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PLUS: 2020-2021
Locco Award Winners

BUSINESS

MAGAZINE



LOGISTICS+®

PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE

GLOBAL SOLUTIONS PROVIDER
CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

SPOTLIGHT Q&A:
HOFFMAN INDUSTRIAL
MARKS 175TH YEAR

SPECIAL SECTION:
MBA RECOGNIZES MEMBER
MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

CEO Jim Berlin founded Logistics Plus in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1996. Over the past 25 years, the company has grown from a small transportation and logistics business to a \$300 million privately held company with a sprawling Erie campus, 45 offices and nearly 600 employees worldwide. Here, Berlin is shown at the company's newest location, the Erie Times-News building on West 12th Street in downtown Erie.



Global Solutions Provider Celebrates 25 Years

Logistics Plus is in the business of solutions.

Solutions to transport parts and products around the globe.

Solutions to navigate complex export and import rules and regulations.

Solutions to warehouse critical inventory and address fulfillment needs.

Even solutions to source and supply hard-to-find personal protective equipment (PPE).

"We're a solutions provider," explains Founder and CEO Jim Berlin, "and we've been doing it for 25 years."

Logistics Plus (LP) certainly has been one of northwest Pennsylvania's most exciting companies to watch since its founding in Erie in 1996. Led by Berlin's enthusiastic entrepreneurial style and loyal team members, Logistics Plus has grown from a small transportation and logistics business to a \$300 million privately held company with nearly 600 employees in 45 offices worldwide.

Over the past 25 years, the award-winning "Best Medium-Size Workplace" has become more diversified, more technology driven and more people driven — cementing its reputation as a leading provider of transportation, warehousing, fulfillment, logistics, business intelligence, technology and supply chain solutions around the globe.

Presently, Logistics Plus, a partner of the Manufacturer & Business Association's logistics program, is on pace for another record year of consecutive growth as it enhances and expands its logistics,

transportation and warehousing services, and enters new markets with the creation of its new LP Air Charter Group cargo service and new LP Medical Division (LP Med).

"We've been global for more than 20 years, and we have a good reputation and good connections around the world," explains Berlin, "so we've continued to find a way to deliver when others could not. That's really how we've run the business by making things happen."

Adapting for Sustained Growth and Success

Berlin, who began his career in the trucking industry and started LP with what initially was a one-year contract to handle in-bound logistics for GE Transportation, has always been a risk taker and "big idea" guy. He is visibly passionate about his business and his team members, often encouraging them to jump first and problem solve, while supporting ideas to adapt and innovate with changing market demands and economic shifts.



Logistics Plus launched a new line of business to support the sourcing, transportation and fulfillment of personal protective equipment. Team members traveled to Detroit, Michigan, to unload planes full of PPE in order to get it to employers and essential workers throughout the country.



In 2020 alone, Logistics Plus added more than 1 million square feet of warehousing space across the country, including its new facility at the Erie Times-News building in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Most recently, Logistics Plus created new lines of business from the growing demand for personal protection equipment (PPE) due to COVID-19. The company quickly leveraged its global connections to source and deliver PPE around the world, including local employers throughout northwest Pennsylvania.

According to Senior Vice President of International at LP Gretchen Seth, the company's first experience with PPE began in January 2020 when LP's Shanghai office shipped a box full of latex gloves and N95 and three-ply masks to its Erie headquarters. That shipment turned out to be a watershed moment for the company as demand for PPE exploded over the next month and a half.

As lockdowns impacted the world, the importance of "logistics" and "supply chain" management have become more apparent than ever before. For its part, LP was able to leverage its supply chain expertise and lean on its global network to source and deliver nearly impossible to find PPE. The company worked closely with Delta Air Lines to create a new, charter air cargo service, utilizing several passenger planes and turning them into cargo planes, to get the items delivered.

When the planes reached the Detroit airport, LP's team was there, ready and waiting on the tarmac, to unload the shipments. "The first planes came in, and we weren't sure where all the stuff was going," recalls Berlin. "But we brought it here and, in the meantime, there was a market making itself."

Since then, Seth says PPE orders have become more streamlined and demand has remained steady. One of LP's office doors was even covered with notes from front-line workers and employers, thanking LP for the supplies that the company procured.



Gretchen Seth,
Senior Vice President,
International

"It's just been very rewarding to be able to see that we made a difference, even in our own little area here," Seth says.

"To me, it was one of the proudest moments of our 25 years," adds Berlin. "It was the courage and grace under fire from the people who come to work every day."

During the pandemic, LP's team members even pitched in to pack nearly 1 million face shields for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania — a total of 23 truckloads, floor to ceiling, at its new *Erie Times-News* (ETN) warehousing facility in Erie.

"We called all hands on deck — HR, IT, operations, legal and maintenance — to help," says Berlin, who drove a forklift for a week while supporting his team. "The assembly line was insane, but it's our kind of thing."

Without question, LP's "whatever it takes" culture is unique and indispensable to its success. "We hire based on culture and not just the skill set," notes Chief Operations Officer Yuriy Ostapyak. "At LP, it's finding ways to say 'yes,' and it's solving complex problems. If that requires for half of the company to work over the weekend, then so be it. If that requires working long days and nights, then so be it. It's necessary because our customers depend on us successfully moving and not disrupting their supply chain."



