



Port X Logistics plots new route to success

Business needs

Better ways to track and protect customers' cargo

Networking solution

The AT&T Smart Label delivers enhanced, near-real-time visibility and expanded condition monitoring capabilities.

Business value

Insights such as location, condition, chain of custody, and more on customers' shipments

Industry focus

Transportation

Size

500 trucks

About Port X Logistics

Port X Logistics is a transportation company that specializes in expediting containerized cargo throughout the U.S. and Canada. The company, which provides transportation of goods from ocean ports and rail ramps (drayage services) to and from all ports and ramps in the U.S. and Canada, strives to deliver outstanding customer service.

The situation

Customers choose Port X Logistics because of the care it takes with their shipments. Not content to rest on its laurels, Port X Logistics needed solutions to go beyond simple location tracking to give customers richer data about their cargo.

Solution

AT&T Smart Label enabled Port X Logistics to deliver near-real-time package-level insights and customizable alerts, including temperature, shock mapping, and geofencing.

Simplifying drayage

The founders of Port X Logistics focus their business on drayage, a specialized logistics service that involves transporting goods from ocean ports and rail ramps. It's an essential part of the overall shipping process, often connecting different modes of transportation, such as ships, trains, and trucks.

Blake Cooper, Port X Logistics technology expert, said the company has a single goal. "We work to make drayage, which is often a little technical and difficult, easy for our customers," he said.

"We can handle it all: We are ready to approach any port or rail ramp in the U.S. or Canada and any logistical issues that come up. That's where Port X Logistics comes in. Because no matter what port it is, we will be there and ready to assist."

Closing a drayage black hole

There are many drayage carriers, but few that focus so intently on customer service. Company founder Brian Kempisty believed there was a better way to manage drayage logistics. He and his co-founders found a niche in managing drayage, bringing a personal touch and fostering a comfortable working relationship.

Before Port X Logistics, some referred to drayage as a "black hole" in the supply chain, forcing companies to deal with numerous partners.

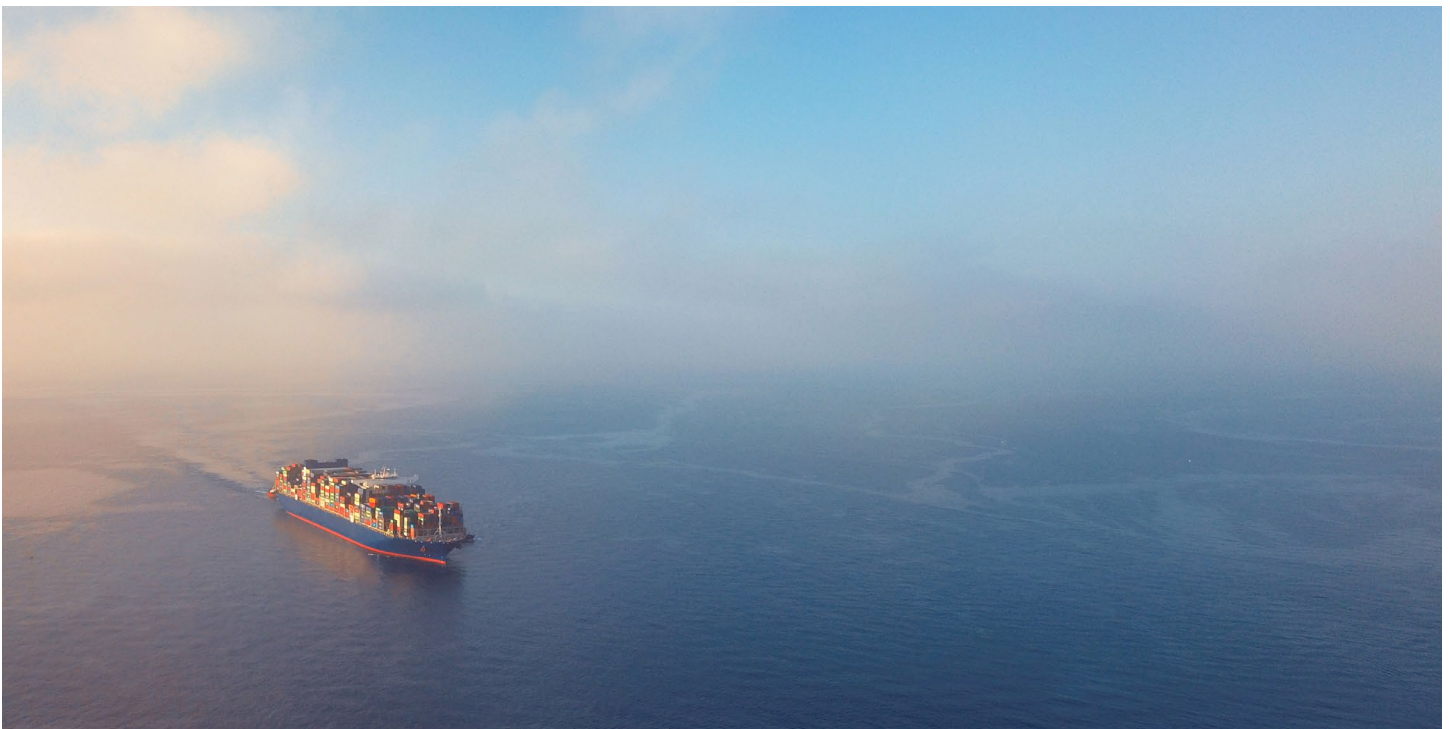
"Whether it's the port, the shipper, the cargo owner, the consignee, or the trucking company, keeping the parties in sync and communicating is a difficult task," Cooper said.

