



**CONTAINERCHAIN**

# BEYOND VISIBILITY

## WHAT THE NEXT-GEN SUPPLY CHAIN MEANS FOR SHIPPERS

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Visibility. It's a word that's taken on significant meaning to shippers and logistics providers the world over. Traditionally, visibility has meant knowing, at any one point in time, where shipped goods are within the cargo supply chain. But is this really all that it means? Is it enough to simply know where goods are? In a landscape of increased competition from non-traditional integrated technology and logistics players like Amazon and Alibaba, as well as rapid digital transformation within the maritime and port landside segment, the answer is: Not really. Not anymore.

In this new era of supply chain connectedness, the concept of visibility has expanded to take on additional shades of meaning. This includes the synchronous flow of information, the ability to use that information to accurately predict milestones and resource requirements, as well as gain prior warning of potential problems to proactively manage risk. The wider benefits of what we've come to know as 'visibility' has the power to dramatically improve the speed at which cargo owners

can transport and manage their shipments across markets, while transforming profitability of the sector as a whole. This is done through workflow digitisation, process standardization and connection of meaningful data sets in real time.

### **VISIBILITY**

Cargo tracking technology has been evolving rapidly over the last two decades, rolling through advances in RFID sensors and other tracking hardware, satellite-based GPS technology, IoT location devices, and now the evolution of Blockchain. The extent to which these technologies have been implemented by the liner and landside container transport sectors is largely a function of economics and the specific needs of BCOs, especially those responsible for sensitive or high value cargo.

The interconnectedness of these tracking technology solutions via platform to platform eco-systems now presents the opportunity for the sector to evolve through the lifecycle of the cargo chain, and analyse, predict and manage the next set of events in real-

time via straight through digital processing. This outcome achieves much more than traditional 'visibility' which historically and typically has only been an outdated time stamp of an event in the near past and takes management of the cargo chain to the next level of its evolution.

### **CONNECTIVITY**

In our last whitepaper, Platforms and Landside Port Community Connectivity, we looked at the rise of digital platforms that connect the landside and portside sectors of the container logistics supply chain. This has opened up new possibilities for all players to work synchronously and efficiently with comprehensive and meaningful data sets. Driven by a common data-platform or API-integrated systems, platform ecosystems can now provide deep data linkages that significantly improve speed, accuracy, and alignment of resources between members of a supply chain community in real-time.

Singapore's Networked Trade Platform, for example, is in the process of connecting more than 10,000+ registered

shippers within its portside and landside communities to a single, independent, integrated transport platform. This platform will share information, standardise communication protocols and processes, and drive an industry-wide lift in operational performance. Singapore sees connectivity as key to maintaining the country’s competitive position as a global trade hub, and is investing heavily in digitization and smart logistics. By leveraging a common data platform, an array of connected devices used in SMART transport vehicles and at the terminal gate, and process automation across document creation and transfer, they are focused to achieve this outcome.

Singapore is but just one example of major port communities and governments globally recognizing the importance of creating connected trade platforms with B2B ecosystems to facilitate improved and secure cross border movement of cargo and in the process creating valuable buyer and seller marketplaces.

**PREDICTABILITY**

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits of this new era of digital connectivity and visibility is that the flow of information - matched in real-time to the physical movement of cargo from point A to point B- can be used to predict and plan the resources that will be needed at each interchange point.

An example of a solution designed to enable more predictability while reducing aggravations in the transport system is Containerchain’s LIVE solution. An end-to-end order management, track and trace product that aims to eliminate the ‘black hole’ of information that has traditionally existed in the landside container logistics supply chain segment, LIVE’s flow of shared, real-time data between BCOs, liner companies, land transporters and handling facilities means costly and avoidable problems like detention and demurrage can be resolved before they arise, ensuring that the entire cargo flow is managed with more precision and with less reliance on manual and paper based processes.

The importance of such solutions in providing industry participants with real-time information in which business decisions can be made is increasingly evident given existing operating margins within the landside segment for some stakeholders is already razor thin.

**PROFITABILITY**

The ongoing objective to obtain better visibility within the container logistics supply chain always comes back to one major objective: profitability. By smoothing of operational peaks and troughs, mitigating risks, dynamic, real-time matching of resources to requirements, and the



elimination of conflict within the system the sector is able to run more efficiently and profitably overall.

For terminal, depot, and warehouse operators this can mean no longer having to turn trucks away from gates and docks because they’re there at the wrong time, or with the wrong information, or having yard / facility utilisation bottlenecked due to peak capacity constraints. For transporters it can spell an end to wasted hours spent idling in frustration waiting for the right instruction to be received. Additionally, yard equipment and other resources such as warehouse docks and lift equipment can be more profitably managed when these facilities have accurate real-time data at their disposal to plan asset deployment and manage utilization optimally via the use of interconnected applications.

Across Containerchain’s global network of customers and users, trucking companies have seen their turnaround times improve from hours to minutes, double their average number of jobs per day and eliminate futile trips. Meanwhile, container depots and terminals have seen gate overheads decrease by as much as 30%, energy costs reduce by 20% and find an additional 40% in asset capacity utilisation.

**HARNESSING THE TRUE VALUE OF VISIBILITY**

With rapid digital transformation and advances in AI, IoT, platform ecosystems and related technologies, our understanding of what visibility within the supply chain means has deepened. Ultimately, preparedness to tap into this new world requires a frank and honest review of what participant businesses need to make genuine process gains, as well as a readiness to share data, replace or upgrade legacy systems that trap information in silos, and look for solutions that can provide straight through end to end digital processing. This approach will allow business owners and managers to make advance leaps in decision making without the need for outsize investments in technical

products and support.

As industry participants continue to pursue a more connected set of digital solutions, this allows them to see further, manage better and operate more profitably. It enables them to unlock and deliver true value added services at a time where the promise of traditional ‘visibility’ is no longer seen as anything other than at best a commoditized and expected baseline service offering.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Chris Collins is the Managing Director of Containerchain and is responsible for the overall business, growth and strategic direction of the company. With over 20 years’ experience in technology, consulting, infrastructure, transport and logistics, he has previously held executive management roles as Chief Operating Officer and Head of Strategy & Corporate Development prior to 10 years with global advisory firm PwC as a Director in corporate finance / mergers and acquisitions.

**ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION**

Containerchain is a technology company who provides a connected suite of cloud-based software applications to the landside container logistics industry. Currently used in 9 countries and 20 ports globally, Containerchain’s cloud-based software solutions are dedicated to simplifying operations, improving customer service levels and driving down the cost of moving containers from port-to-door. Containerchain is a part of the WiseTech Global group, a leading developer and provider of software solutions to the logistics execution industry globally.

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