Why a Continuous Delivery Experience (CDX) Is Your Key to Amazon-ifying Your Supply Chain
As consumers, “The Amazon Effect” continues to reshape our expectations of customer experience and delivery, with ‘same-day’ having now become a reality.

In fact, as more and more manufacturers, retailers, and others seek to transform their supply chains into profit centers via the Amazon model, they’re finding strategies like digitization, visibility, and other initiatives aren’t delivering on their promises.

What do these global brands and others share in common? Even with state-of-the-art ERPs, control towers and other tools, they’re trying to capture a continuously changing reality through static, point-in-time snapshots. This static form of visibility is not only labor-intensive (requiring an army of analysts to manually cleanse the data), it’s virtually useless (because so much of the information is out of date).

Now, imagine if Amazon’s customer experience relied on this static visibility. You could only track where your packages were a week ago, and you wouldn’t find out that your product was out of stock until days after you purchased it! This is precisely what B2B supply chains are facing. Because static visibility blocks the timely, accurate flow of information between business units, partners and customers, responses to exceptions and conflicts are consistently reactive and siloed. As the second largest global producer of packaging, paper and pulp, Georgia-Pacific was laser-focused on digitally transforming their freight transportation, static visibility was at the center of their disconnected supply chain:

50% of customer shipments weren’t meeting perfect order, leading to some customers having to shut down production (and carry additional stock in many cases) due to delays.

100 hours per week were being spent by logistics teams working with historical transit time tables and spreadsheets, manually updated by hearsay from carrier websites multiple times a day.

20% of invoicing was lagging due to the need to cross-reference 600+ ocean bookings to track final arrival, leading to missed billing opportunities.
A Continuous Approach to Supply Chains

In a Bain & Company report, five out of 10 factors that drive Net Promoter Scores (NPS) are impacted by what Amazon has accomplished in the B2C space. This results in two significant shifts over the past three years:

- **Product delivery expectations grew** by 1.25x
- **User experience expectations grew** by 2x

Companies seeking to employ the Amazon effect within their businesses need to embrace a continuous approach to drive constant, measurable improvement in both delivery and experience.

Most importantly, these two elements feed off one another in an instantaneous and ongoing feedback loop - known as Continuous Delivery Experience (CDX) - that continually learns, adjusts and gets smarter in helping companies get ahead of problems and exceed customer expectations. If you consider, for example, that when suppliers communicate with their customers, these are either reactive (to a customer complaint) or based on an event (we’ve just learned that something has changed, and need to figure out what to do). From a CX perspective, there’s no “continuous” loop where customers can, at their leisure, accurately track shipments without contacting the shipper first; even in a portal environment, if the data is incorrect or missing, there’s little point in trusting the nicest looking dashboard. Taking it one step further, if the customer wants to partially or fully automate shipment tracking and other processes, unreliable data could exacerbate problems: “garbage in, garbage out.”

Likewise, overfocusing on delivery (CD) individually won’t solve the problem either. Even with better on-time performance than your competitors, will your customers really notice if they can’t track event milestones and consistently use that information to apply to other areas of the supply chain lifecycle, such as demand planning, invoicing, and warehouse management?

**CONTINUOUS DELIVERY**
Adapt in Real-Time

Use accurate, live data to adapt plans on the fly, increasing speed to market, reducing costs and inventory, and optimizing global freight flows.

**CONTINUOUS EXPERIENCE**
Effortlessly Access Info

Gain a competitive advantage by giving your customers easy access to trusted shipment information so they can track and optimize their own operations.
Putting CDX to Use: Georgia-Pacific's Story

In the example discussed earlier, Georgia-Pacific's static visibility impacted their delivery precision and overall customer experience. Like most of their competitors, they sought to become “Supplier of Choice” with their customers, and tried multiple approaches, including building their own system (they didn’t have the expertise) or deploying a vendor’s shiny-looking, but still static, solution.

Not satisfied at all with their results, Georgia-Pacific turned to the only freight transportation solution that enabled them to adopt a CDX approach, based on the Amazon model, across their enterprise, and extend it to their customers and partners. ClearMetal’s CDX Platform (now in its second major release) uses a continuous methodology that learns, adjusts, and drives constant improvement in delivery and experience for customers by using proprietary machine learning to cross-reference inputs and canonicalize supply chain data. This differentiated technology enables businesses to make highly intelligent inventory and customer decisions based on continuously live, trustworthy data, versus static approaches that focus on point-in-time views of your assets - in other words, adopting an Amazon-like continuous system where, as noted before, businesses have tended to focus either on delivery or experience, but haven’t been able to optimize either.

“ClearMetal allows our clients to keep less inventory because we are all confident in our transit times.”

Trey Closson, Director of Marine Logistics, Georgia-Pacific LLC

ClearMetal’s CDX Platform implementations are streamlined since they (1) eliminate much of the usual data collection and wrangling approaches that are associated with other solutions, and (2) provide an optional fast-track assessment that delivers insights to help propel a business’s supply chain toward their specific objectives.
In a world where change is the only constant, ClearMetal’s Continuous Delivery Experience (CDX) platform was “built for bad weather.” While manual and competing systems usually provide alerts and other communication for short-term events, software built around static visibility isn’t going to be effective longer-term occurrences like Coronavirus or economic downturns.

