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MBN TEXAS

MINORITY & MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS NEWS

**ACCESS
2021:**
The future is now

**Asian Americans in
the supply chain**

**MBEIC chairs
Nannette Ray,
Debbie Trevino
offer advice**

**ENGINEERED TO A HIGHER
STANDARD—THE HUMAN STANDARD.**

The New Lexus LS

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LEXUS

Options shown



Uncharted territory

Transportation and logistics pave the way ➡ BY GEORGEANN H. IKUMA



➡ Thomas Thacker, president and chief operating officer, Logisticorp Group LLC



Every single one of our customers is considered an essential business ...

Additionally, not only were we fortunate to avoid layoffs and furloughs, but we saw the quality in performance go up in our labor force.

— Thomas Thacker

The impact of COVID-19 on the transportation and logistics industry has been compared to multiple hurricanes hitting the United States — and perhaps the world — all at the same time, thereby placing an unprecedented strain on resources.

Even for well-established companies like Logisticorp Group LLC in Irving, Texas, and MW Logistics LLC based in Dallas, Texas, the pandemic presented a set of extraordinary challenges, and an ever-changing “new now.” Moreover, it made critically clear to these business leaders that communication is key.

“None of us—at any level of leadership—had been trained to run a firm through a global pandemic,” said Thomas Thacker, president and chief operating officer of Logisticorp Group, a full-service logistics company with dedicated fleet transportation services and supply-chain solutions, servicing customers globally.

“At the beginning of the pandemic, everything changed,” he added. “All mobility fell off, meaning passenger transportation — buses, trains and planes — just stopped moving.”

While the public simply saw that shelves were wiped clean of toilet paper, supply-chain companies saw the full scope of what was happening behind the scenes.

“The demand became larger than the supply, because while paper mills got busier, factories were closing down,” Thacker said. He added that he immediately began setting up meetings early and often with his customers at the executive level to support the customers’ changing needs.

“Car factories were now making ventilators, and distilleries were producing hand sanitizers, so I needed to touch base and ask, ‘What’s going on in your world, and how can we help?’” he said.

ASSURANCE OF SUPPLY

Mitchell Ward is founder and CEO of MW Logistics. It is a third-party logistics company that designs logistics and transportation solutions for businesses by working with asset-based partners to secure shipping ca-



➡ Mitchell Ward, founder and CEO, MW Logistics LLC



We’re focused on the companies that have always wanted to do business with us and are making sure that we grow with them.

— Mitchell Ward

capacity and services across multiple transportation modes. The company moves products for clients like Clorox, Coca-Cola, Walmart, Frito-Lay, PepsiCo, Best Buy, General Mills and more.

He echoed the importance of transparency with clients as well as vendors.

"Sitting down with our drivers and customers to strategically talk about each of their needs is critical to being able to deliver on contracts," Ward said. "We've been faced with not only a shortage of truck drivers, but also the consistency of regulation on how many hours a driver can be behind the wheel."

While skills such as problem-solving, troubleshooting and thinking outside the box have long been staples in the company's toolbox, this past year offered up more questions than answers.

"Am I going to have drivers in my trucks or workers in my warehouse? And, if I do, what is the protocol for getting tested?" asked Thacker, who prepared by cross-training his staff to counter the potential delays. "We also had to remain responsive and accommodating to our customers who were implementing their own protocols."

GOING THE DISTANCE

Despite the hurdles in the rear view and the uncertainties that still lay ahead, the sustainability of the transportation and logistics industry can be summed up in two words — essential business.



"Every single one of our customers is considered an essential business," said Thacker, whose company's 2020 revenues exceeded that of the prior year, and 2021 is on schedule to do the same. "Additionally, not only were we fortunate to avoid layoffs and furloughs, but we saw the quality in performance go up in our labor force."

Ward holds an optimistic outlook as well. "We're focused on the companies that have always wanted to do business with us and are making sure that we grow with them," he said. "Going forward, it will be about how much money the customer is willing to pay to support these drivers in the marketplace, so that they can get the products to the shelves."

The journey is sure to see more bumps ahead, but if history has proven one thing — these companies are in it for the long haul. ■

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LOGISTICORP GROUP, VISIT LOGISTICORPGROUP.COM.

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MW LOGISTICS, VISIT MWLOGISTICS.COM.

DIVERSITY: Together the extraordinary array of colors make up a masterpiece.



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