

Digital Supply Chain Sophistication Coming Soon to a Port Near You

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In a post-MODEX interview [Jon Slangerup](#), the CEO of the Atlanta-based 4PL, [American Global Logistics](#), says that U.S. ports are finally keeping pace with technology-driven trends in other transport industries.

"When I was recruited to be the CEO at the Port of Long Beach in 2014, the biggest concern was to get the dockside labor and management issues put aside," he recalls. "But when we finally addressed that, we discovered a whole culture of inefficiencies related to the resistance to new technologies."



Slangerup resigned from the Port of Long Beach in 2016, but not before overseeing a significant transformation in strategic operations by introducing a cloud-based platform enabling supply chain transparency.

"Having custodial control of both goods and information is key," he says. "Shippers who came to rely on expedited air and courier freight during our labor crisis were now demanding the same level of sophistication from the ports. "

Rather than enduring “fragmented handoffs” between vessel operator, warehouses, and drayage companies they insisted on having a “backbone” providing a single link to do away with this segmentation.

“And once we got the FMC (Federal Maritime Commission) to buy into this, we took a major step forward,” says Slingerup.

Three years ago, the FMC issued *U.S. Container Port Congestion & Related International Supply Chain Issues: Causes, Consequences & Challenges*.

The report organized and further developed stakeholder discussion around six major themes that emerged at the “port forums” held at major gateway ports.

These included investment and planning; chassis availability and related issues; vessel and terminal operations; port drayage and truck turn-time; extended gate hours, PierPASS and congestion pricing; and collaboration and communication.

“Advanced technology is going to transform ports to even greater degree,” he said. “We see it driving a vision developed first on the West Coast for greener and more efficient supply chains.”