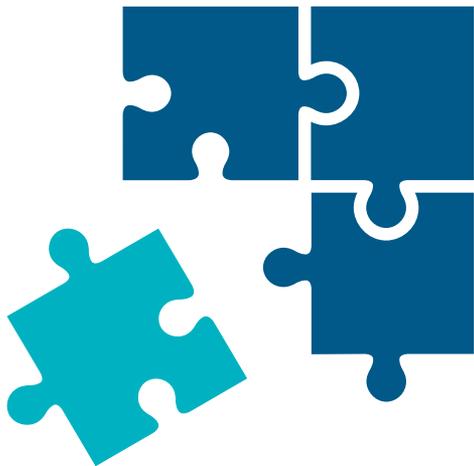


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# inbound logistics

a **ii** THOMAS™ company

From implementing artificial intelligence to outlining strategies for thriving amidst a competitive supply chain labor market, these case studies highlight ingenuity and the ability to solve practical and complex supply chain, logistics, and transportation challenges.



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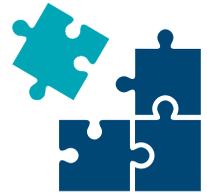
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Supply Chain Challenge?  
**SOLVED**

# Blend of Solutions Saves the Day for Yogurt Maker

When yogurt company Noosa needed to sleeve bottles of drinkable yogurt while maintaining temperature integrity, Verst provided a mix of solutions to make sure processes went smoothly.

**THE CHALLENGE**

Noosa reached out to Verst to immediately sleeve filled bottles of drinkable yogurt as their co-packer who was filling the drink could not properly apply the shrink sleeve with their equipment.

The biggest concern was that they needed Verst to apply the sleeve to filled bottles of yogurt that had to stay below a specific temperature, otherwise the product would spoil. This is not an ordinary request as most of what Verst decorates are empty containers, and if it is filled, the temperature of the product is not a factor (like alcohol for example).

**THE SOLUTION**

Verst Packaging was ready for the challenge and was able to take learnings from a similar project it ran years ago.

The company already had the application tooling in house, had line availability to auto-apply the sleeves and bundle wrap the trays, and was able to



address the stringent storage conditions. (Product had to remain below 47°F at all times.)

This project was run in two passes:

1) The bottles were removed from cold storage, sleeved, placed in trays, and returned to cold storage (to minimize temperature exposure).

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*Verst was able to start production within weeks of the initial request for a shrink sleeve solution, making sure yogurt company Noosa kept their drinks cool.*

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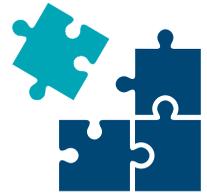
2) They were then removed from cold storage, the trays were shrink bundle wrapped with in-house equipment, and then returned to cold storage.

At the same time, the QA team took temperature readings of the yogurt to ensure that the product remained below the allowed maximum temperature.

Although this was a short-term project, Verst was able to start production within weeks of the initial request and saved the day for Noosa.



To learn more:  
phone: 800-978-9307  
web: [www.verstlogistics.com](http://www.verstlogistics.com)



## Supply Chain Challenge? **SOLVED**

# From Robots to Running Shoes

With homebound consumers buying new shoes and gear like never before, DHL Supply Chain and Locus Robotics helped Brooks Running race to meet consumer demand and prepare for future growth.

