bay is also recognized as a leading hub for breakbulk and project cargo. The port routinely handles oversized and heavy-lift cargo supporting energy, defense, aerospace and large-scale industrial projects. Specialized terminals, ample laydown space and an experienced maritime workforce enable the port to manage cargo movements that cannot be accommodated at many other gateways.

"Our breakbulk and project cargo capabilities allow customers to move freight that requires planning, precision and specialized infrastructure," Anderson said. "Those capabilities are essential for industries that depend on reliable execution."

This combination of cargo diversity and geographic advantage positions Port Tampa Bay as a strategic asset for mitigating risk as shippers rebalance port portfolios. The port offers uncongested waterside operations, strong berth availability and dependable inland connectivity that support predictable cargo movement.

These advantages are reinforced by disciplined capital investment guided by the port's Vision 2030 strategic plan. Port Tampa Bay is currently executing more than $100 million in active infrastructure investments, including new wharves, upland yard development, berth improvements and increasing crane capacity. The recent arrival of two new post-Panamax ship-to-shore cranes marks another significant milestone in expanding the port's cargo-handling capabilities and long-term container growth strategy. Once operational in 2026, the cranes will increase lift capacity, improve berth productivity and enable the port to service up to three large container vessels simultaneously, further strengthening the port's ability to support growing cargo volumes and customer demand.

As a public port, Port Tampa Bay works closely with tenants, logistics partners and public agencies to align infrastructure planning with customer needs. That long-term, partnership-driven approach has helped establish the port as a stable and trusted gateway in an increasingly complex trade environment.

"In today's supply chain landscape, reliability is the true differentiator," Anderson said. "Our focus is ensuring Port Tampa Bay remains a port our customers can count on today and in the years ahead."

For more information, visit porttb.com.

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- Strategically located at the crossroads of the growing Tampa/Orlando Corridor
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- The fastest growing region in the fastest growing state
- Recently expanded terminal capacity and plenty of room for growth
- Capable of multiple round-trip truck deliveries per day from Port to distribution centers
- Weekly direct sailings from Asia and Latin America including Mexico

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Port of Davisville (Quonset), RI – While a national leader in Ro-Ro (autos), it maintains a niche container presence for specialized manufacturing.

Port of Port Arthur, TX – A key energy and military port with growing breakbulk-to-container transload facilities.

Port of Beaumont, TX – The nation's top military port by tonnage, also facilitating containerized equipment for global operations.

Port of Lake Charles, LA – A critical hub for energy-related containerized chemicals.

Port of Cleveland, OH – Operates the unique "Cleveland-Europe Express" (CEE), providing a direct Great Lakes container link to Antwerp.

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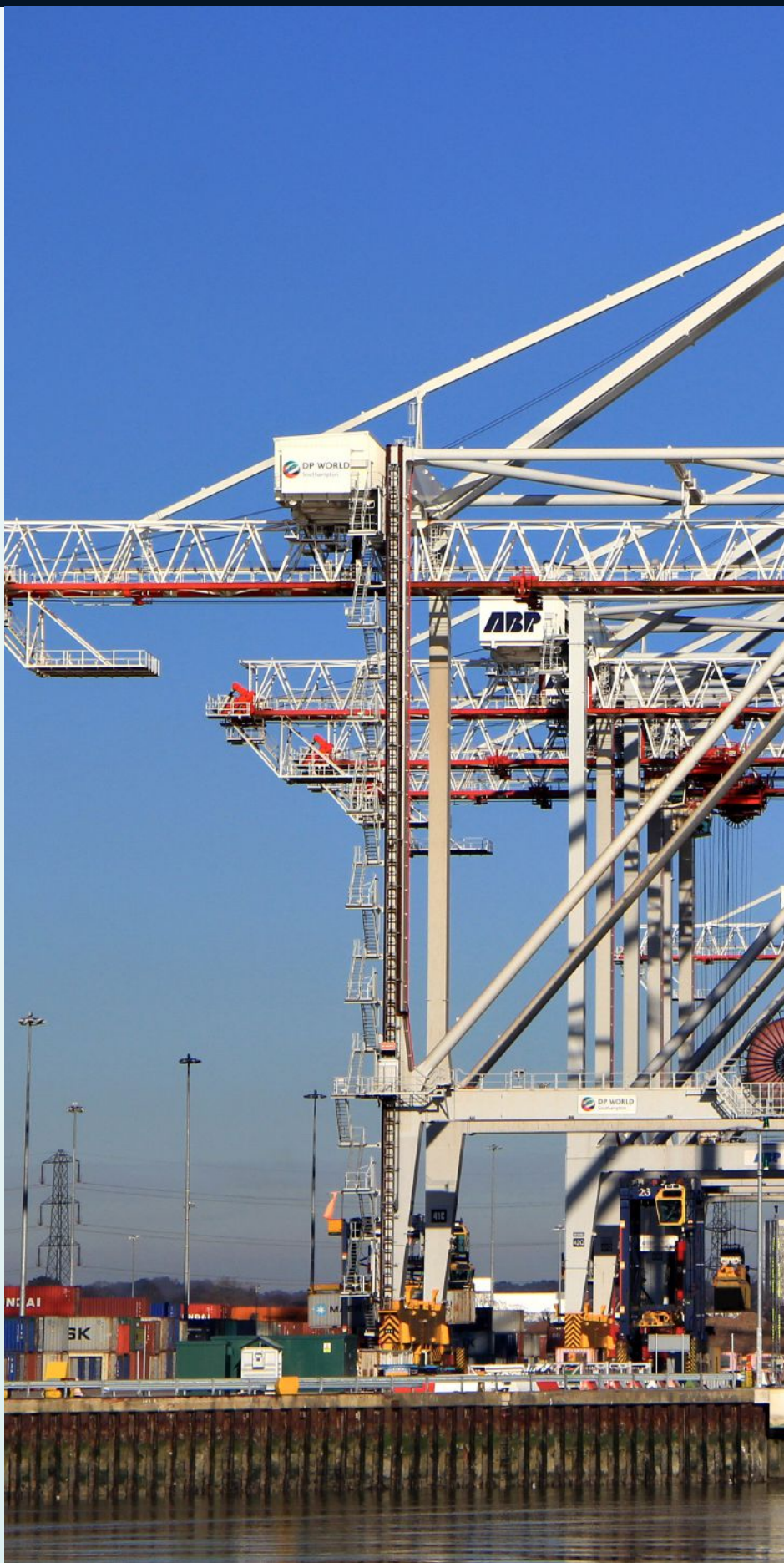


IN BUILDING MODE

Growing container traffic at Port Tampa Bay explains the order six months ago for two new STS cranes from Liebherr Container Cranes, which marked the Irish company's first such installation on the Florida Gulf Coast. *Liebherr Container Cranes*

MOVING THE WORLD FORWARD

10 WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF LOGISTICS

By GT STAFF

In logistics, leadership is rarely theoretical. It is measured in shipments that arrive on time, systems that withstand volatility, teams that perform under pressure, and decisions that turn complexity into competitive advantage. It shows up in the quiet discipline of execution, the courage to rethink long-standing industry norms, and the ability to bring people with you when the stakes are high.

For *Global Trade*'s Spring 2026 Women in Logistics feature, this year's nominations offered a compelling view of where the industry is headed. The women nominated by readers represent a wide range of logistics leadership: high-hazard cargo, global manufacturing, ecommerce fulfillment, automotive relocation, supply chain media, mentorship, and community building.

Each story demonstrates that logistics is not a back-office function; it is a strategic force shaping how companies grow, compete, and serve customers in a volatile global market.

This year's honorees and editorial selections reflect four major themes defining the future of the profession: operational transformation, commercial growth, industry education, and technology-enabled innovation. Together, these 10 women show that the next era of logistics will be built by leaders who can manage risk, grow revenue, modernize systems, mentor diverse teams, and communicate the value of supply chain in a way that reaches far beyond the warehouse, port, truck, or boardroom.

OPERATIONAL TRANSFORMERS

Catherine Sharapova, Prometheus Group

Catherine Sharapova represents a new kind of logistics leader: one who understands that supply chain is not simply a cost center, but a financial engine. At Prometheus Group, where the business serves industrial energy storage, infrastructure and commercial lighting, mining, and specialized project logistics, Sharapova has made her mark by bringing financial sophistication to some of the most complex logistics environments in the industrial sector.

The Supply Chain Manager's influence extends beyond company performance. As a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the international journal *Crede Experto*, Sharapova is helping connect academic research with field-tested logistics practice. Her career arc, from junior export clerk to strategic council member, offers a powerful model for the next generation of logistics professionals, especially women seeking leadership in technical and high-stakes sectors.

Priya Anand, Jabil

Priya Anand's 25-year logistics career is a study in global growth, operational discipline, and team building. Now Global Head of Logistics Services at Jabil, Anand began as a trainee at a global ocean transport company and has since built a career defined by adaptability, technical fluency, and leadership across regions.

Her nomination describes her as a collaborative leader who opens the floor to ideas, encourages feedback, and helps team members view new roles as opportunities to stretch and learn. Anand's external recognition reinforces that impact. She was included in *Who's Who in America* as a woman leader in Supply Chain Management in 2023 and was named a 2025 Workforce Innovator in the Women in Supply Chain Awards by *Supply & Demand Chain Executive*. In an industry where digital transformation often receives more attention than the people required to make it work; Anand brings both together.

Debbie Boyce, Reindeer Logistics

Debbie Boyce, CEO of Reindeer Logistics, brings more than 40 years of automotive and logistics experience to an industry undergoing significant change. Her nomination describes her as a servant leader and visionary who has helped move Reindeer beyond traditional vehicle relocation into a broader mobility support model.

As client needs have become more complex, Reindeer has positioned itself as a strategic partner across the vehicle lifecycle, not merely a transportation provider. But Boyce's nomination also points to a broader leadership legacy: More than half of Reindeer's leadership team is female, and she is credited with creating a workplace culture rooted in inclusion, partnership, professional growth,

and servant leadership. Her story is a reminder that transformation is not always about disruption for its own sake but about seeing where the customer is going, building the services to meet them there, and bringing the team along with purpose.

COMMERCIAL GROWTH LEADERS

Victoria Maddux, DCL Logistics

Victoria Maddux has built a 20-year logistics career around one of the industry's most valuable capabilities: translating growth ambition into operational reality. As Vice President of Sales at DCL Logistics, she operates at the intersection of sales, fulfillment, customer strategy, and execution. Her influence reaches into the commercial infrastructure of the company. She has helped develop structured approaches to RFP strategy, pricing, customer onboarding, and alignment across sales, operations, transportation, and technology teams.

Maddux's leadership style is rooted in trust, accountability, and long-term relationship building. As a female leader in a traditionally male-dominated industry, she models how high performance and inclusive leadership can reinforce each other. Her impact is evident in measurable growth, team development, client partnerships, and her role representing DCL at major industry events such as CES, Manifest, and Shoptalk.

Kristy Knichel, Knichel Logistics

Kristy Knichel, President, CEO and owner of Knichel Logistics, is a strong example of entrepreneurial leadership in third-party logistics. She leads a woman-owned logistics business and has become an advocate for women in freight, intermodal, and transportation leadership. She has been recognized by Women in Trucking, has spoken openly about mentorship, and has used her platform to encourage more women to see logistics as a viable and rewarding career path. Women in Trucking's Distinguished Woman in Logistics Award recognizes outstanding achievement and leadership in North American logistics, and Knichel has been associated with that recognition through the organization's award program.

Knichel Logistics has also publicly emphasized her role as a voice and advocate for women within the logistics community, as well as her work mentoring other women in business. As an owner-operator, she represents leaders who are not only navigating the industry, but building companies within it.

Nicole Glenn, Candor Expedite

Nicole Glenn, founder and CEO of Candor Expedite, brings the urgency and precision of expedited freight into sharp focus. Candor is known for time-sensitive, high-touch shipments, hot shot ground transportation, and white-glove delivery services. Glenn's leadership reflects the demands of logistics when the margin for error is extremely small.

Glenn boasts a strong connection to industry organizations and women-owned business recognition. She is associated with WBENC certification, Women in Trucking, the Transportation Intermediaries Association, and the Expedite Association of North America.

Her leadership speaks to a broader truth about logistics: Some of the industry's most important work happens when plans break down. Expedite providers often step in when production schedules, customer commitments, or critical operations are at risk. Leaders like Glenn turn pressure into performance.

INDUSTRY VOICE & COMMUNITY BUILDERS

Sarah Barnes-Humphrey, Let's Talk Supply Chain

Sarah Barnes-Humphrey has shaped the logistics industry not only by participating in it, but by

changing how the industry talks to itself. As founder of the global podcast *Let's Talk Supply Chain*, she identified a gap in supply chain dialogue and built a platform for education, storytelling, collaboration, and inclusion. Barnes-Humphrey also founded the Blended podcast and the *Blended* Pledge, a nonprofit initiative focused on increasing representation and diversity across supply chain industry events.

She has expanded her company's revenue streams, growing a team of more than 12 freelancers, and launching *Let's Talk Supply Chain Asia*. Her nomination cites recognition as one of the "10 Most Admired Women in Business to Follow," a "Top Woman in Supply Chain," a 2024 Pros to Know Lifetime Achievement honoree, and one of *Supply Chain Digital*'s Top 10 Influencers.

Hannah Kain, ALOM Technologies

Hannah Kain, founder, president, and CEO of ALOM Technologies, has built a career around global supply chain execution, innovation, and leadership. ALOM provides supply chain management, fulfillment, and related services, and Kain has become one of the most recognized women leaders in the field.

