

SPOTLIGHT ON

TARIFFS

HOW HAVE NEW POLICIES SHAPED THE FUTURE
OF CROSS-BORDER FREIGHT?



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A NOTE FROM THE COO: BRYAN REKOWSKI



While a favorable end to 2024 shifted to a softer Q1 than expected, Hoplite focused on growth by increasing our headcount, bringing on new shippers, and growing professionally as a team. With an average tenure of 10 years per employee, you would think we've seen it all but logistics keeps you on your toes and offers new learning experiences. Cross-training was a big focus as we pushed our reps in Mexico to learn more about the domestic US market and our US reps to learn more about cross-border. Our motto of freight without borders continues to be a focus.

As we head into Q2 and closer to the second half of the year, Hoplite aims to leverage more technology with new partners to cut out inefficiencies and errors that ultimately lead to better service for our shippers and a better experience for our carrier partners. With effective processes in place and a team able to move quickly, we are poised for a big jump and excited to prove our service with new opportunities. We certainly appreciate the support. The sky is the limit!

Bryan Rekowski



Q1 REWIND

LOOKING BACK, DRIVING FORWARD





UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Tariffs and the Current Presidential Administration's Impact on Cross-Border

A tumultuous Q1 filled with tariff uncertainty and an uneasy start to April created ripple effects across the global economy, prompting corporations to reevaluate where they establish foreign infrastructure. One takeaway is becoming increasingly clear: some of the safest shelter from these storms lies just over the border in Canada and Mexico.

In a recent interview on **Hoplite's** *The Ramp Up* podcast, Matt Silver, CEO of *Cargado*, offered a perspective worth pausing on:



“**The USMCA still stands. I wouldn't be surprised to see an update to it again, but remember — Trump negotiated the USMCA as an update to NAFTA. So it would feel odd to undo the very thing he celebrated. That's why I always urge patience.**”

- Matt Silver



The next three and a half years are shaping up to bring continued volatility to global trade. While Canada and Mexico are largely insulated from the brunt of recent tariff actions (excluding key sectors like steel and autos), the broader signal is loud and clear: nearshoring isn't just a strategy — it's a necessity.

“If I'm a shipper considering nearshoring, I'd be hustling to get Mexico figured out,” Silver continued. “NAFTA becoming the USMCA encouraged nearshoring. Then the pandemic exposed over-reliance on China. Then came the trade war. The signs are all there.”



CANADA

We've seen Canadian and U.S. companies aggressively push product across borders to hedge against tariffs. Initially delayed until April 2, some tariffs were implemented while others were rolled back — but the USMCA offered critical protection in the chaos.

Capacity on Canadian lanes tightened quickly. Routine rate spikes around holidays and end-of-quarter windows were exaggerated significantly. Remote provinces like British Columbia and Alberta experienced steep climbs in rates due to scarcity, making pre-booking essential.

By mid-April, fears had cooled. A softer U.S. market combined with inflation concerns reversed rate trends and reopened capacity. However, existing steel and auto tariffs continue to hit hard. As long as new sanctions aren't introduced, Canada-U.S. freight markets should remain stable through 2025.



MEXICO

Guillermo Sanmiguel, Hoplite's Head of Cross-Border Carrier Sales, noted:

“Rates around key border crossings like Laredo and El Paso jumped in Q1 due to increased inspections and delays. Carriers adjusted pricing to account for higher risk, but overall capacity stayed consistent.”

-Guillermo Sanmiguel

Carriers remain cautious but expect tightening conditions into Q2 — especially for time-sensitive or high-value loads.

Northbound volume growth will be the key trend to watch.



Meanwhile, inflation and recession fears are looming. Although the IMF hasn't forecasted a full downturn, risk factors have escalated. For shippers, maintaining short-term RFQ cycles — quarterly or six-month terms — is a smart hedge.

