







# RELEVANT, FOCUSED, AND COMMITTED

*AIT Worldwide Logistics is a full-service transportation management provider that is responsive to customer needs, focused on staying relevant to changing markets, and respectful of its workforce. As the firm's name suggests, it has customers around the globe and continental headquarters in Chicago, Hong Kong, and Amsterdam.*







**Written by Nate Hendley**

**A**IT handles a wide variety of supply chain solutions, including domestic ground distribution, transpacific imports via ocean and air, exports, and customs brokerage. The company also provides services for strategic sectors requiring special handling and processes such as residential deliveries of consumer goods and retail logistics solutions.

"We focus on being a consultant. We want to make sure we're providing options and unique solutions to our customers in response to their particular supply chain challenges," says AIT President and Chief Executive Officer Vaughn Moore.

The company works extensively with a wide variety of industries including cold chain for life sciences and perishables, retail logistics, government, and ►►





► residential delivery, to name a few. AIT has also implemented robust e-commerce services, but Moore does not want to single out any one particular sector as being more important than any other. For now, AIT intends to be best in class for all industries it serves.

AIT was originally founded in 1979 in Itasca, Illinois. At the time, both the company and the logistics and transportation industry were completely different.

"It was a very humble beginning," states Moore. "The industry has evolved from almost a blue-collar industry back in the day to a much more white-collar industry. For us, that means taking a more consultative approach to business – figuring out ways to solve problems for our customers on a day-to-day basis."

From modest beginnings, AIT has grown and now has more than 50 locations in North America, Europe, and Asia and a penchant for technological systems. "Our goal is to be able to expand," says Moore. "I do expect we will continue to grow in Mexico and Europe. We'll certainly add more locations to our network in Asia."

In five years, Moore anticipates AIT, "will have a substantial amount of new offices around the world. That global footprint will continue to grow ... But I don't want to grow just for growth's sake. We will do it in a way that fits within our planning and our strategy as a whole. The company is focused on key areas where geographic expansion will help us secure new business and expand partnerships with our current customers."

When it comes to risk management, AIT's goal is to ensure safety and security throughout the supply chain. That begins with the organization's teammates and partners who work to effectively execute strict shipping procedures every day. The company actively participates in the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT), a joint industry-government initiative that aims to enhance protections on cargo that enters the U.S. AIT is also a platinum member of the Airforwarders Association (AfA), a major alliance for the logistics and forwarder industry. The AfA lobbies on behalf of members and keeps them updated on risk management regulations and other subjects.

AIT's risk management programs complement the company's quality assurance practices. Its Quality Management System incorporates best practices and uses multiple key performance indicators for evaluation purposes. A quality assurance segment called Corrective and Preventive Action is designed to identify, then eliminate the root cause of problems. An annual survey, formally called a Quality Satisfaction Index, gauges how customers view the company.

"We've put a lot of emphasis on communicating with our customers – hearing their voice. I think customers should demand that from any partner they're working with," states Moore. The goal of AIT's risk management and quality assurance programs is to "protect the integrity of the products we are shipping."



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Using technology to track the location and status of freight at all times is one way of achieving this. To this end, AIT offers online tools such as MyAIT, a proprietary online portal that updates customers about their cargo.

Given AIT's global scope, the company's emphasis on advanced solutions makes good business sense. "You have to start with a [technology] platform that comprehensively ties in with all offices around the world, to communicate as efficiently and as effectively as possible. We certainly have that," says Moore.

AIT has experienced explosive growth in recent years, due in part to a strong economy, the company's expanded Asian operations, and the surging popularity of e-commerce services. As Moore points out, two other factors have contributed to AIT's growth: an enhanced focus on earning customers' trust and strengthening the company's core services while staying relevant in an evolving global economy.

Maintaining relevance means adapting to new technology and market changes and not being averse to risk, he says. "You have to stay relevant in the marketplace. You need to provide options and solutions for your customers, and sometimes that means being open to taking chances and risks in areas that maybe your company wasn't in before. When we look back at our business 20 years ago, we weren't yet in truckload brokerage; we were still a few years away from providing customs brokerage services; we did very little international or e-commerce work. You have to step in and take chances and [strive] to be best in class," explains Moore. ►►



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► For its efforts, the company has received some very high-profile industry kudos. In 2017, AIT was awarded the prestigious Best in Class accreditation in the exclusive U.S. Independent Freight Forwarder category from the Global Institute of Logistics (GIL). “I’m very proud of it because it’s an award from a respected independent third party with insightful knowledge of the industry,” says Moore, of the Best in Class honors.

The honor recognizes independent freight forwarders that demonstrate a strong commitment to best practices in logistics. The GIL describes itself as a think tank for the international logistics industry.

When it comes to staffing the company’s teams, AIT aims to hire people with optimistic outlooks, a collaborative spirit, and a strong work ethic. In return, AIT offers them a sense of being valued for their contributions and opinions.



“I want people to feel they have a chance to make an impact. Part of our culture is making sure people have a voice. I also want them to have fun and enjoy what they do,” says Moore.

AIT stresses volunteer efforts and charitable initiatives. The company runs its AIT Cares program and teammates are asked to spend at least five hours of their time each year working for a charitable cause. The firm donates to scores of charities, with St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital being its flagship cause as a Silver National Team.

“I’m a very big believer, as a company, the more success we have, the more we have to give back. When we talk about culture and we talk about Core Values, I believe it’s one of the most fundamental parts of our company,” states Moore.

AIT faces obstacles like low unemployment, which is great for the economy, but not so good for companies working to recruit new talent. Other opportunities include new market and technology developments such as blockchain. This decentralized, digital ledger has many uses beyond cryptocurrency, including smart contracts that can provide unique transparency and efficiency across the supply chain.

“We are very much educating ourselves in the world of blockchain and making sure we gain a clear understanding of how it can boost the quality and integrity of communication with our customers. We believe there are real opportunities [with blockchain] in the future and we’ll continue to explore and develop prudent technological solutions that advance our reputation in the industry,” says Moore.







"We're always looking at what could be the next thing to enhance our toolbox for our customers," Moore says of new services or products. "I really try to focus on being the best at what we already have. We have growth in a lot of different areas: aerospace, technology, and others. We're also looking at acquisitions in a variety of areas that may bring in new services and solutions."

In other words, new services and solutions might emerge organically through acquisitions, but AIT is more focused on

enhancing its existing offerings before plunging into new sectors. This is not to say AIT is taking an overly cautious approach to the future.

"In five years, our company will continue to be an industry leader and become a much larger player in the marketplace, even compared to our position today. More than ever, we remain committed to earning our customers' trust and becoming the global logistics provider respected for delivering a world-class experience." ■

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