

BlueGrace Logistics

Setting Sights on Real-time Freight Visibility for Expedited Loads

For Tampa-based, full-service 3PL BlueGrace Logistics, customer success doesn't depend on shipments and deliveries alone. Even with 24/7 access to over 450 expedited carriers across the U.S. and Canada, success by BlueGrace standards is a product of dependable relationships between customers, carriers and logistics experts. As part of its progressive approach to transportation management, BlueGrace automated location and status tracking for all expedited loads with the Descartes MacroPoint™ freight visibility platform.

The Challenge

In less than 10 years, BlueGrace has grown rapidly from a 24-person company to over 500 employees across 11 locations in the U.S. In August of 2016, the company decided to add expedited freight to its suite of offerings that already included less than truckload (LTL), truckload (TL) and transportation management services. In establishing the service level standards for the new division, BlueGrace outlined a number of key objectives, including the ability to meet demanding pick-up and delivery times; support specific appointments, as well as deliver weekends, nights and holidays; quote a guaranteed rate and capacity within 30 minutes; offer 2-day cross-country service—and provide not only 24/7 booking but also 24/7 tracking. Taking this even further, BlueGrace wanted to be able to provide its shipper customers with location updates every 2 hours for 1-day deliveries, and every 4 hours for 2+ day deliveries.



Headquartered in Tampa, Florida, BlueGrace needed technology to provide continuous visibility including arrivals, departures, in-transit status updates, and more across its shipper and carrier network.

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“ The demand for better insight into quickly moving freight has created new requirements for tracking that helps our customers better manage potential challenges to their supply chains. With Descartes MacroPoint, we now have the means to provide customers with real-time updates on the location and status of their shipments. It's been a huge selling point, and we've seen a 95% adoption rate of the technology among our carrier community. ”

– Shawn Leonard,
Head of Expedited Freight
BlueGrace Logistics

BLUEGRACE LOGISTICS

BlueGrace® is an award-winning, full-service Third Party Logistics (3PL) provider that helps businesses manage their freight spend through industry leading technology with a large network of established carriers to customers across the country. Sure, lots of firms may claim that, but what really sets us apart is our passion to support your success in this complex \$750 billion U.S. freight industry.

The Solution

BlueGrace turned to a technology-based solution to replace traditional track and trace practices with true end-to-end supply chain visibility. Integrated with the company's MercuryGate TMS, the Descartes MacroPoint platform gives BlueGrace, its carrier network and its diverse shipper customers real-time visibility into load status. Using the system, BlueGrace can closely monitor and evaluate the movement of all shipments in one portal, whether goods are moving by Sprinter vans, semis or domestic air.

Within a year, the division had grown by 350%, mirroring the same hyper growth the company has experienced since inception. A third person came on board in late 2017, and the expedited team currently handles 25-30 shipments per day, or approximately 4,000 annually. Initially, the small group had borrowed a TL resource, but they were able to eliminate any reliance on the TL team after becoming quickly proficient with Descartes MacroPoint. In addition, the cloud-based solution easily facilitates collaboration across operations staff in Tampa, and division management in Cedar Rapids, IA.

"Our customers include, for example, airline and automotive parts manufacturers, consumer packaged goods companies, businesses in construction delivery and even food distribution. Each one of their time-sensitive shipments is tracked by Descartes MacroPoint, so shippers always know where their goods are without our team having to make a series of check calls on a load-by-load basis," explains Shawn Leonard, Head of Expedited Freight at BlueGrace.

Given that 80% of the company's expedited loads are 24-hour moves, the ability to access status information on a 24-hour basis, including arrivals, departures and in-transit updates, is key to customer satisfaction. "One of our customers urgently had to move a promotional display from Atlanta to Las Vegas. On Friday morning, the display and signage were picked up; by Saturday evening, we were on site and, throughout the process, we were able to proactively provide the customer with frequent and detailed updates," illustrates Leonard. With Descartes MacroPoint, BlueGrace and its customers get automated check calls around the clock without having to staff a third shift.

Like everyone involved in rush freight, BlueGrace understands how it feels to need something delivered yesterday. Descartes MacroPoint has become a critical tool for helping the company simplify expedited freight, increase productivity and save costs across the supply chain. In fact, in 2017, only 3 expedited loads were behind schedule—out of a total of 3,800—underscoring the improved performance and reliability driven by real-time freight insights.

The Results



Better Customer Service

BlueGrace distinguishes itself as a partner to its shipper and carrier communities, and using the proven Descartes MacroPoint visibility platform to deliver accurate, real-time freight information improves communication, coordination and performance for all stakeholders.



Minimal Late Shipments

In 2017, with only 3 late loads out of 3,800, Descartes MacroPoint helps BlueGrace to constantly monitor the on-time delivery of goods, keep customers' supply chains moving, and minimize late shipments or unreported delays that can have a ripple effect on supply chain productivity.



Lower Operating Costs

Descartes MacroPoint eliminates the need for administrative-intensive check calls to carriers and drivers to track ~4,000 loads per year. In addition, load location and status information is directed to shippers faster and more frequently with integration to BlueGrace's TMS.



Dramatic Business Growth

The BlueGrace drive to meet freight visibility requirements from shippers in different industries has spurred a 95% Descartes MacroPoint adoption rate among carriers, new freight hauling opportunities, and rapid expansion of the new expedited freight division.