Yuriy Ostapyak,
Chief Operations
Officer

LP's Med Division is certainly proof of this. The new division has quickly become mission critical, representing 5 percent of the company's overall business in 2020. The LP Med division services all industries, but its primary customers are manufacturers and health-care providers, including a 40-location retirement community headquartered in Denver, Colorado, where it recently contracted to provide exclusive fulfillment services.

As LP officials explain, many organizations don't have the space or manpower to manage such large inventory, but Logistics Plus has the flexibility to both adapt its operations and procure supplies, as needed. "It used to be three-ply masks, N95 masks and hand sanitizer that were in demand," explains Seth, "but now it's things like air purifiers, electrostatic spray cleaners, tubs of wipes and touchless thermometers. If it's not on our list, we tell all of our clients to at least let us know, and we can get them a proposal."

Investing in the Future

If there is one lesson to be learned from LP's ability to adapt, it's that the transportation and logistics industry is rapidly changing. To stay competitive, companies must increase their value to customers, and LP has consciously made a significant investment in both its services and capabilities. >



LP has expanded its services to include new customer-related logistics activities such as mobile phone and tablet device programming, warehousing and fulfillment.





Logistics Plus is a company on the move, growing from a small transportation and logistics provider to an integrated, global solutions provider.

Logistics Plus is proud to be a part of the Erie community, displaying its pride on the overpass as you enter downtown Erie outside its Union Station headquarters.



Today, Logistics Plus has become “a 21st century logistics company” by being as innovative as industry giants Google and Amazon by equipping them and its other customers with user-friendly technology and business intelligence solutions for transportation management, freight forwarding, warehousing management, eCommerce fulfillment, and supply chain management.

For example, eWorldPlus™ is LP’s client-facing web portal integrated with its global logistics and back office platform CargoWise One to provide real-time global shipment quoting, cargo tracking and warehousing. LP also offers eShipPlus™, the company’s proprietary North American transportation management system (TMS) for quoting, tracking and booking. Additionally, the company offers a full suite of MyLogisticsPlus™ business intelligence tools with planning, custom reporting and control tower capabilities for end-to-end supply chain visibility.

No matter the needs, LP has the compliance expertise to handle all aspects of data solutions. “We’ve become as much a technology company as we are a logistics company. With the data we manage, we can analyze and give our customers simple dashboard reports that help them be more efficient,” explains Berlin. “We now have a whole team of people who do that for a lot of our customers.”

LP has invested heavily in its warehousing operations too. In 2020 alone, Logistics Plus added more than 1 million square feet of warehousing space across the country, including major hubs such as Los Angeles, Chicago and New Jersey.

Yet, the most exciting addition may be in its own backyard. In May 2020, LP purchased the 88,000-square-foot *Erie Times-News* building at 205 West 12th Street and in November 2020, another 130,000-square-foot warehouse at 1803 Pittsburgh Avenue. The two investments have enabled LP to expand warehousing and dock space to support current and new customer-related logistics activities such as mobile phone and tablet programming, warehousing and fulfillment, just to name a few.

The ETN addition expands LP’s campus in downtown Erie, which includes its historic Union Station headquarters, bringing its Erie warehousing space to nearly 300,000 square feet. The Union Station campus is already home to several tenants The Brewerie and Concourse, a hookah café, hair salon and other local shops, as well.

“We love our little neighborhood. We love Erie. We want to stay in Erie. We want to give back to Erie, give back to the community, and have a positive print in the community,” notes Ostapyak. “It all started with us buying Union Station, but between all the new tenants that we have now, it’s contributed to the betterment of the whole neighborhood. And with some of the grants that helped improve the park, and just with us buying ETN, we feel that it brings up the value of the entire neighborhood and is a positive example of LP’s influence, not just in its own business but also in the community.”

Fostering Talent

With its global headquarters in Erie, LP is also contributing to the community’s brain gain by recruiting talent from the local area and through its relationship with the major universities — Gannon, Mercyhurst, Edinboro and Penn State Behrend. “The notion that Erie does not have as good of talent as, let’s say, New York City or West Coast, is a myth,” adds Ostapyak, who began his 15-plus year career with Logistics Plus after graduating from Edinboro University. “It is one of the areas where we continue to excel and get great people, and that’s allowed us to continue to grow over the years.”

Indeed, Logistics Plus has been recognized by Great Place to Work®, the global authority on workplace culture, and *FORTUNE* magazine as a Best Medium-Size Workplace for companies with 100 to 999 employees each of the past two years. Logistics Plus, the only transportation company recognized, took the No. 74 spot on the top 100 list for medium-sized workplaces in 2020.

At LP, the treatment of people, the treatment of customers, vendors and employees, and culture is very important to its continued growth and success. “Everyone uses the same ships, the same airplanes, the same trucks. So what’s different is that extra effort, the extra hustle, or as we say, ‘putting the plus in logistics’ to make sure that we provide the best possible service,” says Berlin. “That is what is unique about LP — creative problem solving, entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for excellence — for the past 25 years.” ■

For more information, visit logisticsplus.com.



Logistics Plus Inc., founded in 1996, is a 21st century logistics company and a leading worldwide provider of transportation, warehousing, fulfillment, global logistics, business intelligence, technology and supply chain solutions.

Headquarters: 1406 Peach Street, Erie, PA 16501

Global Operations: Nearly 600 employees at 45 offices in 28 countries, including 300 in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Annual Sales: More than \$300 million worldwide

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