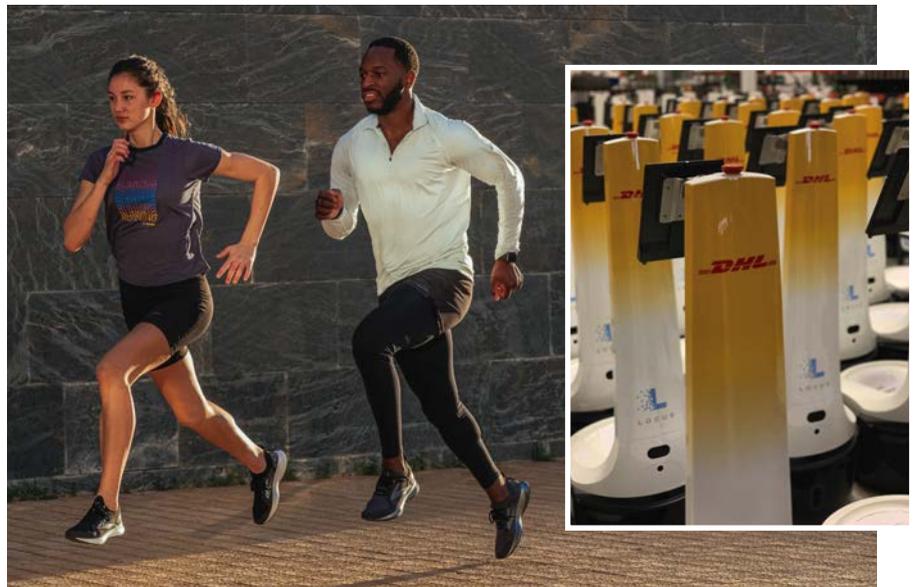
### THE CHALLENGE

Brooks Running is the number-one brand in performance running in the United States, and pre-pandemic, they sold 90% of their units through a retail store.

When the pandemic shut down brick-and-mortar stores in March 2020, Brooks thought they might have to slow their pace.

Then, people stuck at home during lockdowns started running, walking, and buying new shoes and gear like never before.

Though Brooks had been developing an omnichannel strategy for years, they needed to ramp up their direct-to-consumer channels quickly to meet the spike in e-commerce demand.



### THE SOLUTION

To help navigate the shift to direct-to-consumer and manage e-commerce distribution, Brooks opened a new distribution facility in July 2020.

The company turned to its 3PL partner, DHL Supply Chain, and its e-commerce experience and knowledge of emerging technologies, to help maximize the value of its supply chain and deliver on increasing consumer expectations and demand.

Drawing on its deep experience, DHL Supply Chain knew LocusBots from Locus Robotics—often called collaborative robots or “cobots”—provided many immediate benefits and needed to be a part of the solution for Brooks.

LocusBots could be up and running quickly, and associates at the site could be easily trained to work alongside them within the first shift on the job. They also reduce order cycle times, allowing associates to pick and pack orders to get products into consumers’ hands more quickly.

DHL knew associates enjoyed working with the technology for several additional reasons—a less physically taxing work experience with less walking and without having to push heavy carts; worker engagement and motivational opportunities through Locus’s innovative built-in gamification feature; and powerful, real-time management visibility into operational productivity and workflow progress.

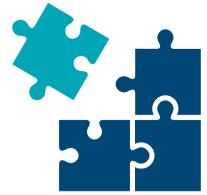
Most importantly, LocusBots give Brooks the ability to quickly scale up or down, depending on consumer demand and as the business grows.

DHL Supply Chain’s collaboration with Locus Robotics has successfully helped Brooks capitalize on the 27% year-over-year increase in volume they experienced and strongly positioned them for future growth.



To learn more:

[DHL.com/AllBusinessNoBoundaries](https://www.dhl.com/AllBusinessNoBoundaries)



Supply Chain Challenge?  
**SOLVED**

# Echo's Managed Transportation Solution Supports Resin Distributor's Rapid Growth

Leveraging enhanced technology and a dedicated LTL carrier network, Echo's solution enables M. Holland to meet national business needs with a more strategic routing process.

**THE CHALLENGE**

A leading international distributor of thermoplastic resins, M. Holland supports more than 4,000 clients in industries ranging from automotive to healthcare.

Following a period of robust growth, M. Holland saw an increase in LTL shipping and needed to find a way to keep pace with demand. Company leadership decided a national freight broker with technology expertise was the solution it needed to become a shipper of choice.