Port X Logistics set out to create a nationwide solution, the go-to for drayage, and improve transloading (the process of transferring cargo from one mode of transportation to another) and final delivery trucking.

"There was an easier way to manage drayage. We work hard to be partners with our customers and help them feel comfortable with this part of the process, and make sure that they are every bit in the know as we are," he said.

More insights for customers

In the eight years since its founding, Port X Logistics has experienced impressive growth. Its headquarters are in Buffalo, and it has assets in Savannah, Oakland, Denver, and Los Angeles. The company merged with U.S. Multimodal Group, a large network of asset-based trucking companies with assets that include hundreds of trucks, thousands of yards of warehouse space, secure storage, and terminals in nearly every major port or rail market in the U.S.



Customer service has always been crucial. “One of the things that we used to hang our hat on was providing visibility to every truck on the road. That used to be a huge selling point,” Cooper said. “Now, that’s the expectation, and it’s not just visibility. Customers today need fine-grained details, and they need them in real time.”

Preventing theft

Another challenge is increased fraud and theft associated with technology platforms. “It’s so easy to impersonate someone,” Cooper said. “We’ve had to invest in ensuring that the trucks we use are secure and the drivers are properly vetted. That’s a huge challenge. And the proliferation of technology has created that opportunity for people.”

These concerns are magnified by the high-value, sensitive cargo that Port X Logistics handles. “We do a lot of expedited air imports, and those are timed down to the minute because we’re dealing with airports and security. It’s important for people to know exactly what’s going on with their cargo. Visibility is important to them,” he said.

On another level, it’s vital to see how long things take and whether they’re moving or not at specific times. “Everyone’s looking to optimize, and the more data you can derive from your visibility, the better. At the same time, the people on the ground managing that shipment have the visibility they need to make logistical decisions, which can sometimes be in the moment and unexpected,” Cooper said. “So, the visibility helps everyone, albeit for different reasons.”

A new IoT monitoring solution

Port X Logistics needed a solution that couldn’t be tampered with or falsified without the company’s knowledge. The company’s Canada team suggested investing in an Internet of Things (IoT) solution. “This led us to the AT&T Smart Label,” Cooper said.

AT&T Smart Label offers enhanced, near-real-time, end-to-end inventory tracking in more than 210 countries and territories across more than 600 networks with supply chain visibility, quality control, and chain of custody validation.

Some Port X Logistics customers ship items that can be damaged by temperature and shock.

AT&T Smart Label sends an alert if these variables become problematic. In addition, the near-real-time location reporting provides details that most customers never had before. “It’s really the difference between being able to say, ‘Our pings show that your cargo is here,’ versus ‘Our pings show that your cargo is here, and it hasn’t been opened since we put the label in the cargo three days ago,’” Cooper said. “It’s not just the location; it’s really the bigger picture about what’s going on with that cargo that makes a huge difference.”



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Port X Logistics technology expert

Details for the win

The AT&T Smart Label uses highly secure AT&T cellular connectivity to connect globally in more than 210 countries and territories. “It’s worked very well,” Cooper said. “We have been able to win bids based on that, and customers appreciate not just the location data, but the fine-grain details that come into play with high-value cargo.”



The solution has been good for business, he added. “Just having this relationship with AT&T Business and knowing we can utilize these Smart Labels is allowing us to pitch for more business and bigger business, because we can confidently tell people that we have a detailed tracking solution with a lot of data that can feed into whatever systems we need it to. That’s been a big selling point.”

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“Having this relationship with AT&T Business and utilizing AT&T Smart Labels with our existing technology stack is a great way for us to be able to let customers know we’re capable of doing this. It’s not just about where the cargo is on the road. We’re capable of tracking temperature, light, and shock sensitivity to give customers insight into their cargo with data they wouldn’t be able to get otherwise.”

Cooper said that new technology solutions often lack adequate customer support. “I’ve often felt that we’re on our own, but I haven’t felt that with the AT&T Smart Labels. We know that AT&T Business is there as a resource. The solution has been approachable because of the relationship and the support we’ve had from AT&T.”

“We’re trying to solve X, whatever X is for you, whatever port you’re trying to get to, whatever issues you have with your cargo.” This includes handling challenging cargo such as giant wind turbines that don’t fit in standard trucks. “We try to find a way if it’s at all within our wheelhouse,” he said.