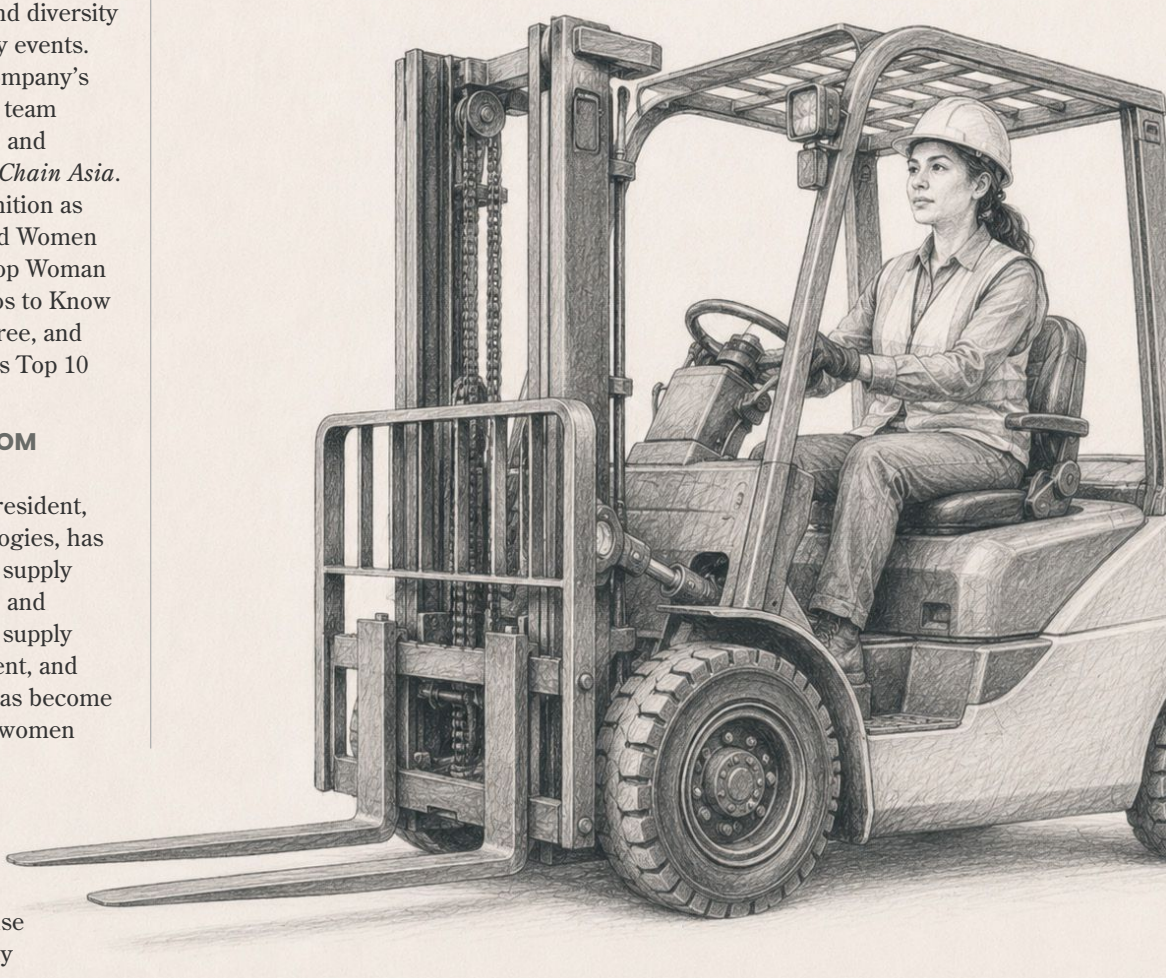
Supply & Demand Chain Executive's 2024 Pros to Know Lifetime Achievement Award winner stands out as a leader because she has built both a company

and a platform for broader industry influence. Kain's work is also highly relevant to the conversation about women in logistics because she has long been visible as a founder and CEO in a sector where executive representation remains uneven. In a world where supply chains must be resilient, ethical, and technology-enabled, Kain's career provides a long-view example of leadership built to endure.

TECHNOLOGY & PLATFORM INNOVATORS

Heather Hoover-Salomon, H2S Group Consulting Services

Heather Hoover-Salomon's rise at uShip is one of the most compelling leadership stories in logistics technology. She began there in 2005 as a public relations and marketing intern and was named CEO in 2023. Hoover-Salomon left the online marketplace for shipping services a year later to form H2S Group, where she serves founders, executives and investors



through strategic consulting, operational execution and market insights.

Her progression from intern to CEO to consultant to CEOs offers a meaningful culture and talent-development narrative. It shows what can happen when organizations retain, develop, and promote leaders who understand the business from the inside out. In logistics, technology is often discussed in terms of software, automation, visibility, and data. Hoover-Salomon's leadership reminds the industry that platforms are ultimately human systems. In an industry where many companies are still working to bridge traditional logistics with digital models, that kind of leadership is essential.

Monica Wooden, MercuryGate International (retired)

Monica Wooden, the former CEO of MercuryGate International, represents the technology foundation of modern transportation management. She co-founded the company in 2000 and helped build it into a transportation management software company recognized for flexible and sophisticated TMS capabilities. MercuryGate was sold to a private equity firm in late 2018.

By helping build a major TMS provider, Wooden contributed to the digital infrastructure that many logistics organizations rely on today. Considering her digital know-how, it's no small wonder she now sits on the advisory board of Opptly, whose proprietary AI and direct sourcing platform enables optimal connections between job seekers and hiring companies. (And whose CEO is also a woman, Lori Hock.) Wooden's influence also extends into education: The University of South Florida highlighted her support for supply chain education and belief in building academic programs with practical business connections.

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THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY'S BLIND SPOT

WHY YOUR SUSTAINABILITY GOALS LIVE OR DIE IN REVERSE LOGISTICS

BY **DISNEY PETIT**
CEO & FOUNDER, LIQUIDONATE

"Closing the loop" is the retail industry's favorite promise. Whether it's designing biodegradable packaging, launching a resale site, or committing to zero-waste manufacturing, brands are racing to prove their circular credentials. But there is a massive, unglamorous bottleneck that most executives are hesitant to discuss: Reverse Logistics.

In the rush to go green, we've mastered the art of getting products to the consumer. We are still failing, however, at the science of bringing them back. If you haven't solved for the backward flow of goods, your circular supply chain isn't a circle. It's a dead end.

Returned items are the "elephant in the room" of modern retail. Without a cost-effective, dedicated system to reintegrate these goods into the economy, even the most "sustainable" product is just future landfill fodder. Consumers assume that perfectly usable, new items they return will be resold, but the truth is that up to 80% of those returns end up in a heaping pile of trash.

WHY 'BACKWARD' IS THE NEW 'FORWARD'

Ignoring reverse logistics isn't just an operational oversight; it's a massive reputational and financial liability. We've all seen the headlines: luxury houses incinerating unsold stock or mountains of fast fashion accumulating in the Atacama Desert.

Consumers are paying attention. When a brand's "circular" promise is met with photos of their products in a dump, brand loyalty evaporates. According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), roughly 85% of used textiles in the U.S. end up in landfills or incinerators. Many of these items are perfectly functional.

Fixing the return pipeline isn't only about "doing good" for the environment. It's about protecting your brand credibility and your bottom line.

4 PRACTICAL WAYS TO ACTUALLY 'CLOSE THE LOOP'

Here's the good news: transforming your reverse logistics doesn't require a total technological overhaul. Often, it requires a shift in perspective and a little creativity. Here are four ways we've seen brands successfully close the loop:

1. Harness the Power of Proximity

Early in my career, we discovered that retail warehouses and event organizers could bypass massive disposal fees simply by sending usable goods to local nonprofits. That led us to apply the same concept on a per-item level to returns.

The Lesson: Stop looking for a global solution for a local problem. Every inhabited area of the country has community organizations and schools in need of food, clothing, beauty products and everything else. By keeping the "reverse" movement local, you slash high, per-item transit costs and carbon footprints while building community goodwill.

2. Prioritize Low-Tech Scalability

In a tech-obsessed world, we often assume we need a complex app to solve logistics. Sometimes, the best solution is a cardboard box.

The Lesson: We found success by sending physical, prepaid donation boxes to retailers. Instead of a pile of returns that ultimately meets the landfill, they simply fill them; we handle the transit to nonprofits that have asked for that specific category of items. It removes the friction of "warehouse purgatory" by making the right choice the easiest choice for the staff on the floor.

3. Give Customers the "Donation Option"

Why wait for a return to reach the warehouse to decide its fate? By integrating donation options directly into your digital return management system, you empower the customer, not tarnish your brand.

The Lesson: When it comes to donation, so many brands are worried about their reputation, "giving away" their high-quality goods. The irony is, most consumers would increase their loyalty knowing a brand donates and decrease it knowing they landfill perfectly usable,

but unsellable items. A pair of cleats can go straight to a youth league; a returned blender can go to a community kitchen. This bypasses the traditional "return-to-warehouse" route entirely, saving time, money, and emissions.

4. Find Value in the "Broken"

Electronics and appliances are often discarded because of minor defects. But "broken" is a relative term. Ask yourself if there is another use for a dented laptop or a defective radio.

The Lesson: If refurbishment isn't cost-effective for your brand, consider donating those items to trade schools or after-school programs. A box of non-functional laptops is a goldmine for a student learning hardware repair. It's an investment in the next generation of the workforce rather than a contribution to the local landfill.

The circular economy will never scale on marketing slogans alone. It requires the messy, difficult work of managing returns, overstocks and unsold inventory. The human side of everything matters just as much as the technology side.

Brands that invest in the "unglamorous" practice of reverse logistics aren't just checking a Corporate Social Responsibility box. They are building a resilient, credible business model that actually delivers on the promises they've made to their customers.

Disney Petit is a social impact entrepreneur and CEO of LiquiDonate, a software that integrates with any WMS or RMS to match unsellable returns and overstock inventory with nonprofits and schools. She was employee 15 at Postmates, where she built the Civic Labs team and won Time Magazine*'s Invention of the Year for the food security product, Bento.*

NOT SO FAST

The delivery may not be the end of the line for a product. Like the truck, the product can move in reverse. *Kevin Grieve on Unsplash*

BANKING FEATURE

TRADE FINANCE 2.0

WHEN CROSS-BORDER INVENTORY STRATEGY OUTRUNS TRADITIONAL FINANCE

BY **MENACHEM WOONTEILER** • HEAD OF GROWTH, DOCKFI

For many consumer brands sourcing product internationally, today's trade-finance challenge is no longer simply getting goods across borders. The harder question is whether the capital structure keeps up with how those goods are actually purchased, stored, and converted back into cash. In theory, trade finance has always existed to smooth that path.

In practice, many brands still find themselves caught between operationally smart inventory decisions and financing structures that were not built for the way modern supply chains really work.

That gap is becoming easier to see. Brands are buying earlier, carrying deeper positions in key SKUs, and making more deliberate decisions around where inventory is held. Some are doing so to protect margin. Others are doing it to reduce exposure to policy swings, freight volatility, or supplier uncertainty. On the operations side, those decisions can be rational. On the finance side, they can quietly stretch the cash conversion cycle in ways that are harder to manage with traditional bank products alone.

Consider one consumer brand that chose to purchase a substantial portion of its annual inventory in advance. The logic was straightforward: secure supply, reduce the risk of disruption, and create more certainty around cost and availability. To improve customs-related cash timing, the goods were stored in a bonded warehouse, which deferred duty payment until the merchandise would later be withdrawn for U.S. consumption. From a cross-border planning perspective, that was a thoughtful move. It addressed one timing issue well.

But it did not address the entire financing problem. The brand had reduced immediate duty outflows, yet it had still converted a large amount of cash into inventory months before that inventory would fully turn back into receivables and then cash. In other words, customs timing improved, but liquidity remained under pressure. This is where many businesses get crossed up. They assume that if a cross-border strategy is financially efficient in one respect, it is therefore efficient in every respect. Usually, it is not. Duty deferral, warehouse strategy, and working capital are related, but they are not interchangeable.

From the perspective of a lender or an operator, this is not an abstract distinction. Inventory can be a valuable asset, but it can also become an expensive form of waiting. It sits on the balance sheet while restricting the company's ability to reorder, market aggressively, respond to demand spikes, or preserve room to operate. The issue is not simply carrying cost. The deeper issue is optionality. A brand can make the right move for supply continuity and still leave itself with less flexibility than it expected six or nine months later.

This is where the phrase Trade Finance 2.0 begins to mean something practical. Historically, trade finance has often centered on instruments tied to the movement of goods across the border: letters of credit, documentary finance, import lines, and other bank products designed around shipment and payment events. Those tools still

NEED FOR SPEED: TRADITIONAL FINANCE OFTEN RELIES ON BILL OF LADING DOCUMENTS AND MANUAL CHECKS THAT CAN TAKE DAYS. BUT IN TODAY'S MODERN LOGISTICS FACILITIES, THE DIGITAL SPEED OF FUNDING MUST KEEP UP WITH THE PHYSICAL SPEED OF THE HIGH-TECH HUBS.*GEMINI GENERATED IMAGE*

If a modern consumer brand is managing **cross-border inventory** through bonded storage, 3PL infrastructure, and live warehouse controls, then the financing conversation should reflect that reality. The more closely capital tracks the actual movement and control of goods, the more useful and resilient the financing tends to become.

matter. But many modern consumer brands do not experience their biggest strain at the moment a shipment leaves a port. The strain shows up after the goods are already in the country, while inventory is sitting in a bonded facility, a third-party logistics center, or another controlled warehouse environment, still waiting to convert.

Traditional banks are not wrong for approaching that conservatively. Their structures were built around documentation, standardized credit boxes, and broad working-capital analysis. The problem is that those structures do not always map neatly to a business whose most important asset is visible, warehouse-held inventory moving through a real operating environment. A static financial statement can tell you part of the story. It usually cannot tell you enough about release mechanics, inventory turns, reporting cadence, SKU concentration, or how quickly product can be monetized under real conditions.

That is why more operationally grounded forms of inventory finance are becoming important in cross-border commerce. The innovation is not just

in offering capital against inventory. That idea is not new. The innovation is in structuring finance around the actual logistics environment: where the goods sit, what visibility exists, how they are monitored, and how cash is expected to be created from them over time. A lender that understands warehouse operations can evaluate risk differently from a lender relying primarily on paper abstractions. That does not mean looser underwriting. If anything, it often means more specific underwriting.

In the case above, the most useful solution was not to unwind the inventory position or pretend the original strategy had been wrong. It was to align financing with the operational reality created by that strategy. The bonded warehouse solved a customs-timing issue. A more logistics-aware inventory facility helped address the working-capital strain created by buying deeply and holding inventory well ahead of sale. Those were two different tools solving two different problems inside the same broader trade cycle.

That distinction is important for banks as well. The opportunity is not only to digitize old products or add faster interfaces around legacy workflows. Real innovation also means recognizing where traditional finance ends and a more operational model has to begin. If a modern consumer brand is managing cross-border inventory through bonded storage, 3PL infrastructure, and live warehouse controls, then the financing conversation should reflect that reality. The more closely capital tracks the actual movement and control of goods, the more useful and resilient the financing tends to become.