**THE SOLUTION**

*A Better Outbound Shipping Process.* Echo's Managed Transportation solution introduced proprietary technology to M. Holland's transportation management operations, allowing the company to

automate its routing process and increase visibility into shipments. M. Holland's logistics team was able to reallocate its time to business objectives while Echo:

- Helped validate distribution center locations with improved analytics
- Assessed M. Holland's shipping costs to identify savings opportunities
- Provided guidance on quality issue resolution with strategic insights
- Identified pain points related to market segment, region, and time of year

By presenting M. Holland with a broader view of its shipping practices, Echo was able to provide information about the company's total lane operation and offer insights into establishing a more efficient network design.

*A Partnership Focused on Strategy.* Echo provided M. Holland guidance for educating customers, account managers,

---

*With Echo, we experienced an attitude of continuous improvement. Very quickly we realized that Echo could optimize, refine, and create a more efficient routing process for our needs.*

—Pete Nutley  
Vice President of Operations  
M. Holland

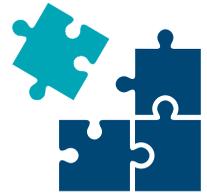
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and industry partners on the challenges facing the freight market. As a strategic partner, Echo:

- Hosted quarterly business reviews
- Helped M. Holland develop long-term business goals
- Introduced a new outlook on shipping operations
- Supported panel discussions during streaming web conferences



To learn more:  
email: [info@echo.com](mailto:info@echo.com)  
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web: [echo.com](http://echo.com)



Supply Chain Challenge?  
**SOLVED**

# Flexing Labor Practices to Respond to Supply Chain Disruptions

Responding to e-commerce surges without compromising service levels, MD Logistics developed flexible labor solutions across its business by emphasizing four core elements.

**THE CHALLENGE**

The COVID-19 pandemic transformed the world and forever altered the way in which supply chains, everywhere, operate. One of the many disruptions the supply chain experienced during this time was a shortage of available labor. Prior to the pandemic, due in part to the growing demand for e-commerce, the supply chain was already experiencing a shortage of readily available labor. The ensuing days of the pandemic only exacerbated that challenge as more and more consumers moved to e-commerce channels for all of their shopping needs.

This shift, coupled with the need to take time off to care for family members due to illness or the closing of schools, created a labor challenge for 3PL providers and supply chains everywhere. They were now tasked with finding a solution to respond to this influx of orders, without compromising on the level of service the consumer has come to expect.

**THE SOLUTION**

MD Logistics operates as a 3PL within two very distinct and separate industries: Life Sciences and Pharmaceuticals, and Retail and Consumer Goods. These two industries have their own set of handling requirements and quality controls in place to ensure the integrity of the product. Because these two industries are so distinctly different, traditionally, the best way to deliver a lasting customer experience would be to have separate,



highly specialized teams operating within each industry.

While this worked for many 3PLs, including the team at MD Logistics, in the past, the events of the past year have proven a need for greater flexibility across all areas of the supply chain. Throughout the pandemic, as some areas of our business slowed, others got busier. We used this opportunity to alleviate a portion of the labor shortage we were experiencing by flexing labor across the business. The solution is made possible by keeping these elements in mind:

**Collaboration.** Cross collaboration between the facilities within our four-facility Plainfield, Indiana, campus ensures that all areas are properly staffed, flexing team members where needed.

**Open communication.** Consistent open channels of communication ensure that as additional staffing needs arise,

they can be met and fulfilled.

**Company culture.** The culture at MD Logistics supports a “can do” attitude and is very much a team environment. Creating an environment which supports assistance within the organization produces a team-oriented group of individuals all with a willingness to assist where needed.

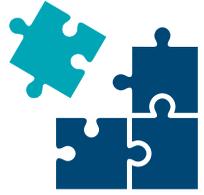
**Technology.** Utilizing the same WMS across the MD Logistics organization creates a more seamless transition of personnel from one operation to another.



To learn more:  
email: [info@mdlogistics.com](mailto:info@mdlogistics.com)  
phone: 317-838-8900  
web: [www.mdlogistics.com](http://www.mdlogistics.com)

## Supply Chain Challenge?

# SOLVED



# Holman Logistics Uses Artificial Intelligence to Increase Forklift Safety

Holman partners with OneTrack to bring AI solutions to the issue of forklift accidents.

