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Making the Invisible Visible with Fully
Integrated Supply Chain Solutions

Armada

Making the Invisible Visible with Fully Integrated Supply Chain Solutions

Produced by John Carioti & Written by Molly Shaw

There are many steps along the way before thousands of individual components arrive at restaurants and retail stores across the country every day. The vast complexity of supply chains can be overwhelming. However, Armada, a Pittsburgh-based supply chain management and efficiencies firm, knows there is a better way to optimize logistics networks for a range of restaurant, food service and retail clients through synergy between all points of contact. “Managing the cost of goods is one of the most important objectives for any operation, from national restaurant chains to food manufacturers and





Joe Dominijanni, COO and John Burke, CEO

retailers,” explains John Burke, CEO of Armada. “We can help any company with a large, complex supply chain reduce costs and become more efficient.”

Armada is one of a few firms paving the way in the niche supply chain analysis industry that’s emerged in recent years. “We’re doing what TD Ameritrade did to brokerage or what LinkedIn did to recruiting,” compares Burke. “We’re creating complete supply chain visibility building a smaller, more cost-effective network for our clients.”

As the supply chain expert, Armada specializes in supply chain planning, warehouse and transportation solutions and global logistics. The firm’s proactive approach involves a continuous focus on comprehensive, fact-based supply chain network engineering, design and product flow optimization. “We’re essentially re-engineering the networks to reduce costs and improve performance,” adds Burke.

Paving the Way for more Efficient Operations

Armada is better equipped to serve restaurant and food service industry clients, because that’s where the company’s origins lie. “The business originated as a family food business based in Pittsburgh, dating back to the 1890s,” reveals Burke. “The Hofmann family established a meat packing company on the north side of Pittsburgh and remained in the meat industry, producing meat products for one of the largest fast-food chains in the country until the 1990s.”

After five generations of family ownership the company diversified from meat packing to



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warehousing and logistics in 1988. “After years of servicing a wide range of large restaurant chains, the family realized an opportunity to create efficiencies in shipping through warehousing and freight,” recalls Burke.

Burke joined the Hofmann operation in 1992 and took over the company’s small logistics division. “In 1999 the family sold the meat packing side of the business but retained ownership of the logistics division,” shares Burke. “Northside Foods, which was the meat packing company, was purchased by Smithfield Packing and Northside Distribution eventually became Armada.”

In 1996, the company performed supply chain analysis for a key big-name fast-food client. “1996

was really the transition year that launched us into a much larger company,” recalls Burke.

In 2011, the Hofmanns sold Armada to Burke and his fellow managers. Over

the years, Armada has broadened its operations into supply chain management and logistics, leading a series of landmark undertakings that have changed the way the industry operates today. Through a culture of innovation, leadership and extraordinary customer commitment, Armada has formed a solid foundation and core principles that still guide the company.

COMPANY AT A GLANCE

ESTABLISHED : 1890

CEO: JOHN BURKE

EMPLOYEES : 400

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Working Backward for Better Visibility

Armada remains headquartered in Pittsburgh, but has established offices and warehouses in Chicago,

Denver, Orlando, Atlanta and more recently, the U.K.

“We perform supply chain management and logistics work all across North America with 400 employees,” notes Joe Dominijanni, COO of Armada. “We operate large warehouses and run contracts with some of the largest trucking companies in the U.S. In the last year, we have launched a European group and we’re continuing to expand with new clients in Europe.”



Armada has built a network of clients coast to coast and continues to add more every day by working backward. “We work hard to drive efficiencies in the network by building a smaller, better connected one,” explains Dominijanni. “From the supply houses to the warehouse and distribution center back, we’re creating more visibility upstream so to speak. Who’s manufacturing the product? Where is it being stored and who’s shipping it; we answer these questions.”

Using a comprehensive, engineering-based approach, Armada delivers solutions backed by state-of-the-art optimization and simulation software that removes the complexity and cost from a client’s supply chain infrastructure. “It’s all about collaboration,” explains Dominijanni. “Our approach models our client’s current supply chain state and allows them to better understand existing logistics costs while identifying improvement opportunities that best align with their strategic goals.”

A Well-oiled Machine

Armada offers supply chain network design, distribution channel optimization, transportation mode optimization and strategic sourcing, development of strategic success measurements, risk management and contingency planning. “Our process relies heavily on visibility to transactional data to provide insight into logistic costs and enable proactive development of short and long term sustainable savings,” examines Loraine Yalch, vice president of business development for Armada.

Additionally, Armada helps clients minimize the cost and effects of short-term challenges such as natural disasters, unexpected changes in customer demand related to promotional opportunities and commodity price volatility. With effective communication between all parties, a supply chain can run like a well-oiled machine.

In the instance of a restaurant supply chain, if the culinary side wants to change the menu, the supply chain should advise the most cost-effective new items. If the marketing team wants to run a promotion, the supply chain should help determine the best positioned inventory. “The supplier should see through the operator’s eyes,” explains Yalch.

Assisting All Sectors

This concept not only applies to restaurants but to nearly all operations dealing with consumable goods. “We have introduced our business model

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to the food industry, but the time is right to grow and expand into other consumable industries,” says Burke. “We’re working more with retail clients looking to add value, everything from small stores to auto part companies. We’re still very much in assessment mode, but it’s nice to get outside of your daily bread and butter and see how what you’re doing in one sector applies to another. I truly believe there is a whole litany of other companies that could benefit from our services.”

Armada is also eager to bring its business model overseas and into European countries. “It’s been a

12- to 18-month process, but we opened our first legal entity in the U.K. in 2013 and we’re in the process of taking it to another level,” reveals Burke. “It’s a different business environment, so there have been some challenges, but we’re excited to show European clients our model and let them see that there’s a better way.”

Armada’s agile and collaborative approach to supply chain management is changing the face of a range of industries, ensuring whether demand is high or low, no opportunity for profits will be lost. •





ARMADA

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