For brands, the practical takeaway is straightforward. A smart cross-border inventory decision can still create a working-capital problem if capital planning is left out of the equation. The right question is no longer just, "How do we reduce immediate landed-cost pressure?" It is, "If we make this inventory decision now, what happens to our liquidity over the next six to nine months?" Businesses that ask that question early tend to make better choices about purchasing, storage, and finance as one system rather than three separate conversations.

That is the direction trade finance needs to keep moving. In a supply chain environment shaped by policy uncertainty, tighter cash discipline, and increasingly sophisticated logistics infrastructure, the next generation of financing will not be defined only by speed or digitization. It will be defined by how well capital understands operations. For consumer brands operating across borders, that may be the difference between an inventory strategy that merely looks smart and one that actually preserves the flexibility to grow.

Menachem Woonteiler leads growth at DockFi, an inventory-backed lender focused on working capital for consumer brands and other inventory-heavy businesses. His work sits at the intersection of capital, logistics, and inventory strategy.

Finding the Right Hubs

Global Reshoring, Nearshoring & Friendshoring

By **Todd Mathews**

The year 2026 marks a definitive era in the history of international trade, a period where the efficiency-at-all-costs model of the late 20th century has been replaced by a "resilience-first" strategy. As geopolitical tensions, environmental mandates, and the scars of pandemic-era disruptions linger, global supply chains are being radically redrawn. For the world's largest corporations, the map of the future is no longer defined by the lowest labor costs in distant markets, but by the search for "friendlier" shores and domestic industrial security.

Two seminal studies provide the framework for understanding this shift. Cherie O. Taylor's working paper for Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, titled "Reshoring, Nearshoring, and North American Supply Chains," and Morgan Stanley Research's report, "Reshoring and a Multipolar World," offer a comprehensive look at how companies are seeking "friendlier" shores and more resilient hubs.

THE NEW LEXICON OF TRADE

To understand the current migration of industry, we must first look at the definitions that have become the cornerstone of modern corporate strategy. Three distinct strategies have emerged as companies seek to "de-risk" their operations:

Reshoring: The act of bringing manufacturing and services back to a company's home country to ensure proximity to the consumer and national security.

Nearshoring: Moving production to a country close to the home market to reduce transit times and logistics risks. For the U.S., this has made the USMCA corridor the most vital trade artery in the world.

Friendshoring: A strategic evolution where companies diversify their supply chains toward countries that share similar values or maintain stable geopolitical relations.

As Taylor of the Baker Institute points out, these aren't just buzzwords; they are reactions to a global economy that has experienced "shocks"—the U.S.-China trade war, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine war—that revealed both the importance and the fragility of international dependencies.

THE AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL REVIVAL: IDENTIFYING DOMESTIC HUBS

While much of the global narrative focuses on international movement, the reshoring effort within the United States is perhaps the most significant economic story of the decade. Companies are no longer just looking "overseas"; they are looking "inland" at regions that offer stability, energy resources, and skilled labor.

Texas: The Reshoring Powerhouse

Texas has emerged as the clear leader in this domestic revival. In 2024 and 2025, the state ranked first in the nation for reshoring and foreign direct investment (FDI) job announcements. Cities such as Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and Plano have become primary destinations for high-tech manufacturing, ranging from semiconductors to advanced electronics. Texas benefits from a business-friendly environment with no state corporate or personal income tax, extensive Gulf Coast port access, and a massive, skilled industrial workforce.

The "Silicon Heartland" and the Southwest

The epicenter of the semiconductor "arms race" is undoubtedly Phoenix and Queen Creek, Arizona. With historic investments from giants like TSMC—which expanded its commitment to $165 billion—and Intel, the region has become a global hub for fabrication plants and advanced R&D.

Further north, the "Silicon Heartland" is taking shape in Ohio, where massive memory fabs are rising. Micron's staggering $200 billion investment is not only revitalizing New York and Idaho but also creating a domestic memory-chip supply chain that is no longer dependent on East Asian foundries.

The "Battery Belt" of the Southeast

The transition to electric vehicles (EVs) has birthed a new industrial corridor known as the "Battery Belt." Spanning from Georgia and Tennessee to the Carolinas, Alabama, and Kentucky, this region has captured over 50% of all U.S. EV and battery investments. Hyundai's $21 billion U.S. expansion, centered largely in Georgia, and LG Energy Solution's multi-billion-dollar complexes are anchoring this region as a global competitor in clean energy manufacturing.

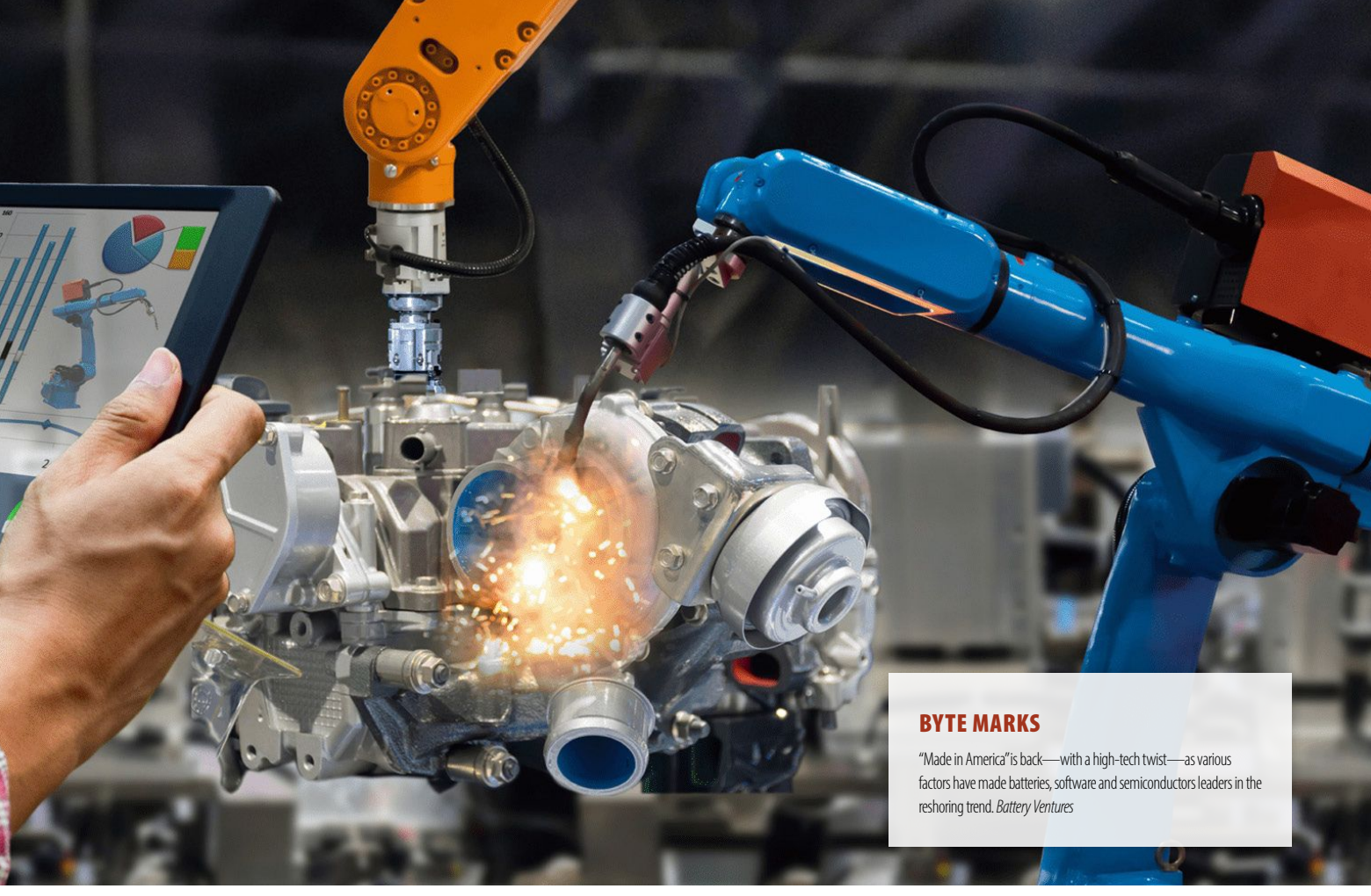
The Pharmaceutical Resurgence in Puerto Rico

Surprisingly, one of the most effective reshoring hubs for the life sciences isn't on the U.S. mainland. Puerto Rico has experienced a massive resurgence as a pharmaceutical manufacturing hub. By leveraging its existing industrial base and specialized workforce, the island is helping companies like Johnson & Johnson and Eli LILLY MOVE HIGH-VALUE DRUG PRODUCTION CLOSER TO HOME.

THE NEARSHORING HUB: THE MEXICAN RENAISSANCE

While the U.S. builds its domestic capacity, Mexico has become the premier hub for nearshoring. According to the Baker Institute report, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is being leveraged to create a "Critical Minerals Club."

Mexico's strategic importance is highlighted by initiatives like "Litio 2040," a vision for sustainably developing Mexico's lithium reserves. As the world pivots to electric vehicles and AI-driven technologies, the minerals required for batteries have become the new "gold." Taylor emphasizes that for reshoring to be successful, the U.S. and its partners must secure the entire



BYTE MARKS

"Made in America" is back—with a high-tech twist—as various factors have made batteries, software and semiconductors leaders in the reshoring trend. *Battery Ventures*

"ground to grid" pipeline within the USMCA framework.

THE LOGISTICS OF A MULTIPOLAR WORLD: THE MODAL SHIFT

The transition to these new hubs is fundamentally changing how goods move. The Morgan Stanley Research report, "The Rewiring of Global Logistics," identifies a profound "modal shift." Because manufacturing is moving closer to the end consumer, the reliance on massive ocean container ships—the giants of the "Old Globalization"—is slowing.

Morgan Stanley's analysis shows that truck freight is the outright beneficiary of this shift. As goods move between Mexico and Texas, or between the new hubs in Ohio and the Southeast, the high-frequency, short-haul lanes are becoming the dominant arteries of trade. The report predicts that while sea freight volumes will grow more slowly than GDP—a phenomenon they call "Slowbalization"—listed truck freight players and specialized logistics firms are poised for significant earnings growth.

GLOBAL FRIENDSHORING: ASEAN AND INDIA

While North America is the focus for the U.S. market, "Friendshoring" is playing out across the Pacific. Morgan Stanley Research identifies the ASEAN region, specifically Vietnam and Indonesia, as critical alternatives to traditional manufacturing centers. Vietnam has become a primary destination for electronics manufacturers looking to diversify away from China, while Indonesia is leveraging its nickel reserves to anchor a regional battery value chain.

Furthermore, India is emerging as a "mega-hub." With its massive domestic market and government-led "Make in India" initiatives, India represents the ultimate friendshoring destination—a democracy with an expanding infrastructure and a skilled, English-speaking workforce.

CONCLUSION: SLOWBALIZATION, NOT DEGLOBALIZATION

As we navigate 2026, the narrative is not one of the world "closing off," but of the world "moving closer." As the Morgan Stanley Research eloquently puts it, we are witnessing "Slowbalization, not deglobalization." Trade is still happening, but the routes are shorter, the partners are "friendlier," and the modes of transport are shifting from the sea to the road.

The "Right Hubs" of today—the industrial parks of Texas, the fabs of Arizona, and the mineral-rich regions of Mexico—share common traits: geopolitical alignment, logistical resilience, and a seat at the table of the new "Critical Minerals Club." By synthesizing the geopolitical scholarship of the Baker Institute with the market analysis of Morgan Stanley, a clear picture emerges: the future of global trade belongs to those who can navigate a multipolar world with agility, prioritizing the stability of a "friend" over the razor-thin margins of a distant stranger.

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PORT FEATURE

THE WHEELED GIANTS

AMERICA'S TOP 25 RO-RO GATEWAYS

BY **TODD MATHEWS**

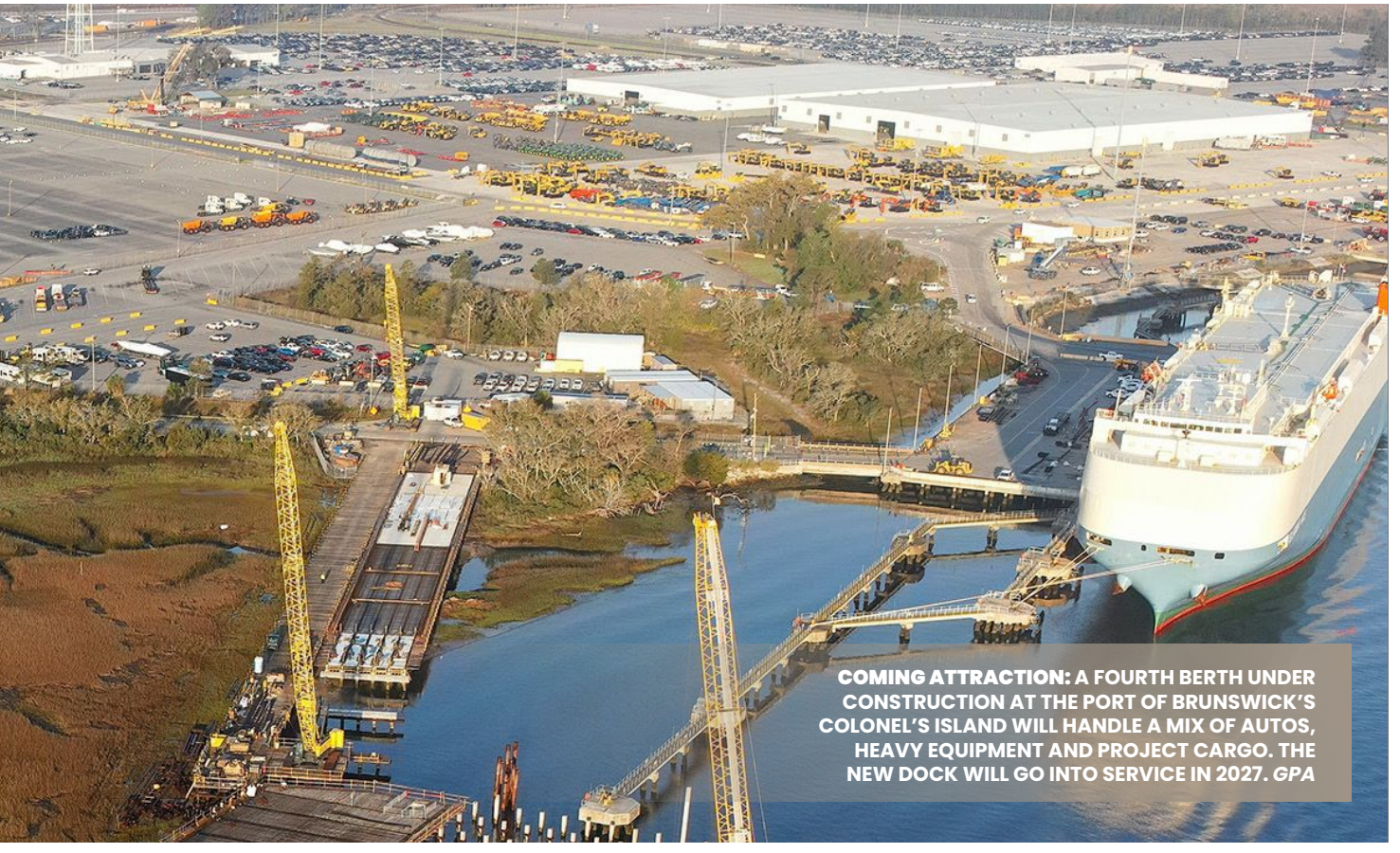
In the complex ecosystem of global logistics, not every piece of cargo fits neatly into a corrugated steel box. For the automotive, construction and agricultural sectors, the lifeblood of trade is roll-on/roll-off, commonly known as ro-ro. .