### THE CHALLENGE

For Holman Logistics, nothing is more important than the safety of its team members and the customers for whom they provide manufacturing logistics, warehousing, omnichannel fulfillment, and transportation services.

“Our core values set the foundation for the work we do, and we have no more important core value than safety. We constantly seek technology, training, and other innovative resources to help us maintain our superior safety performance,” commented Brien Downie, president of Holman Logistics.

Holman operates forklifts in all of its locations across the U.S., and operations managers and customers understand the human and financial costs of forklift-related accidents. Holman always monitored and tracked forklift activity; however, management wanted to understand the root causes of mishaps and find out if it was possible to create a system to warn of problems and prevent accidents from occurring.

### THE SOLUTION

Along with ensuring that it hires, trains, and develops technically proficient forklift drivers, Holman chose to partner with OneTrack to leverage that company’s expertise in Computer Vision and Deep Learning, also known as Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Computer Vision refers to software processing images from an onboard camera. While the concept of Computer



**Holman custom logistics solutions are both cost-effective and safe. AI technology provides real-time feedback and detects patterns to prevent collisions.**

Vision has been around a long time, recent advancements in Deep Learning allow computers to detect, recognize, and predict high-level concepts from images with superhuman accuracy and reliability.

A system powered by Deep Learning has the ability not only to detect that an incident occurred but also to learn why that incident occurred. Most importantly, it can recognize the same pattern in the future and provide a real-time warning when it thinks a similar incident is about to happen. Such a system continues to learn while deployed, actively preventing incidents and continuously getting better at doing so. As the system learns, drivers become safer and more effective, and the number of accidents can be reduced over time.

These technologies create a safer, more efficient workplace for everyone, which is important for Holman because

processes, requirements, and workflows can vary greatly by customer and location across its network of facilities.

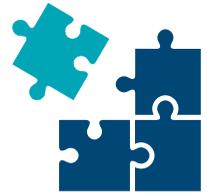
Brien Downie concluded, “I am confident that these AI tools, along with our never-ending safety focus, are helping us move steadily closer to our goal of accident-free operations. AI technology can have a positive impact on the safety performance of the entire industry.”



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## Supply Chain Challenge? **SOLVED**

# Pool Distribution Increases the Speed to Market for Fast-Fashion Giant

A major fast-fashion retailer got a leg up when SEKO Logistics streamlined workflows with a 24/7 performance portal to manage metrics, outside market conditions, and costs.

Fast-fashion retailers, like Forever 21, work with designers for both regular fashion items and collections which are, in turn, themed and timed for release around traditional retail sales events. However, a key differentiator between fast-fashion and traditional retail is that inventory for fast-fashion is determined during the design phase and pushed through the supply chain directly from origin to store; instead of the typical planning and ordering by the individual stores to meet sales projections.



A control tower process enables data management from the DCs, into the client systems, and concurrently back into SEKO's systems to meet any financial expectations. In addition, this performance portal tracks DC-to-store delivery metrics, delivery window accuracy, and carton forecasts.

Daily snapshots are relayed to the management team to monitor key metrics, and a highly controlled master delivery schedule ensures DCs deliver within scope to save on added labor expenses.

SEKO provides 24/7 management of DC performance metrics and develops responses to provide continuous improvement to the client's supply chain. Enhanced customer service communication drastically improves client-side visibility, providing a means to manage operational responses within established cost constraints for a truly scalable solution.

### THE CHALLENGE

Due to the fact that shipments are controlled by the origin manufacturer, the local warehouse has no visibility to the incoming inventory—hence no volume projections—until the distribution center (DC) processes cartons to SEKO for transport to destination markets.

To maintain transparency, IT infrastructure needed an upgrade and alignment to address data management best practices and workflow management.

From line haul to the last mile, SEKO created an intake variance/condition reporting workflow detailing truck routing in accordance with the daily forecast and POD process. This new operational workflow enabled the compilation of clean data to maximize financial workflow efficiency.