BOTTOM LINE

Tariffs may be calming, but uncertainty remains. Fraud and double-broking are expected to rise in unstable markets. Eyes should stay locked on both the economy and the Trump administration. And if you haven't already made a plan for nearshoring to Mexico — now is the time.



DRIVING OUT HUNGER



How Hoplite & Move For Hunger are Delivering Against Food Waste

By: Bryan Rekowski

From the early days of Hoplite Logistics, Rich and I have consistently discussed our long-term vision for giving back and establishing meaningful charitable partnerships. **Move For Hunger** appeared on our radar much sooner than anticipated, but it quickly became clear that this partnership perfectly aligned with our core values. With Food and Beverage representing a substantial part of our freight mix, it's been exciting to learn more about how this remarkable organization operates efficiently and swiftly to ensure surplus food reaches those in need. We recently sat down with **Kramer Stuth**, Manager of Food Recovery Programs at Move For Hunger, to dive deeper into their inspiring mission.

Q: We met through a mutual contact at Manifest and recently kicked off our new relationship with Move For Hunger. Your organization's impact across the U.S. and Canada is incredible. For those unfamiliar, could you introduce yourself, your role at Move For Hunger, and share a bit about the organization?

KS: Sure! My name is Kramer Stuth and I am the Manager of Food Recover Programs here at Move For Hunger. We are a national nonprofit organization, that mobilizes transportation networks to deliver surplus food to communities in need. Our goal is to increase access to nutritious food, fight hunger, and reduce food waste. I have to plug our 2024 year in review so you can take a look at our network's impact and how our programs empower real, local change.

Q: What are the various ways your organization receives donations, and who are your most common donors?

KS: We receive donations in a variety of ways. We work with all partners across the food and beverage industry; from CPG companies, manufacturers, distributors, growers, packers, farms and gleaning organizations, multifamily properties, moving or relocation industries and. We provide FREE transportation for Food Banks and Food Pantries when needed, as well as providing cold storage solutions in areas of need. Our goal is to be the "easy" button for our donors when they have excess product.

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

- **15,045,629 LBS** of food we helped transport
- **12,538,024** meals provided to those in need
- **7,523,773 LBS** of fresh food we helped store and transport to food banks nationwide
- **6,173.84 Metric Tons** of CO2 removed from the atmosphere from rescued food
- **2,078** food rescues in 2024
- **494** food banks & pantries served in 2024

Q: Given our specific industry, it seems natural to delve into the logistics of food recovery. Could you walk us through a typical food donation scenario and highlight the importance of timeliness, especially with larger orders of product that may have a shorter shelf life?

KS: That is a great question! With us working nationally, every donation situation is different, but I'll give you the most recent example of a project we are working on with one of our donors. Our food donor is coming up on their end of the fiscal year and they have product at different warehouses across the country that are short-dated or no longer in their rotation of products they are selling, and they would like to have them off their books before the end of the fiscal year. They have sent us a spreadsheet with all of the details of the product they are wanting to donate along with locations of the warehouses. My team takes in that information and starts reaching out to local food banks and food pantries that are close to the warehouses. Once we have found a food bank that can take in the product, that is when we start reaching out to our large network of transportation partners to send a truck to pick up and deliver the product. If a donor has a particular food bank or pantry they want their donation to go to, we will definitely accommodate that request. This whole process can take a day or a week to come to fruition. Really depends on multiple factors with the type of product, food bank storage, and transportation availability in the region. We also work with our transportation partners that deal with rejected loads when delivering products for their customers. They will give us a call and we will get that rerouted to the closest food bank typically within an hour.

Q: We often talk about network optimization, but Move For Hunger seems to take it to another level. How do you manage internal organization to act swiftly and efficiently, ensuring products reach the right place at the right time, especially since donation opportunities can occur unexpectedly?