Unlike traditional container shipping, which requires massive cranes to hoist cargo, ro-ro vessels act as giant, floating parking lots. Vehicles, heavy machinery and "static" cargo on trailers are simply driven on and off the ship via integrated ramps.

This method is vital to global trade because it minimizes handling, reduces the risk of damage to high-value vehicles, and allows for the rapid movement of oversized equipment that keeps the world's infrastructure moving.

To identify the leaders in this specialized field, the 2026 Port Performance Freight Statistics, alongside data from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center and the Census Bureau, utilized a multidimensional methodology. Rather than looking at volume alone, the rankings account for actual tonnage, vessel dwell times (how quickly a ship is processed), berth utilization (the efficiency of dock space), and the total dollar value of the imports and exports crossing the piers.

Here then are the top 25 ro-ro ports in the United States that define the standard for efficiency and economic impact in 2026.



COMING ATTRACTION: A FOURTH BERTH UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT THE PORT OF BRUNSWICK'S COLONEL'S ISLAND WILL HANDLE A MIX OF AUTOS, HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND PROJECT CARGO. THE NEW DOCK WILL GO INTO SERVICE IN 2027. *GPA*

PORT OF BRUNSWICK (GA): Solidifying its status as the nation's premier auto hub, Brunswick has expanded its Colonel's Island Terminal to accommodate nearly every major global car manufacturer.

PORT OF BALTIMORE (MD): Following a historic infrastructure recovery, Baltimore remains the undisputed king of "high and heavy," moving more farm and construction machinery than any other U.S. port.

PORT OF JACKSONVILLE (FL): Known as JAXPORT, this facility serves as the primary clinical gateway for the Florida consumer market and the essential ro-ro link to Puerto Rico.

PORT NEWARK (NY/NJ): Occupying the heart of the most densely populated region in the country, this port manages a high-velocity flow of luxury European imports destined for the Tri-State area.

PORT OF HUENEME (CA): Often called the "Port that helps California drive," Hueneme specializes in high-touch processing for specialized vehicle brands on the West Coast.

PORT OF PORTLAND (OR): This Pacific Northwest powerhouse serves as a critical entry point for Asian-manufactured vehicles, supported by an expansive rail network reaching deep into the Midwest.

PORT OF TACOMA (WA): As a key component of the Northwest Seaport Alliance, Tacoma excels in handling heavy industrial ro-ro cargo bound for the Alaskan and Pacific markets.

PORT OF CHARLESTON (SC): Driven by the proximity of major manufacturing plants, Charleston is a primary exit point for American-made luxury SUVs exported to global markets.

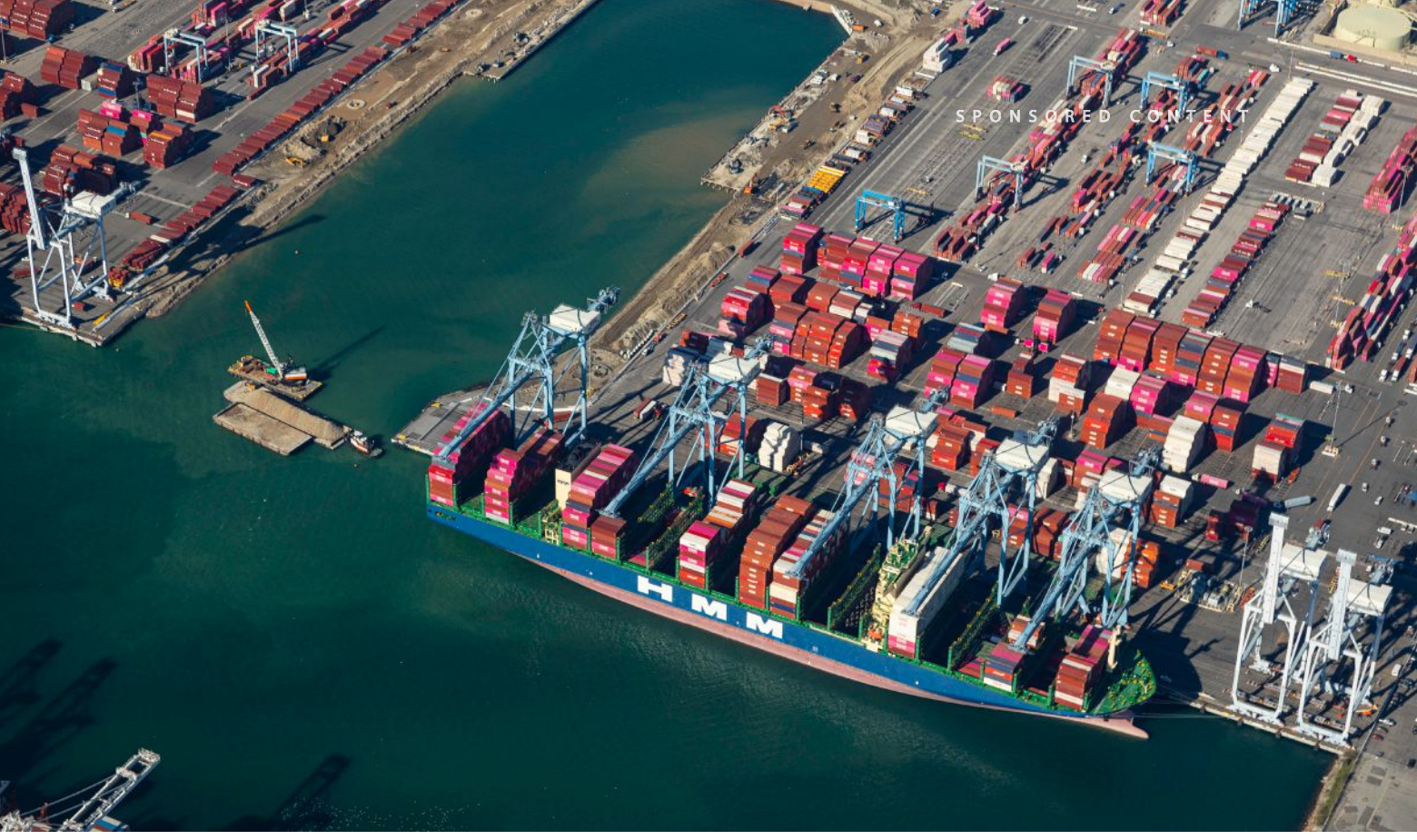
PORT OF GALVESTON (TX): Strategically located at the mouth of the Houston Ship Channel, Galveston has carved out a niche as a high-efficiency distribution center for BMW and Mini.

PORT OF SAN DIEGO (CA): The National City Marine Terminal here is a model of efficiency, serving as the primary West Coast port of entry for Volkswagen Group of America.

PORT OF PHILADELPHIA (PA): Utilizing the Packer Avenue Marine Terminal, Philadelphia has seen a surge in ro-ro tonnage by specializing in the rapid processing of Hyundai and Kia shipments.

PORT OF WILMINGTON (DE): Beyond its famous fruit trade, Wilmington maintains a robust ro-ro operation that serves as a major hub for the export of used vehicles to the Middle East and Africa.

PORT OF PROVIDENCE (DAVISVILLE, RI): Located at the Quonset Business Park, this port is one of the largest auto importers in North America, often handling



LONG BEACH – THE PORT OF THE FUTURE

As the premier gateway for trans-Pacific trade, the Port of Long Beach is a global leader in green port initiatives and top-notch customer service, moving cargo with reliability, speed and efficiency. The Port moves more than $300 billion in cargo annually and supports 2.7 million jobs across the United States, including 691,000 in Southern California.

Industry leaders named Long Beach "The Best West Coast Seaport in North America" in 2025 for the seventh consecutive year, thanks to its focus on increasing competitiveness and operational excellence. The year 2025 was the busiest on record for the Port of Long Beach, with nearly 9.9 million TEUs moved, making it part of the nation's busiest port complex.

The Port of Long Beach is focused on transforming into the Port of the Future, with a projected throughput of 20 million TEUs annually by 2050. To remain at the cutting edge, the Port is investing $3.3 billion in strategic projects over the next 10 years to build the Port of the Future by enhancing marine terminal productivity, delivering greater efficiency to our customers and improving the sustainability of our operations.

These modernization efforts include construction of a state-of-the-art rail hub that will speed the movement of cargo through the port complex and shift more cargo to rail, helping to alleviate traffic on local freeways.

Achieving environmental goals while maximizing operations remains a priority as the Port explores the proposed development of the first conventional, zero-emissions container terminal in the world. If approved, the facility would handle up to 1.8 million TEUs annually, utilizing human-operated cargo-handling equipment powered by renewable energy.

By operating Foreign Trade Zone 50, the Port of Long Beach helps mitigate the impacts of tariffs and increase cash flow by deferring import duties and eliminating duties on re-exports for qualifying businesses within Orange County and parts of San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties.

The Port of Long Beach offers a data solution known as CargoNav for the industry's free use, providing a flexible, safe source of data on cargo movement that registered users tap into for valuable visibility into cargo movement, allowing operations crews to better coordinate workforce and equipment deployments, giving operators the information they need, when they need it.

Soon, CargoNav will be equipped with a Universal Trucking Appointment System that will allow motor carriers to schedule the pickup and drop-off of containers at any of the Port's six marine terminals – and eventually the entire San Pedro Bay.

Customers choose the Port of Long Beach for the most dependable, cost-effective and fastest delivery of goods in the world, along with the strong relationships it maintains with industry, community, environmental advocates and partner agencies.

For more information, please visit **www.polb.com.**

The Port of Long Beach.
Always open. Always moving.

Long Beach International Gateway Bridge is fully operational – always ready to serve **ALL** of the San Pedro Bay.

Port of
LONG BEACH
THE PORT OF CHOICE

200,000+ vehicles annually for the North Atlantic.

PORT OF RICHMOND (CA): This Bay Area facility is a dedicated specialist for Subaru and Honda, boasting some of the lowest vessel dwell times on the West Coast.

PORT OF VANCOUVER (WA): Vancouver has pivoted its strategy to focus on the export of heavy American-made wind energy components and agricultural equipment.

PORT OF BENICIA (CA): A unique, privately-operated facility, Benicia provides highly specialized, end-to-end processing for a high volume of vehicles in a compact, efficient footprint.

PORT OF SAVANNAH (GA): While famous for containers, Savannah's Ocean Terminal has become a massive ro-ro asset, providing a dedicated "heavy lift" alternative for regional manufacturers.

PORT OF LONG BEACH (CA): Long Beach leads the way in sustainable ro-ro operations, featuring the world's first "green" vehicle processing terminal powered by a massive on-site solar array.

PORT OF HOUSTON (TX): Houston leverages its world-class heavy-lift capabilities to manage massive "project cargo" ro-ro shipments for the global energy and oil sectors.

RIDING HIGH: THE STEVEDORING OF PORTS AMERICA HAS BEEN KEY IN THE PORT OF CHARLESTON BECOMING A PRIMARY EXIT POINT FOR AMERICAN-MADE LUXURY SUVS. ***PORTS AMERICA***

PORT OF LOS ANGELES (CA): Despite its container dominance, the Port of LA maintains world-class ro-ro facilities that focus on high-value, tech-integrated vehicles from Pacific Rim manufacturers.

PORT OF BOSTON (MA): Serving the New England corridor, Boston's dedicated auto berths provide a vital local entry point that avoids the congestion of larger Mid-Atlantic hubs.

PORT OF VIRGINIA (Norfolk, VA): The port's unmatched rail connectivity allows ro-ro cargo landed in Norfolk to reach the U.S. interior faster than almost any other East Coast location.

PORT EVERGLADES (FL): This port acts as the "neighborhood grocer" for the Caribbean, using ro-ro ramps to facilitate the short-sea shipping of everything from delivery trucks to emergency vehicles.

PORT OF GRAYS HARBOR (WA): Standing out as a major success story, Grays Harbor has become the leading West Coast exporter of American-made Chrysler, Jeep, and Dodge vehicles.

PORT OF MOBILE (AL): Fueled by the "Southern Automotive Corridor," Mobile has rapidly ascended the rankings by serving the logistics needs of the massive Mercedes-Benz and Mazda-Toyota plants nearby.

AIR CARGO LOGISTICS

EXPANDING HORIZONS

AIR CARGO LINKING SECONDARY CITIES TO GLOBAL TRADE

BY **TODD MATHEWS**

In March 2026, a "bomb cyclone" over the northeastern United States and coordinated strikes across major European gateways have paralyzed the primary arteries of global trade. For the third day in a row, the tarmac at Chicago O'Hare and Frankfurt remains a frozen graveyard of grounded freighters. Yet, in the sterile labs of a Munich hospital, a patient waits for a life-saving, temperature-sensitive biologics shipment from Alabama.

In the old world of 2024, this would have been a "total loss" scenario. Today, the cargo is already moving—not through the major hubs, but through the "pressure valves" of the global trade map.