### THE SOLUTION

SEKO Logistics worked hand-in-hand with our partner to increase visibility and ensure the yard has sufficient resources, planning, and contingency equipment to handle any unexpected spikes in volume, while also managing store inventories for exception events such as road closures and COVID response conditions.

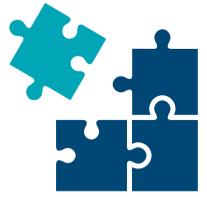
SEKO provided the client with an SLA/KPI live-update portal that enables Store Managers, District Managers, and HQ OPS to access a daily forecast of arriving inventory to plan for unexpected needs. Using industry-standard IT specifications for creating and maintaining SEKO's data feed, freight milestones were converted to XML format for complete end-to-end alignment.



To learn more:  
email: [hello@sekologistics.com](mailto:hello@sekologistics.com)  
phone: 630-919-4800  
web: [sekologistics.com](http://sekologistics.com)

## Supply Chain Challenge?

# SOLVED



# 3PL Outsourcing Beyond the Initial Goals

RedStone understands that cost savings are just a part of each client relationship; a 3PL must provide more if the relationship is to withstand the demands of an ever-changing supply chain.

### THE CHALLENGE

Outsourcing logistics operations to a 3PL isn't new. Unfortunately, disillusionment after a year or two isn't new either and can result in dissatisfaction. The experience of a RedStone Logistics client that manufactures and distributes outdoor recreational equipment across North America illustrates this challenge.

For Alan, the company's director of distribution and domestic logistics, his frustration was at a point that he knew he had to make a change. "We hired a 3PL to help us save money and ultimately to turn our supply chain into a competitive advantage. Early on, the savings were there, and the 3PL team did everything we told them to. But," he added, "why should we have to tell them what to do? They are supposed to be the experts."

"Our business was growing, and we were not sure that our 3PL was looking beyond cost savings to improve our supply chain as business expanded. What we really needed was a partner who would drive innovation and challenge our ideas if they weren't the best for our business."

Clients are looking for additional assistance and efficiencies, not just reduced costs. Some 3PLs, having worked hard to deliver on early promises, fall into an operating rhythm with current clients and then must turn their attention to meeting expectations of



**Growth industries such as recreational equipment require a 3PL partnership that looks beyond initial cost savings to improve supply chain efficiency and customer satisfaction.**

new clients that are coming onboard. Culturally, the two organizations may be focused on different priorities.

### THE SOLUTION

RedStone understands that cost savings are just a part of each client relationship; a 3PL must provide more if the relationship is to withstand the demands of an ever-changing supply chain. The RedStone answer was a solution designed specifically for the demands of the organization's industry and customer requirements.

"Many 3PL organizations rely on price alone to drive improvements, quickly running out of options to improve efficiencies after lower costs are no longer an option. RedStone solutions start with getting to know our clients—their challenges, systems, processes, people, and most importantly how they measure success—before we do anything else," commented Jim

Ritchie, president and CEO of RedStone Logistics.

RedStone focused its work for Alan on simplifying the entire supply chain from the beginning, not just on reducing the cost of shipping their products.

"We worked with Alan and his team to ensure we met their near-term requirements and anticipated changes in their supply chain," added Ritchie. "We invested in dedicated resources to meet the strategic direction of the

company, the needs of its customers, and the plan for how its supply chain should react to ever-changing logistics requirements."

These specialized resources provided by RedStone reach into every corner of the business to drive continuous improvement, resulting in years of client satisfaction. Eliminating client disillusionment is a fundamental imperative for RedStone Logistics, creating client relationships that don't merely survive but thrive beyond the first year of cost savings.

**REDSTONE**  
LOGISTICS

To learn more:  
email: [solutions@redstonelogistics.com](mailto:solutions@redstonelogistics.com)  
phone: 888-733-5030  
web: [redstonelogistics.com](http://redstonelogistics.com)