KS: We utilize a great CRM software, Salesforce. We use this to track all upcoming and in process transportation opportunities. We also have integrated Heat & Opportunity map that has all of our food banks or food pantry locations, transportation partner locations, and donor locations to be able to find the best fit for every opportunity.

Q: How can U.S. or Canadian food shippers become involved in this fantastic community?

KS: It is a very easy process. First, I would love to set up a quick 30-45 minute call with the food shipper and see how our companies could align with the work we are doing currently. If you would like to learn more about how to partner with Move For Hunger, please visit our Charity Freight Sign Up website to schedule a meeting



with our team!

Q: Often, the unsung heroes in organizations like yours don't receive the recognition they deserve. Given the ongoing nature of your work, how does your team celebrate successes? Do you manage to find moments to appreciate the impact you're making?

KS: It does get tough to step back and appreciate the impact we have because we are so busy day to day doing what we do, but we do have monthly team meetings highlighting the impact of what we do. We also utilize different Slack channels to celebrate and give "kudos" to our team on big wins we have across the whole organization.

Q: What's on the horizon for Move For Hunger? Are there specific goals you're aiming to achieve in 2025?

KS: In 2024, we saw tremendous growth in all of our programs, and we transported a record setting 15 MILLION pounds of food. We are looking to keep that momentum rolling into 2025 and transport 16 million pounds of food!



For more information, visit Kramer and his team at www.moveforhunger.org.



HOPLITE SPOTLITE



ANDREW KONRATH

The King of Coverage



Meet Andrew Konrath, one of Hoplite's first and most important hires. Andrew has a knack of finding options when no one else can, and generally has a competitiveness that is unmatched. His leadership and team-first mentality have made him invaluable to the future of Hoplite. We highlight him for Q2 as our **HOPLITE SPOTLITE!**

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

Andrew Konrath: I grew up in Palatine, IL I went to Ball State University from 2009-2013 and I studied journalism and philosophy.

Q: How did you get into logistics?

AK: I was initially hired by Coyote Logistics in 2014. I was hired as a Carrier Sales Rep.. I knew nothing about the position - just knew it was Sales job and that worked for me at the time.

Q: What is the most rewarding thing about your role?

AK: I love the daily competition and the compensation opportunity. I believe Carrier Sales, at its core, is a true meritocracy where you can get as much out of it as you put into it.

Q: What is the ideal carrier you like to work with?

AK: Communication is key. Carriers that overcommunicate regardless of whether things are going well or if there are problems are the best to deal with. Obviously having competitive rates and sending daily truck lists are ideal but I believe it falls on the Carrier Rep to help get their carrier partners into that those habits.

Q: What made you decide to work at Hoplite?

AK: Rich Krul. I have known Rich for over a decade and he is a very easy person to follow. I am of the opinion that the group we have here at Hoplite, following Bryan and Rich's leadership, is the best in the industry.

Q: What do you like to do outside of work?

AK: Love hanging out with friends. Huge sports fan. And I love exercising when I can.

Q: How is it possible to be a Packers fan while being a native Chicagoan?

AK: I wish the story was more interesting! My best friend in first grade was a Packers fan and I copied him. Twenty-five years later and I have only missed one game.

QUICK HITS



SAN DIEGO, CA



SENIOR CARRIER SALES REP



JULY 2024

WHY SHOULD A CARRIER WORK WITH HOPLITE?

“At Hoplite, we are always 100% transparent with our carriers and we always do what is in their best interest. Things do not always go according to plan in logistics, but when issues do arise, we work quickly to find the best possible solution...” ”



CATCH US ON...

THE RAMP UP

The Ramp Up is a Podcast by Hoplite Logistics detailing their journey from a pre-launch startup as a Logistics brokerage.



Co-Founders Rich Krul and Bryan Rekowski share their perspective as the business has continued to evolve, while also talking with industry professionals about every aspect of growing a business.



POWERED BY
HOPLITE
LOGISTICS

MEET THE **HOPLITE**™ TEAM





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