THE SECONDARY CITY REVOLUTION

We are in the midst of a $251 billion air freight forwarding boom. As primary hubs like Memphis and Shanghai buckle under e-commerce saturation and weather volatility, the global trade map is being redrawn around secondary cities. These hubs offer lower landing fees, faster truck-to-air turnaround, and—most importantly in 2026—resilience.

1. The Aerospace Shock Absorber: Huntsville, USA (HSV)

Known as the "Rocket City," Huntsville has leveraged its International Intermodal Center to become a specialized global gateway.

The Connector: Huntsville International Airport (HSV) one of the few secondary U.S. airports approved as a Commercial Spaceport, designed to handle the largest cargo aircraft.

Global Link: It serves as a direct "Alternative to Atlanta" for high-value aerospace and defense cargo. Dedicated charter lanes to European industrial hubs like Luxembourg allow time-sensitive components to bypass the multi-day "recovery lags" that plague coastal mega-hubs during storms.

ALABAMA PROUD

Huntsville International Airport has emerged as a worthy alternative to the Atlanta hub, especially since being designated a Commercial Spaceport. *Huntsville.org*

2. The European Life-Science Gateway: Liège, Belgium (LGG)

In Europe, the Port of Liège has cemented its status as the world's most versatile "secondary" hub. While Brussels and Heathrow face strict night-flight bans, Liège has doubled down on a "Freighters First" policy.

The Connector: In early 2026, Emirates SkyCargo officially integrated Liège Airport, deploying five weekly Boeing 777F flights to support the "Golden Triangle" of Amsterdam, Paris, and Frankfurt.

Global Link: Liège is the premier European hub for the "cool chain" corridor. Three weekly flights connect LGG with Chicago O'Hare (ORD) and Dubai (DWC) for temperature-sensitive pharmaceuticals. When strikes paralyze primary hubs, Liège's AI-driven sorting facilities—which now process 1.3 million tonnes annually—keep the life-saving medical flow moving.

3. The Nearshoring Bridge: Mexico City (AIFA)

The Felipe Ángeles International Airport (AIFA) has officially become the beating heart of North American nearshoring. As manufacturers shift production from East Asia to Mexico, AIFA has expanded its capacity to accommodate nine simultaneous heavy freighter operations.

The Connector: AIFA funnels automotive parts and electronics from Querétaro and Monterrey directly into U.S. distribution networks.

Global Link: By bypassing the congested border crossings of Laredo, air cargo at AIFA is shaving 48 hours off supply chain cycles, processing over 600,000 tons of freight since its opening.

4. The E-Commerce Engine: Columbus, USA (LCK)

Rickenbacker International Airport in Ohio is the textbook example of a secondary city outperforming major hubs in pure logistics speed.

The Connector: Strategically located within a one-day drive of nearly 50% of the U.S. and Canadian populations, Rickenbacker is a cargo-dedicated airport.

Global Link: With the opening of the Air Cargo 5 Terminal in 2026—a 100,000-square-foot facility—LCK has perfected a "One-Stop-Shop" approach. By managing ground handling and warehousing under one roof, LCK achieves aircraft-to-truck transfer times that are 50% faster than the congested primary hubs.

5. The Hemispheric Pivot: Miami, USA (MIA)

While a major city, Miami acts as the "secondary pivot" for trans-Pacific trade entering Latin America.

The Connector: MIA handled nearly 3.5 million tons of cargo in 2025, marking its sixth straight record year.

Global Link: It serves as the primary "Trans-Shipment Shield," where cargo from Europe and Asia is broken down and rerouted to secondary cities across the Caribbean and South America. MIA now handles 82% of all air imports between the U.S. and the Latin American region, powered by a $9 billion "Modernization in Action" plan.

RISK-MITIGATION CHECKLIST: SHIFTING TO SECONDARY HUBS

For freight forwarders, the strategic shift to secondary air cargo hubs isn't a suggestion; it's a necessity. Here's how leading 3PLs are de-risking the transition:

Dual-Hub Strategy (Primary & Secondary): Maintain active relationships and pre-booked slot agreements with at least one primary mega-hub and two secondary hubs for each critical lane. This ensures immediate failover capacity during disruptions.

AI-Driven Lane Diversification: Utilize predictive analytics platforms (like FourKites or Blue Yonder) to identify emerging "smart corridors" that leverage new intermodal connections (e.g., direct rail-to-air at Huntsville, or road-to-air at Rickenbacker).

Digital-First Document Management: Implement Electronic Bills of Lading (eBL) and other digital trade documents compatible with ISO 20022 standards. Secondary hubs often have leaner, more agile customs processes that benefit from paperless transactions.

Dedicated Ground Handling Partnerships: For specialized cargo (e.g., pharmaceuticals, aerospace), secure guaranteed ground handling slots and temperature-controlled storage at secondary airports. Many secondary hubs manage these in-house, offering greater control.

Geo-Fencing & IoT Visibility: Deploy IoT sensors on high-value cargo and implement geo-fencing alerts. This provides real-time tracking, allowing for immediate rerouting decisions when primary lanes are disrupted.

"Trusted Carrier" Networks: Develop a prioritized list of carriers that routinely operate out of secondary hubs, offering them consistent volume in exchange for guaranteed lift capacity during peak seasons or emergencies.

Dynamic Pricing & Capacity Algorithms: Leverage AI-powered platforms that can instantly re-quote rates and find available capacity across multiple secondary hubs, rather than relying on static contracts.

THE "JUST-IN-TIME" LOOP

Back in Munich, the "just-in-time" delivery alert pings. The biologics shipment, rerouted through the specialized Huntsville-to-Liège cool-chain corridor, has bypassed the storm-ravaged primary hubs entirely.

In the 2026 economy, "Just-in-Time" no longer means "praying for good weather" at a mega hub. It means having an Agentic AI system that sees the secondary cities as the true anchors of the global grid. The trade map has been rewired; the patient in Munich is safe, and the logistics engine of the world hasn't skipped a single beat.

DIGITAL-FIRST ... OR DIE

BEING A SMART PORT IS A NO BRAINER

BY **TODD MATHEWS**

The global maritime landscape has reached a technological tipping point. While the U.S. has made massive strides, the race to build the "digital port of the future" is a global sprint. China continues to set a formidable pace, with the Yangshan Deep-Water Port in Shanghai now operating more than 130 unmanned guided vehicles (AGVs) around the clock, and Qingdao Port recently deploying the world's first vacuum-based automated mooring system—completing vessel docking in under 30 seconds without a single human on the pier.

Europe remains a powerhouse of innovation, with the Port of Rotterdam and Antwerp-Bruges launching integrated drone networks for 24/7 surveillance and automated hull inspections. Meanwhile, in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia's NEOM Oxagon has officially opened its Terminal 1, designed from day one as a fully electric, AI-first ecosystem. To catch up and maintain maritime dominance, the U.S. has launched the 2026 Maritime Action Plan (MAP), a sweeping federal initiative to modernize shipyards and digitize the nation's most critical gateways.

Indeed, in the high-stakes world of 2026 maritime logistics, the "Smart Port" is no longer a pilot project—it is the operational standard. To survive the volatility of global trade, these five U.S. ports have transformed into digital-first hubs, using AI, IoT, and unified data to move cargo at the speed of code.

TRAINING HUB

Port of Savannah is leading in "speed to rail," using its Mason Mega Rail Terminal and AI-driven logistics to move containers from vessel to train in under 22 hours—the fastest in the industry. *Georgia Ports*

The race for the smart port had become a race for survival. In 2026, the winners aren't the ones with the biggest cranes, but the ones with the **smartest code**.

1. PORT OF LOS ANGELES: THE "BUILD SMARTER" PIONEER

As the nation's busiest port, Los Angeles has doubled down on its Port Optimizer platform. By March 2026, this system had evolved from a simple dashboard into a predictive engine that synchronizes data across the entire San Pedro Bay complex.

The Digital Edge: Through a recent $8 million state grant, the port has extended its Universal Truck Appointment System to neighboring terminals, creating a "single pane of glass" for motor carriers.

The Smart Goal: Their "Pier 500" initiative aims to be the world's first terminal designed from the ground up to be both fully digital and zero-emission, integrating AI-driven cargo flow with clean-energy infrastructure.

2. PORT OF LONG BEACH: THE "STARTUP" GIANT

Long Beach CEO Dr. Noel Hacegaba has famously pushed the port to operate like a "115-year-old startup." Their flagship digital tool, CargoNav, is the center of their strategy.

The Digital Edge: CargoNav blossomed out of the "Supply Chain Information Highway" to provide shippers with real-time, granular track-and-trace capabilities.

The Smart Goal: The port is working toward the Metro Express Terminal at Pier S, a proposed zero-emissions terminal that will use AI to double the port's cargo throughput by 2050 while maintaining a "human-operated, AI-assisted" workforce model.

3. PORT OF VIRGINIA: AMERICA'S MOST MODERN GATEWAY

The Port of Virginia has positioned itself as the tech-forward alternative on the East Coast, completing its $1.4 billion Gateway Investment Program in early 2026.

The Digital Edge: Virginia is one of the most automated ports in the country, utilizing semi-automated stacks and Remote-Controlled Suez-class cranes. This reduces human risk while increasing precision in container placement.

The Smart Goal: By 2027, the port will reach an annual capacity of 6 million TEUs, supported by a reconfigured NIT North terminal that uses real-time data integration to manage the deepest shipping channels on the U.S. East Coast.

4. PORT OF SAVANNAH: THE "SMART FREIGHT CORRIDOR"

The Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) is tackling the bottleneck between the dock and the highway through the Greater Savannah Smart Freight Corridor.

The Digital Edge: Partnering with the Georgia Dept. of Transportation, the port is deploying a first-of-its-kind fiber-based network along SR 307. This "Smart Road" uses IoT sensors and AI to facilitate and prioritize freight traffic moving from the port to Interstate 16.

The Smart Goal: Savannah is leading in "speed to rail," using its Mason Mega Rail Terminal and AI-driven logistics to move containers from vessel to train in under 22 hours—the fastest in the industry.

5. PORT OF CHARLESTON (SC PORTS): THE "SMART POOL"

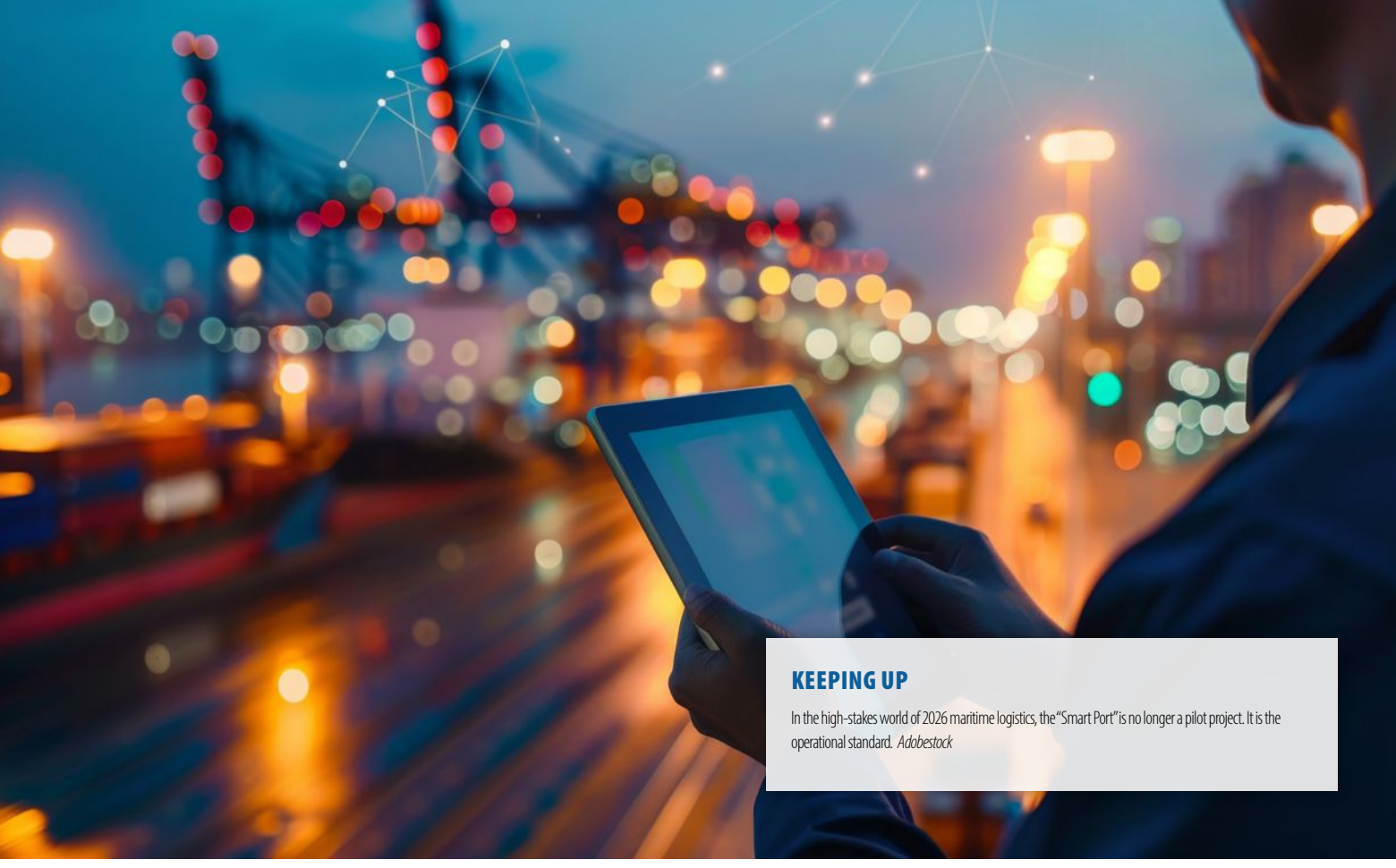
South Carolina Ports has focused on the "connective tissue" of logistics—chassis management—through its proprietary SMART POOL.

The Digital Edge: Unlike other ports that rely on third-party chassis pools, SC Ports manages its own fleet using state-of-the-art tracking and billing systems. This ensures that a digital-first carrier always has a "smart" chassis ready to go, reducing dwell times.

The Smart Goal: Their Navy Base Intermodal Facility, nearing full operation in 2026, uses AI to coordinate near-dock rail moves, ensuring the Port of Charleston remains the deepest and most technologically integrated harbor in the Southeast.

