

GARY M GOLDFARB



We have end-to-end solutions for our customers, therefore, early attention to source points and destination infrastructure issues are the main reasons why we have emerged as the selected provider, says **GARY M GOLDFARB, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER at INTERPORT LOGISTICS LLC**- a leading logistics services provider headquartered in the state of Florida in the US and serving most of the industry associations in the region with solutions- SCM engineering, FTZ consulting and operations, freight forwarding and customs brokerage. In an exclusive interview, the veteran discusses with Ritika Arora Bholia, how the logistics sector can offer a glimmer of hope to the global economy, supported that, as players they combat robustly with the crisis.

We anticipate vigorous growth of Indian business in coming months

How may we best summarise the current state of the global logistics industry in the wake of the pandemic. How are you adapting to serve the complex demand?

In our view, there are three logistics industries at this moment. Firstly, COVID-19 response logistics which is at a fever pitch and includes PPE, pharma and medical equipment. Secondly, regular commercial logistics which includes

industrial supplies and 'Brick and Mortar' retail support, currently down to about 20 per cent. And thirdly, there is e-commerce, which has resulted in a triple increase for us.

In Miami, Florida, we serve all of the above markets inbound into the US as well as outbound to the Caribbean, Central and South America.

Logistics is definitely one of the worst hit sectors during the

pandemic. Could you highlight the key challenges that the global logistics sector is currently facing?

Logistics is all about capacity. With blank sailings on the ocean side and airport closures on the air side, it is a challenge to find the right infrastructure at the right place. Points of heavy congestion, such as China and India are more challenging than those in the Americas, which at least seem to have the right balance of empty containers and full loads.

How have logistics and supply chain operations changed as a result of the coronavirus crisis?

I wrote an article for a publication based out of Washington, DC where I suggested doing a 'stress test of the supply chain'. This, during the early days of trade disputes between the US and China, now more appropriate with the coronavirus crisis. The premise of the article was that you either had multiple sources of supply, a secure and dependable supply chain, or had to carry excess inventory.

I can say that nothing has changed. Most of our customers have bolstered their inventories after taking care of emergency air charters during May and June. Now a build-up is taking place, so inventory management and warehousing opportunities are ultimately increasing.

Brief us about the logistics and supply chain management activities at the Interport Logistics.

Interport Logistics LLC is one of the largest 3PLs in South Florida, in a very active logistics community. We provide supply chain management engineering, foreign trade zone consulting, FTZ operations, freight forwarding, and customs brokerage, besides operate over 350,000 sq ft of warehouse facilities, all with FTZ status and some with state-of-the-art temperature-controlled services.

Can you describe your company's own business contingency plans? Do you have a crisis tool kit? Crisis processes, resources are in place and understood?

We have end-to-end solutions for our customers, therefore, early attention to source points and destination infrastructure issues are the main reasons why we have emerged as the selected provider.

We have always been operating in a crisis mode. Miami, in general, has variety of providers that have built their businesses around ability to react quickly and find solutions. We are just one of the largest, and as such have been doing this crisis thing for a long time now.

How are you managing your logistics network and supply chain operations in terms of creating value for customers?

Most of our clientele tend to be larger companies with a diverse offering. We engage at the start of the flow and help them design their supply chains with an input from the logistics view; we help them manage their inventory right from purchase order until the shipment is delivered to the end user over the six continents. Our Portal System allows a company to interact with us 24x7 and view, download and upload directly into our systems. In several South American countries, we even clear through company's Customs systems from Miami, so cargo moves and arrives immediately as a domestic shipment.



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Could you tell us about the end-to-end digital starategies at Interport Logistics?

Interport has been at the forefront of logistics technology. For example, when we receive over 100 truckloads of merchandise with pallet level and unit level distribution requirements, the cargo is pre-received by our customers and their providers interacting with our systems. So, when goods arrive at our warehouses and FTZs, they are weighed, measured (electronically), images are clicked, tagged with RFID tags, and stored within minutes. The data is immediately moved up to the cloud, where our customers see it, provide disposition information and upload their shipment details, from across the globe, in a seamless manner.

Post-lockdown, how long would you estimate it would take for the logistics industry to get back to business as usual? What will be the growth drivers?

The concept of 'Paired Ports' is one that used to be the main driver of ocean freight, now it has gained more significance with the concept of fast fashion.

But why? If the pair of ports through which you are moving your goods are open and operating, recovery is almost immediate. Even if one of the ports from a pair ceases operations, then no recovery seems to take place.

We can back up to pre-COVID-19 speed in a couple of months if all the ports open up and start operating.

What will be the impact for the future? Do you think there will be changes on the horizon?

We are quite bullish on the near future. Once a port area opens, business bounces back almost immediately.

As we learn to live with the virus, companies are learning to get around inconveniences.

How can companies be more prepared, ready to respond and able to recover from crises?

Speed and Velocity are the two main strategies. Make decisions quickly (speed) and implementing them rapidly (velocity).

How do you think of India as a potential investment destination?

We do a considerable amount of business with India and it's the source for much of the supply chain of some of our customers. We anticipate the growth of India business to be very vigorous in the coming months.

The US has and will continue to have more issues with China, and as such, in some industries India seems to be a very good option for replacement. Our cultures are similar, our language is similar and the work ethic is similar. We are very bullish on India in 2021. 