Stuck containers, blank sailings, equipment shortages, rolled shipments and related factors are all heightened risks resulting from lengthy global events. Meanwhile, shippers and 3PLs that rely on static transit tables, carrier websites and spreadsheets - where getting clean, accurate and real-time data is always a challenge - now need to build in additional time lags, which are costly and often paralyzing to businesses that rely on accurate delivery data to survive and thrive.

While your transportation partners are hyper-focused during this critical time on managing disruptions to the physical flow of your goods, you can rest assured that ClearMetal’s continuous data approach is handling the flow of information so that you can stay fully focused on mitigation planning with your partners. We are continually ingesting the carrier data and, on the fly, dynamically cleaning, correcting, and canonicalizing that data, while our ML algorithms reconcile and triangulate that data with third party data sources (AIS, vessel schedule provider, etc.) to provide you with the highest quality data available.

While physical delays, data reporting delays and resource issues (understaffed and overworked teams, especially in highly impacted areas) are likely to impact any shipper or 3PL during an event like Coronavirus, ClearMetal’s continuous data approach will help you better plan in advance for and readily adapt to difficult circumstances, while our collaboration and portal capabilities help ensure both your internal and external resources are fully apprised of changes and can comment and/or suggest alternatives as needed.
After a successful assessment that helped quantify the short- and long-term value of the ClearMetal CDX Platform to the business, Georgia-Pacific realized the following benefits in just a few months:

- **On-time delivery increased from 50 to 75 percent** through sharing live, secure shipment status with their customers, who are better managing their inventory and happier that they have reliable transparency into the status of their shipments for delivery, planning, etc.

- **Operational efficiency increased 30 percent** since customer service and frontline teams no longer needed to search across multiple carrier websites and systems.

- **Arrival recognition is substantially more accurate**, allowing the manufacturer to bill appropriately and optimize cash flow.

Note that a continuous approach to optimizing delivery and experience helps boost ROI over time, so the manufacturer can expect even greater benefits over time (e.g., On-time deliveries are approaching 80 percent).
How Your Teams Benefit From ClearMetal

A CDX-powered approach disrupts business siloes, but in a way that makes teams more efficient, collaborative and ultimately more valuable to their organizations. For example, ClearMetal is used by:

- **Sales teams** for proposals, providing better promise date accuracy, which leads to happier customers - and the ability to “choose the customers that are best for you.”

- **Planners** to select the best mode carriers and routes to minimize lead time, variability or both.

- **Customer service teams** to monitor shipments proactively to delight customers and instantly have reliable data at their fingertips, while being able to help alert customers to possible exceptions (before annoyed customers tell the shipper!).

- **Manufacturers** to see inbound data and rely on it to plan production.

- **Finance teams** to invoice two days faster on average based on real and trusted port arrival data, and API links to ERP automate processes.

- **C-levels and other executives** to help transform supply chains from cost centers to best-in-class, profitable and dynamic channels that can help you grow and diversify your business.
Why ClearMetal’s CDX Platform Uniquely Recalibrates Supply Chains

Coronavirus, recessions and other “Black Swan” events only magnify the need to digitally transform supply chains sooner rather than later. Despite the abundance of cloud-based technologies, visibility solutions, customer portals and growing quantities of data, the prospect of “Amazon-ifying” as a form of transformation has, up to this point, eluded most businesses.

What’s Inside of ClearMetal CDX Platform?

**CDX Customer Portal:** Give permission-based access to your customers to self-serve and view the status of shipments via a trusted and accurate single source of truth.

**CDX Transport Planning:** Enable continuous freight transportation planning through dynamic transit-times, on-time reliability, and accurate customer promise dates.

**CDX Planning API:** Flexible and simple APIs enable dynamic, continuous planning capabilities, which bolster your other IT systems and investments.

**CDX Collaboration:** Proactively and continuously resolve supply chain issues via instant messaging, notes and @mentions.

**CDX Dashboard:** Gain actionable, AI-powered insights from a birds-eye view of the supply chain.

**CDX Transport Visibility:** New capabilities include additional patent-pending data quality enhancements, multiple transport modes, and advanced exceptions like missed transshipment management.

**CDX Visibility API:** Power your IT systems from Sales to Finance with clean, actionable shipment data.
ClearMetal’s approach is different in that it provides for the ability to make intelligent and dynamic transportation planning decisions to move freight from A to Z most efficiently, considering factors like optimal lead-time, mode, and carrier to ensure on-time delivery - while reducing exceptions, detention & demurrage (D&D) fees, and buffer stock, which have been largely based on transit tables built every few months to determine lead-times, buffer, and routing.

In addition, ClearMetal enhances customer experience by delivering a single source of truth and a customer portal for anyone (executive, DC manager, customer, 3PL/carrier) to see inventory in transit in real-time. We provide a SaaS platform to support business in managing a dynamically and continuously evolving international supply chain. Our customers use this capability to transform their supply chain at the operational level, by evolving from supply chains that are limited on static data, siloed organizational boundaries, and batch-based planning into a "continuous" methodology that deals with the dynamically and ever evolving supply chain.

### Summary and Next Steps

Whether your goal is to transform your supply chain along the lines of what Amazon and other leaders have done, or simply seek to improve ROI in one area of your freight transportation, ClearMetal’s CDX-based approach continuously improves planning and delivery while empowering users, partners and customers with the right information they need to track shipments, manage exceptions and reduce manual processes and "where's my stuff" phone calls.

For a closer look at what one ClearMetal CDX Platform customer has achieved, click here.

For a customized demo, please contact us and we’ll be in touch with you as soon as possible.