COMPARISON: 2026 GLOBAL SMART PORT INNOVATIONS

Region: China
Key Smart Port: Qingdao
Landmark Technology: Vacuum-based automated mooring (30-second docking).
Region: Europe
Key Smart Port: Antwerp-Bruges
Landmark Technology: World-first city-scale autonomous drone monitoring network.
Region: Middle East
Key Smart Port: NEOM Oxagon
Landmark Technology: 100% clean-



KEEPING UP

In the high-stakes world of 2026 maritime logistics, the "Smart Port" is no longer a pilot project. It is the operational standard. *Adobestock*

energy, AI-integrated greenfield terminal.
Region: United States
Key Smart Port: Virginia
Landmark Technology: Full-scale remote-controlled crane and semi-automated stacking.
Region: U.S.
Key Smart Port: Savannah
Landmark Technology: AI-prioritized "Smart Freight Corridor" highway integration.

THE DIGITAL SHIELD IN ACTION

It was 3 a.m. on a Tuesday, yet the Port of Virginia was humming with the quiet precision of a Swiss watch. Deep in the North Terminal's remote-control center, an operator sat at a desk that looked more like a high-end flight simulator than a dockworker's station. On her screens, massive Suez-class cranes—operated via fiber-optic lag-free links—plucked containers from the Atlantic Sovereign with millimeter accuracy.

"We have a localized data spike in the Savannah Smart Corridor," a notification flashed on the main wall.

In the old world, a 40-car pileup on the highway leading into a port would paralyze operations for a day. But the Port of Savannah's new AI-integrated road system detected the anomaly before the first siren even wailed. The "Smart Road" instantly communicated with the port's terminal operating system, automatically re-sequencing the crane moves for the next hour to prioritize rail-bound cargo, bypassing the blocked highway entirely.

THE AUTOMATED RESPONSE

Simultaneously, at the Port of Los Angeles, the Port Optimizer system signaled an incoming "ghost ship"—a carrier whose digital signature didn't match its reported cargo weight. In 2024, this would have required a manual boarding and hours of delay. In 2026, an autonomous drone swarm launched from the pier, performing a sub-millimeter external hull scan and radiation check while the ship was still three miles out.

"Scan clear. Behavioral trust verified," the system chimed.

THE GLOBAL STANDARD

By dawn, the U.S. ports had handled a combined 45,000 TEUs without a single safety incident or manual paperwork error. They were no longer just catching up to the likes of Qingdao or Rotterdam; they were leapfrogging them by integrating National Maritime Cybersecurity protocols directly into the cargo flow.

The "Digital Shield" wasn't just about speed; it was about resilience. If a cyber-attack hit a terminal in Charleston, the SC Ports SMART POOL could shift its chassis fleet to a secondary intermodal hub in minutes, guided by an AI that saw the entire supply chain as a single, fluid organism.

The race for the smart port had become a race for survival. In 2026, the winners aren't the ones with the biggest cranes, but the ones with the smartest code.

TAKE ME TO YOUR LOGISTICS LEADER

The organizations that will benefit most from AI in global trade will design systems that reinforce human judgment rather than remove it. *Maximalfocus on Unsplash*

AI IN GLOBAL TRADE

WHERE AUTOMATION DELIVERS VALUE AND WHERE IT INTRODUCES RISK

BY JACOB LEE

Artificial intelligence is no longer being evaluated as an emerging capability in global trade. It is being deployed under pressure. Rising volatility, margin compression, and persistent disruption are forcing supply chain leaders to make faster decisions about where automation belongs and where it does not.

AI's being integrated into global supply chains at a rapid pace. The goal of this widespread adoption is to automate processes like demand forecasting, inventory management, warehousing picking and packing, and route optimization. For many companies engaged in international trade, the question is no longer whether to integrate AI in their supply chain, but how to implement it responsibly and strategically.

Despite the benefits that AI is delivering, the reality is more complex. The AI automation of essential supply chain processes will improve efficiency and visibility. However, it will also lead to operational risks, governance challenges, and workforce implications. As volatility in the global trade environment continues, supply chain leaders must approach AI automation as a useful tool with strict oversight.

AI IS AN EMERGING TOOL IN GLOBAL TRADE OPERATIONS

Adoption data across global supply chains remains inconsistent, but the underlying pattern is not. Most organizations are not scaling AI across operations. They are deploying it selectively, testing where it delivers measurable impact while avoiding exposure in high-risk functions.

This gap between experimentation and full-scale deployment reflects a broader reality. The constraint is not access to AI technology. It's the confidence that supply chain leaders have in how AI performs under real operational pressure. Variability, incomplete data, and cross-border complexity continue to challenge even well-designed systems.

The hesitation is not just a technology issue. It reflects a structural challenge within global supply chains, where variability, fragmented data, and cross-border complexity make consistent AI performance difficult to achieve.

That said, data still suggests that AI and its implications for supply chain automation is still receiving serious consideration. A survey of supply chain leaders released by ABI Research last October found:

- 94% plan to use AI and GenAI for decision-making
- 90% plan to use AI to enhance customer support
- 76% see potential for autonomous AI agents

While companies might be somewhat hesitant to use AI on a large-scale, use of the technology is expected to grow.

THE HIDDEN RISKS BEHIND AI ADOPTION

On the surface, AI seems like a great way to automate many supply chain processes. However, there are risks associated with the technology that supply chain leaders must consider. First and foremost, AI relies on one crucial ingredient: data.

When data is incomplete, inaccurate, or poorly structured, the performance of AI can deteriorate. This can lead to dire consequences for businesses that are using it to automate their supply chain.

A less visible risk is decision opacity. As AI becomes embedded in routing, sourcing, and compliance workflows, organizations risk losing visibility into how decisions are made. This creates governance constraints that traditional supply chain systems were not designed to handle.

Another risk is cyber-attacks. Every time AI is integrated into an operational platform, a new entry point for hackers opens. One compromised access point can allow attackers to gain access to a company's broader supply chain network. Company trade secrets and personal customer data could be leaked if this happens.

Regulatory uncertainty is another risk that could be a problem for supply chain leaders in the future. Governments in the U.S. and abroad are exploring regulations that govern the use of AI. Businesses using AI to navigate trade compliance and international transactions could be subject to new regulatory requirements.

There's also the concern that AI automated supply chains will lead to workforce displacement. When warehousing operations, transportation planning, and other logistics processes are handled by a machine, human workers will inevitably be affected.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE INVESTING

The question is not whether AI should be implemented, but where it should be trusted. That decision requires a different level of scrutiny than traditional technology investments.

Organizations are not holding back on AI due to lack of access. They are evaluating whether the operational gains justify the cost in environments where outcomes are still inconsistent.

The more critical distinction is whether AI is addressing structural constraints or simply optimizing processes that are already stable.

Not all AI models are interchangeable, and misalignment at the selection stage introduces downstream operational risk.

Vendor selection increasingly determines how dependent an organization becomes on external intelligence layers, with long-term implications for control, flexibility, and risk exposure.

THE HUMAN ELEMENT REMAINS ESSENTIAL

Despite the benefits that AI automation can provide, human expertise is still essential for the success of global supply chains. AI systems might be able to process large datasets, but they can't fully interpret geopolitical risks, regulatory changes, or complex supplier relationships.

Humans remain responsible for prompting, monitoring, and refining AI systems to ensure they continue to function effectively. The organizations that will benefit most from AI in global trade will not be the ones that automate the fastest. They will be the ones that understand where human judgment remains irreplaceable and design systems that reinforce it rather than remove it.

That said, workforce development is a strategic priority when implementing AI automation. Supply chain leaders must see to it that employees are trained to operate it correctly. Not only that, but workers must be able to understand the limitations of AI as well.

Companies that treat AI as a way to replace the workers managing their supply chain may find themselves overly dependent on algorithmic decision-making. This can affect a company's ability to adapt to new challenges and think independently. Instead, supply chain leaders should invest in both artificial intelligence and workforce development so their company will be better positioned to navigate the complexities of global trade.

AI AS A STRATEGIC TOOL

Artificial intelligence and automation are undeniably reshaping the structure of global supply chains. Predictive analytics, warehouse robotics, compliance automation and dynamic transportation planning are already delivering measurable benefits across many industries.

Yet automation is not a universal solution to every supply chain challenge. The success of these technologies depends heavily on data quality, governance frameworks, cybersecurity safeguards, and thoughtful workforce integration.

For executives navigating the next phase of supply chain modernization, the goal shouldn't be to automate everything as quickly as possible. Instead, the objective is to identify where AI can enhance decision-making, reduce operational risk, and strengthen resilience without compromising transparency or oversight.

In an era defined by uncertainty and disruption, artificial intelligence offers powerful tools for navigating complexity. But like any strategic capability, its true value depends on where it is applied, how it is governed, and where human judgement remains essential.

Jacob Lee is a freight and logistics writer who helps businesses understand the operational and regulatory details behind moving goods safely and efficiently. Drawing on his experience in freight handling, warehouse management and international logistics research, he explains complex shipping topics in a way that is practical, clear and useful for businesses needing to ship freight.

BLAST FROM THE (RECENT) PAST

Predictive fatigue models, or biometric and AI-driven monitoring software that analyzes driver alertness and circadian rhythms, are optimizing routes and improving safety. *Timur Garifov on Unsplash*

3PL/TRUCKING

Trust the Ghost, Not The Driver

HOW "BEHAVIORAL TRUST SCANS" AND PREDICTIVE FATIGUE MODELS ENDED THE 2025 IDENTITY CRISIS AND CHANGED THE CAB FOREVER

BY TODD MATHEWS

The year is 2026, and the "gut feeling" of the American trucker has been upgraded to a precision-guided digital instinct. What was once a $20 billion niche in 2024 has exploded into a $196.58 billion AI-driven ecosystem. This is no longer just about moving boxes; it is the "Autonomous Orchestration" of a continent.

CHAPTER 1: THE PREDICTION AT MILE MARKER 42

Sarah, a veteran dispatcher at a mid-sized 3PL in Indianapolis, stared at her "Command Tower" display. In 2024, she would have spent this hour screaming into a headset, trying to find a carrier for a refrigerated load of perishables stuck in Laredo.

Today, she didn't even have to look for a truck. The Truckstop-FreightFriend engine had already found three.

"Sarah," the AI's calm, synthetic voice spoke through her terminal, "I've flagged Carrier ID 4492—'Blue Streak Logistics.' They have a 98% reliability score for this lane. My Predictive Fatigue Model shows the driver, Marcus, will hit his peak alertness window just as the Laredo sun sets. I've pre-negotiated the rate based on real-time Dynamic Pricing models. Do you wish to book?"

Sarah tapped the glass. "Book it. And run a Behavioral Trust Scan."

This was the new standard. Since the 2025 "Identity Crisis"—a wave of high-tech freight fraud—brokers now relied on Agentic AI to verify more than just paperwork. The system checked

Marcus' live, device-level data: where his truck actually was, how consistently he'd performed over the last 48 hours, and his "Digital Fingerprint" to ensure his authority hadn't been hijacked.

CHAPTER 2: THE GHOST IN THE ROUTE

Twelve hundred miles away, Marcus felt his steering wheel vibrate. His in-cab AI, nicknamed "The Ghost," was talking to the road.

"Marcus, we're adjusting the route," The Ghost whispered. "A micro-weather event is forming over the Ozarks, and FourKites real-time visibility data shows a three-hour detention spike at the original receiver's dock in St. Louis."

Marcus didn't argue. He watched his GPS reroute him through a secondary "Intelligent Lane." This wasn't just a detour; it was a Multi-Objective Optimization. The AI was simultaneously calculating fuel efficiency, toll costs, and—most importantly—his Circadian Alignment.

As a newer driver, Marcus had no nostalgia for paper logs. He expected the "Uber-ization" of his workday. His cab was a node in a massive Machine Learning (ML) network that now held a 47% share of the logistics market. The ML didn't just see traffic; it saw patterns. It knew that on Tuesdays, the scale at Mile 142 was always backed up, and it automatically adjusted his cruise control to save 4% on fuel by "platooning" with an autonomous convoy five miles ahead.

CHAPTER 3: THE LAST THOUSAND FEET

By the time Marcus' truck reached the outskirts of the destination, the load's journey was already being handed off to the next layer of the machine.

As part of the $196 billion AI transformation, the U.S. had finally leaned into Last-Mile Innovation. Because the administration had loosened drone regulations in 2025, allowing for Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) flight, the final, most expensive leg of the journey was no longer a bottleneck.

At a micro-fulfillment hub, a Google Wing drone detached from its magnetic dock. It didn't need a pilot. It used the same ISO 20022 "rich data" from the original freight invoice to identify the exact medical sample Marcus was carrying. While Marcus' truck was still three miles out, the drone met him at a designated "Trans-Load Point" along the highway. Marcus didn't even have to climb out of his cab. An automated arm transferred a small, temperature-controlled canister from the trailer to the drone.

"Delivery to University Hospital: 4 minutes," the drone's status pinged on Marcus' dash.

CHAPTER 4: THE SAFETY DIVIDEND

What Marcus didn't see was the Predictive Fatigue Insurance working in the background. His carrier had recently switched to a "Pay-as-you-Drive-Safe" model. Because Marcus' cab was equipped with AI cameras and biometrics that verified his alertness, his insurance premiums dropped by 15% for this specific trip.

This was the newest product in the industry: Dynamic Risk Adjustment. Insurance wasn't a flat annual fee anymore; it was a real-time reflection of the AI's ability to prevent an accident before it happened.

CHAPTER 5: THE BOTTOM LINE

Back in Indianapolis, Sarah watched the final green checkmark appear on her screen. The entire lifecycle—from the predictive match in Laredo to the drone delivery in the city—had been "Atomic."

The software sector's 26% CAGR had turned her 3PL from a phone-tag operation into a high-yield tech firm. By using Ship Now, Pay Later—an innovative embedded finance product that bridged the 90-day payment gap—Sarah's company was able to pay Marcus instantly, keeping his cash flow healthy and his loyalty high.

"In 2024, we were just moving weight," Sarah thought, watching the data flow. "In 2026, we're moving intelligence."

The American logistics industry had survived the "Trucking Recession" not by working harder, but by becoming a self-correcting, AI-governed organism. The machines didn't replace the drivers or the dispatchers; they just removed the "drama," leaving a cleaner, faster path toward a $200 billion future.

PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGIES MENTIONED

Truckstop Freight Marketplace: A neutral, high-scale digital platform used by carriers, brokers, and shippers to post loads, source trucks, and manage the entire freight lifecycle.

FreightFriend: A cloud-based carrier relationship management (CRM) and procurement solution that uses AI to rank and match high-quality freight with trusted carriers.

FourKites Real-Time Visibility: An intelligent control tower platform that provides predictive ETAs and autonomous resolution by tracking shipments across weather, traffic, and terminal data.

Blue Yonder Cognitive Orchestration: An AI-driven supply chain platform that integrates end-to-end planning and execution to automate warehouse labor, route optimization, and resource allocation.

BVLOS (Beyond Visual Line of Sight) Drone Systems: Unmanned aerial vehicles (such as Zipline or Google Wing) capable of autonomous delivery without direct pilot supervision, revolutionizing last-mile speed.

Agentic AI Compliance/Trust Scans: Automated software agents that perform real-time, device-level verification of carrier data and "Digital Fingerprints" to prevent freight fraud.

Predictive Fatigue Models: Biometric and AI-driven monitoring software that analyzes driver alertness and circadian rhythms to optimize routes and improve safety.

Dynamic Risk Adjustment Insurance: A real-time insurance model that automatically adjusts premiums based on AI-verified driver behavior, safety performance, and route conditions.

Ship Now, Pay Later (Embedded Finance): A fintech product that automatically bridges the 90-day invoice payment gap, providing immediate liquidity to carriers and forwarders upon proof of delivery.

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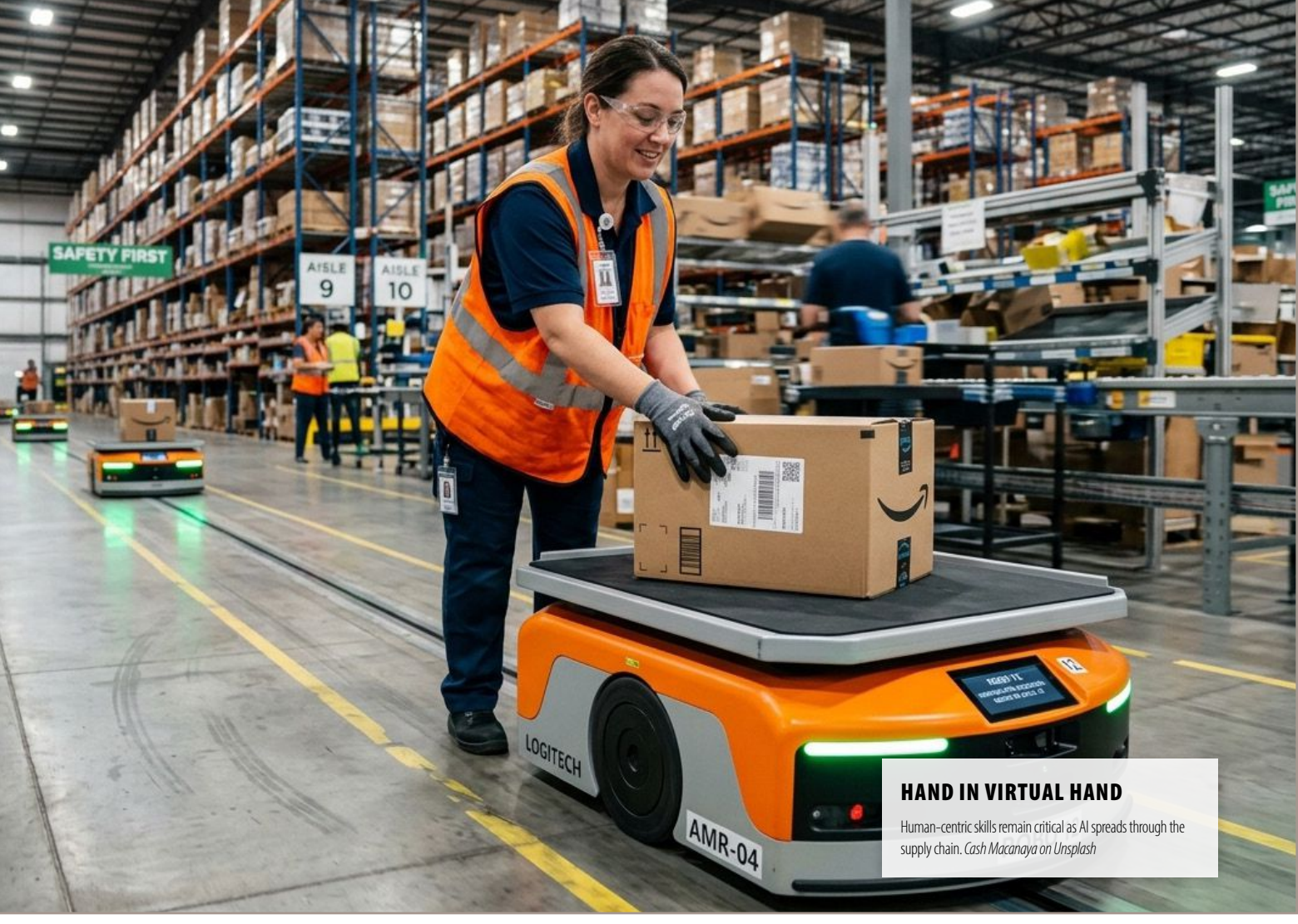


HAND IN VIRTUAL HAND

Human-centric skills remain critical as AI spreads through the supply chain. *Cash Macanaya on Unsplash*

WORKFORCE EDUCATION

AI + HUMAN COLLABORATION

WELCOME TO THE NEXT-GEN SUPPLY CHAIN WORKFORCE

BY **KEITH MOORE,** CEO, **AUTOSCHEDULER.AI**

Global supply chains are changing as customer expectations rise, product portfolios expand, and fulfillment windows shrink. Volatility has become a daily operating condition rather than an occasional disruption. At the same time, the workforce is under constant pressure as experienced operators retire, tribal knowledge walks out the door, and new hires step into roles that demand instant judgment in environments that constantly change.

The issue most warehouses face today isn't labor headcount. It's decision capacity.

Operations don't fail because there aren't enough people on the floor. They struggle because the pace and complexity of decisions have outgrown the tools and processes we've given the workforce. Conditions change by the minute. Priorities shift constantly. The margin for error is thin. What teams need are better ways to make faster, more confident decisions without burning people out.

That's where AI, used the right way, starts to matter.

The next-generation workforce is built around collaboration between people and intelligent systems. Technology handles complexity and signal overload. Humans bring judgment, context, and accountability. The companies seeing the most value from AI aren't using it to reduce headcount. They're using it to make their teams more effective, more consistent, and more resilient.

A WORKFORCE UNDER PRESSURE

Anyone in distribution or manufacturing today knows the pressure. Teams are handling more orders, SKUs, exceptions, and compliance demands every year. Planners juggle demand swings and last-minute changes, while supervisors manage labor gaps, inventory surprises, missed appointments, and equipment constraints. Operators handle a wider mix of products and more complex workflows than ever before.

You can't run that kind of environment with yesterday's operating model, where systems flag a problem, and humans are left to figure out what to do next. That approach assumes deep experience and time to think—two things many teams no longer have.

As seasoned workers retire, they take with them the practical knowledge of how to untangle bottlenecks, rebalance workloads, or work around disruptions. Newer employees don't yet have that intuition. The result is a widening gap between the complexity of modern operations and the support structure we're giving the people who run them.

That's the gap AI is well-suited to close.

THE RISE OF DECISION-SUPPORT AI

The newest generation of AI isn't about automating repetitive tasks or replacing people. It's about supporting human decision-making in real time.

Modern AI systems see across labor, inventory, transportation, dock schedules, equipment constraints, and live execution data. These systems absorb more signals than any individual ever could and translate them into practical actions. They aren't designed to eliminate roles; they're designed to eliminate uncertainty.

In practice, AI acts as an experienced partner. It helps planners evaluate trade-offs across functions, gives supervisors advance warning as issues form, and provides operators clarity around priorities and urgency.

AI takes on the heavy lifting of prioritization, risk detection, and plan adjustment so people can focus on execution, leadership, and improvement. That's where human capability makes the biggest difference.

WHAT AI-AUGMENTED ROLES LOOK LIKE

AI doesn't eliminate roles. It changes how people spend their time. Planners stop chasing yesterday's issues. Supervisors stop living in exception mode. More attention shifts to validating decisions, setting priorities, and stepping in when judgment—not automation—is required.

The common thread is this: people stay accountable for outcomes. AI provides guidance, not authority.

SKILLS SUPPLY CHAINS NEED NEXT

Introducing AI doesn't mean turning everyone into a data scientist. But it does require a different skill set.

Workers need to be comfortable interacting with AI-driven tools. They need to trust system guidance while remaining willing to question it when something doesn't look right. They need a broader understanding of how decisions in one area affect performance upstream and downstream. And they need to adapt to work environments where priorities shift dynamically throughout the day.

Training must evolve to support that shift. Static instruction isn't enough. Teams need exposure to live scenarios, simulations, and decision walkthroughs that show how AI thinks and how human judgment fits in. When people understand the "why" behind recommendations, collaboration improves.

Change management matters just as much. When teams see how AI fits into their daily work, how it reduces friction, and how it supports, not threatens, their roles, adoption accelerates.

THE BENEFITS OF HUMAN–AI COLLABORATION

When AI and people work together effectively, the benefits are tangible.

Decisions happen faster. Bottlenecks are addressed before they cascade. Workloads become more balanced. The mental strain of juggling competing priorities is reduced. Safety and quality improve as instructions become clearer and execution more consistent. Performance becomes less dependent on individual heroics and more driven by shared, real-time intelligence.

Just as importantly, turnover declines. People feel supported rather than overwhelmed. The work becomes more sustainable.

LOOKING AHEAD

As AI becomes more embedded in supply chain operations, systems will increasingly recommend actions and show their likely impact across the network. AI will remove noise and surface what matters most. Humans will decide how to act.

The tools themselves won't define the next generation of supply chain work. What will matter is how well organizations combine machine speed with human judgment. The companies that succeed will be the ones that treat AI as a partner to their workforce, not a replacement—and use it to build operations that can adapt, recover, and keep moving forward, no matter what the day brings.

Keith Moore is CEO of AutoScheduler.AI, a leader in agentic AI warehouse orchestration. Mr. Moore is focused on bringing machine learning and AI to the supply chain and impacting the world through innovation.

D.C. POWER SPOTS

WHERE POLICY MEETS BUSINESS

BY **TODD MATHEWS**

In the logistics world, we often say that "amateurs talk strategy, but professionals talk logistics." In Washington, D.C., there is a third dimension: Policy.

To the uninitiated, the District is a city of white marble and slow-moving bureaucracy. To the logistics executive, however, it is the mission control center for the global supply chain. This is where the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) decides the fate of detention and demurrage fees, where the Department of Transportation (DOT) maps out the future of autonomous trucking, and where "last-mile delivery" is a legislative priority rather than just a warehouse KPI.

If you're visiting the capital to move the needle on trade or infrastructure, you need more than just a badge for the Rayburn House Office Building. You need the right stage. Here is a curated guide to the power spots where the logistics industry meets the levers of government—from the high-gloss corridors of Navy Yard to the hidden alleys of Shaw.

THE MORNING BRIEF: FUELING THE TRADE ENGINE

Swing's Coffee Roasters (G Street)

Forget the frantic energy of a generic chain. If you want to see where the trade consultants and regulatory lawyers plot their morning maneuvers, head to Swing's. Located just blocks from the White House, this is a D.C. institution that has survived since 1916.

The atmosphere is industrial yet refined—a fitting metaphor for modern logistics. It's the perfect spot to review your briefing notes on the Ocean Shipping Reform Act before a 9 a.m. meeting. The "Coffee Bar" setup allows for quick, standing conversations—the kind of "tactical synchronization" logistics pros thrive on.

The National Postal Museum

While the tourists flock to the Air and Space

Washington, D.C. is a city defined by its borders and its flow. Whether you are navigating the "L'Enfant Plan" streets or the complexities of the Jones Act, **the city demands a high level of situational awareness..**

Museum, the logistics elite slip into the National Postal Museum, located in the historic City Post Office Building next to Union Station. It is, quite literally, a temple to the movement of goods.

Walking through the "Systems at Work" exhibit provides a visceral reminder of how the sorting and transportation of mail laid the groundwork for today's e-commerce giants. It is an oddly quiet, majestic space for a mid-morning "walking meeting" with a carrier representative or a tech vendor. Discussing the future of drone delivery while standing next to a 1918 Jenny airmail plane offers a perspective on scale that no boardroom can match.

THE MIDDAY PIVOT: INFRASTRUCTURE AND INFLUENCE

Navy Yard & The DOT Headquarters

The epicenter of logistics policy has shifted south. The Department of Transportation (DOT) headquarters is a glass-and-steel behemoth in the Navy Yard neighborhood. This isn't just where Secretary-level decisions happen; it's where the technical specs for the next decade of American infrastructure are hashed out.

For a lunch that balances business with a sense of place, head to Bluejacket. This brewery and restaurant are housed in a former ship boiler factory (Building 170). The soaring ceilings and exposed cranes are a nod to the city's industrial past. It's where you'll find lobbyists from the American Trucking Associations (ATA) or the Association of American Railroads (AAR) breaking bread with congressional staffers. The conversation here isn't about politics; it's about "intermodal connectivity" and "axle weights."

The Titanic Memorial (Waterfront)

If you need a moment of quiet to take a high-stakes call regarding a supply chain disruption, walk five minutes away from the bustle of The Wharf to the Titanic Memorial. This granite statue, tucked away in a small park at the end of 4th Street SW, was erected by the women of America to honor the men who gave their lives so that others could live.

In the logistics industry, we are in the business of Risk Management. Standing before this monument serves as a sobering reminder of the stakes involved in maritime safety and the human element of global trade. It is the quietest spot in the city to think about long-term strategy.

THE AFTERNOON SESSION: THE HUB OF CONNECTIVITY

Union Station (Main Hall)

Every logistics professional should spend an hour in Union Station, and not just because they are catching the Acela to New York. This is the heart of the Northeast Corridor. Standing in the Great Hall, with its 96-foot constant-radius barrel vault ceiling, you are at the nexus of passenger rail, commuter rail, and the "beating heart" of D.C. transit.

It is a masterclass in high-volume throughput. Watching the flow of thousands of people being sorted into different "modes" of transport is essentially a live-action simulation of a sophisticated sort-center. If you're waiting for a senator to finish a vote, the Main Hall is the ultimate spot for "people-watching" with a logistical eye.

The Gardens at Dumbarton Oaks (Georgetown)

When the noise of the Hill becomes too much, take a car to the highest point of Georgetown. Dumbarton

Oaks is where the 1944 international conference took place that laid the groundwork for the United Nations.

For the logistics leader, this is a "Macro-Policy" spot. The gardens are terraced and meticulously planned—a physical representation of organizational structure. It's the ideal location for a private, high-level executive retreat or a one-on-one "visioning" session with a partner. You aren't here to talk about today's shipping delays; you're here to talk about the 2030 roadmap.

THE EVENING CLOSE: WHERE THE DEALS ARE SIGNED

Old Ebbitt Grill

You cannot claim to have done business in D.C. without a stop at Old Ebbitt Grill. Established in 1856, it is the oldest saloon in the city. Located across from the Treasury Building, it is the quintessential "Power Spot."

The velvet booths and gaslight-style lamps have seen every type of trade deal imaginable. This is where you bring the client you need to impress with "Old Washington" prestige. Order the oysters—the logistics of getting fresh seafood into the landlocked District has improved since 1856, but the tradition of the raw bar remains a staple of the D.C. business dinner.

The Dabney (Blagden Alley)

If you want to show your counterparts that you know the "Real DC," head to Blagden Alley in the Shaw neighborhood. This is the antithesis of the Federal Triangle. It's an alleyway that was once part of the city's working-class backbone, now transformed into a culinary destination.

The Dabney focuses on mid-Atlantic ingredients cooked over an open wood hearth. For a logistics executive, there is something deeply satisfying about the transparency of the kitchen—raw materials (wood, local produce) being transformed into a high-end "finished good" right before your eyes. It's a tough reservation to get, which in the world of supply and demand, only increases its value. Closing a deal here proves you have the "on-the-ground" intelligence to navigate complex environments.

THE LOGISTICS OF LEISURE

Washington, D.C. is a city defined by its borders and its flow. Whether you are navigating the "L'Enfant Plan" streets or the complexities of the Jones Act, the city demands a high level of situational awareness.

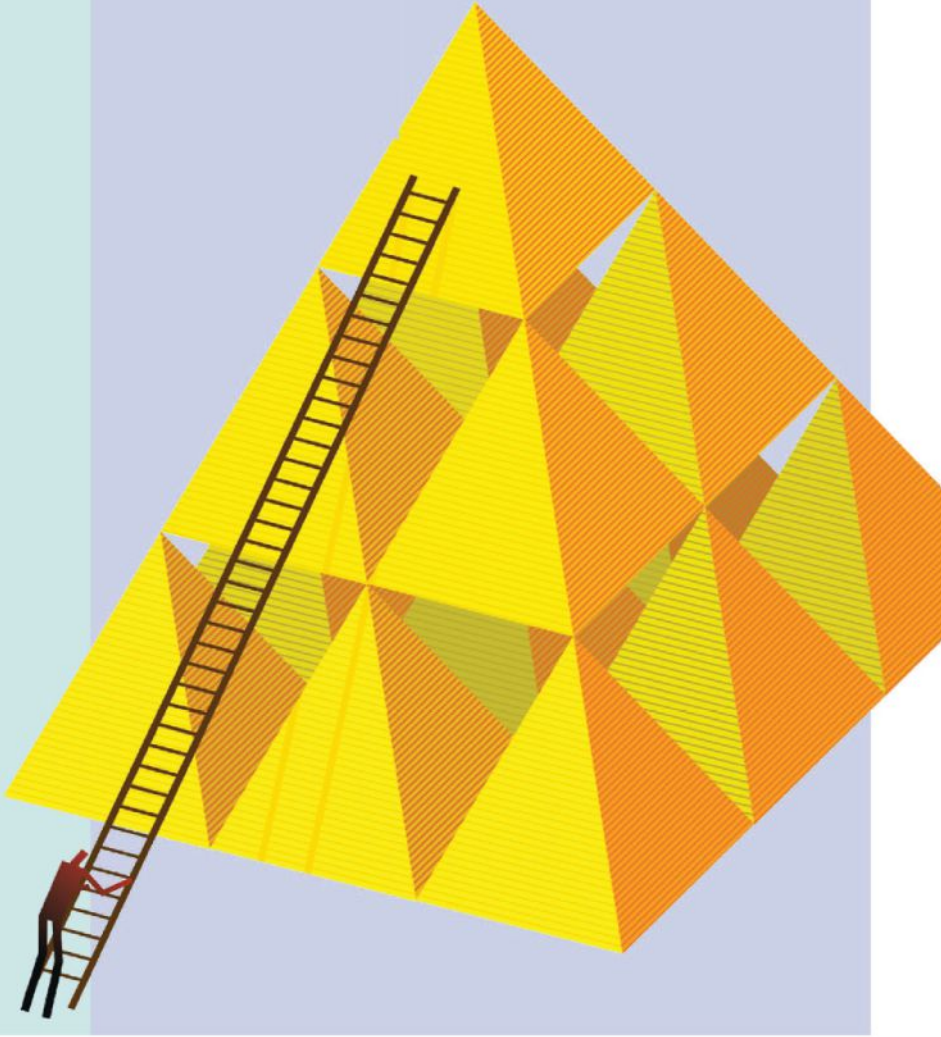
The next time you find yourself in the capital for a "fly-in" or a regulatory hearing, step outside the usual hotel bars. Go where the infrastructure is celebrated, where the history of trade is preserved, and where the policy of tomorrow is being written over a hearth-fired meal or a heritage cup of coffee.

In this town, logistics isn't just a department—it's the foundation upon which the entire government sits.

LIVING HISTORY

The Smithsonian National Postal Museum is perfect for all types of events, from galas and seated dinners to cocktail receptions and business meetings. *Washington.org*

RESOURCES A GUIDE TO OUR ADVERTISERS



RESILIENCE IN AN AGE OF TRADE DISRUPTION

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH TOM COOK

GT STAFF

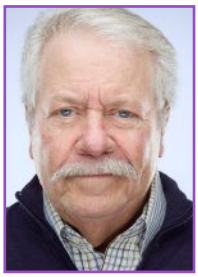
As global trade grows more volatile, supply chain leaders are being forced to rethink how they manage disruption, cost and risk. In his latest book, *Managing and Mitigating the Impact of Tariffs, Pandemics, and Trade Disruptions in the Global Supply Chain,* Thomas Cook, managing director of Blue Tiger International and author of more than 20 books on global trade, examines the strategies companies can use to build resilience in an unpredictable global marketplace. *Global Trade* spoke with Cook about the book, the practical role of AI, the rising interest in Foreign Trade Zones and the changing demands facing today's supply chain leaders.

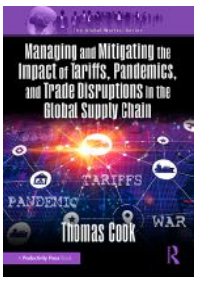
Q: What prompted you to write this book?
A: I have written 20 previous books, mostly on a specific subject matter. Today's trade environment is so complex, so volatile, and so impactful to the bottom line that I felt it was time to frame the concerns, chaos and uncertainty and then address sweeping strategies for managing trade disruptions in the global supply chain.

Q: Who should read this book?
A: While my earlier books addressed specific topics for professionals looking to grow in a career of global trade, this book raises and expands the content level to include the executive reader, as many of the strategies for building a resilient supply chain are strategic in nature, crossing functional silos, and investment and commitment in the organization, CEO, COO and CFO as senior executives, along with all those managers and personnel engaged in operational responsibilities.

Q: Artificial intelligence seems to be positioned as the cure-all for supply chain ills. Do you discuss AI in your book?
A: I do, but only real world "today" applications that are delivering immediate return, such as global sourcing, export business development, trade compliance, routing of freight, and creating and managing vendor and supplier KPIs. I have no doubt that AI will in time contribute to higher-level supply chain decision-making, but it is critical to use today's tools to develop the organizational expertise to use future tools wisely.

Q: In your book you talk about "20 Solutions" for mitigating risk and building a resilient supply chain. Here in the middle of 2026, what are you seeing in your practice as the top solution?
A: Based on the number of active applications filed with U.S. Customs, Blue Tiger International is the one of the top advisors and/or consultant of Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) implementations in the US so far this year.





FTZ implementation isn't project hyperbole – yes, there is significant interest and many companies are investigating FTZs – but there are numerous benefits in addition to cost mitigation: lead-time reduction, inventory visibility, duty reporting, and more, that make this solution stand out. Tariff engineering, alternative sourcing and reshoring are also leading tariff mitigation strategies.

Q: That's very interesting – Foreign Trade Zones do appear to be worth investigating. But what if I outsource my warehouse operations to a 3PL?
A: Under the law, 3PLs are allowed to operate Foreign Trade Zones on behalf of their clients – it's perfectly legal. We have an increasing number of FTZ projects in the last two years, and for good reason: FTZs are a services value-add that increases deal flow, grows revenue, and adds stickiness (customer retention). Included in our FTZ implementation cycle for 3PL's is building their go-to-market strategy, with the goal of having the zone footage completely booked by the end of year one. We never missed on that goal.

Q: What challenges do you face in developing and implementing strategies such as Foreign Trade Zones?
A: The first challenge is creating robust information flows to "reluctant campers"… meaning change is always problematic with layers of resistance. Next is creating both intellectual and financial models that evidence the strategies can work. The last challenge is dealing with government bureaucracy that moves slow and arduously.

Q: How do geopolitical issues play a role in trade disruption?
A: There are as many as a dozen issues occurring geopolitically that stress global supply chain managers. Pick just one, for example: the war in Iran. The price of fuel has almost doubled, raising the cost of energy globally, increasing the cost of freight, heating, manufacturing, distribution in all areas of just living and in operating various business models. The risks in moving freight globally through the Strait of Hormuz has increased logistics delays, risks and costs. The political divide that has taken place between the United States and various allies who have not shown support. And the loss of life, property and the pursuit of peace is in jeopardy in all countries in the Middle East and here in the United States. All of these factors impact global supply chain managers, and this is just one of multiple concurrent geopolitical issues currently in play.

Q: You utilize the words "risk management in the global supply chain." Can you explain how that works?
A: Supply chain, logistics, procurement and operations mangers have a huge preference, established by corporate cultures, to "chase costs". When you chase cost, you trade off other aspects that impact performance, such as but not limited to quality control, reliability, delays, poor performance metrics and potential increase in loss and damage. A better, more intelligent process is setting a culture that "negotiates to obtain the best value for your spend." In that scenario, you eliminate cost as a priority and work towards value-based purchasing, which in the long-run reduces risk, cost and improves business performance.

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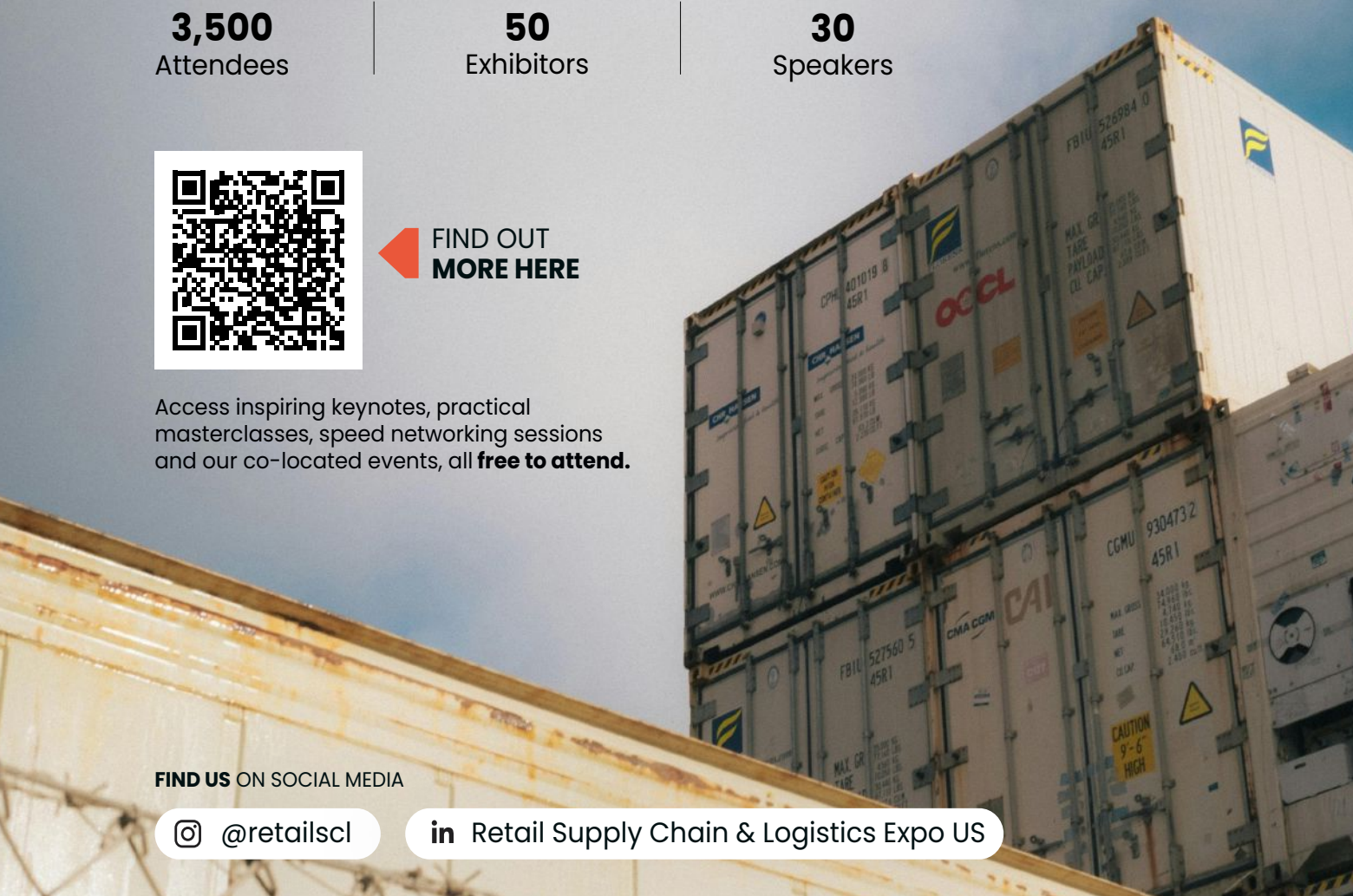

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