

THE
Hoplite

THE LAUNCH

NAVIGATING

How High-Growth Brands Build Scalable Supply Chains in Their First 24 Months



FEATURING

BERO



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A NOTE FROM THE COO: BRYAN REKOWSKI



Building a company and culture during arguably the worst freight market has been no picnic, but we grinded through uncertainty while getting stickier with our current customer base and slowly bringing in new business. Rather than shy away and play defense, we went on the offensive and invested in sales heading into Q4. This not only meant adding talent but tactically setting up operational support ahead of calculated growth and allowing our sales reps to focus on selling.

In a market like this, you have to get creative to stand out in the crowd. Often that has been finding needs within our network and researching deeply to approach potential customers with a possible solution. Some were successful while some led to conversations for other opportunities. In the end, we doubled down on our relationships and were able to lean on those that trusted Hoplite and the people behind Hoplite to help us get a foot in the door.

Looking to Q1, we focus on Growth. As the G behind our motto of "G.R.I.T.", growth is as important for the individual as it is the company. Everyone has made some sort of sacrifice to join us on this journey but we'd be remiss to not mention how much we are all learning from each other, from our roles, and from an evolving industry. We still have a pretty lean team where everyone is stepping outside of their normal comfort zone to help. This petri dish of discovery is elevating an already incredibly tenured group to another level and shaping us to be more well-rounded. As we grow as individuals, Hoplite too grows. In my mind, there isn't a more prepared team in the entire industry that is ready for the challenges ahead in 2026..

Bryan Rekowski



Q3 REWIND

LOOKING BACK, DRIVING FORWARD



THE LAUNCH

NAVIGATING

Inside the systems, decisions, and partnerships that help young brands scale with confidence. How BERO shows the path from early complexity to controlled, repeatable growth.

By Hoplite Logistics



Building a modern consumer brand is a study in contrasts. The early months are exciting—new product, early retail wins, a team forming around a shared vision—but they’re also defined by rapid decision-making, shifting priorities, and structures that must be built almost in real time. It’s a phase every high-growth company goes through, and how they navigate it often determines the pace and sustainability of their long-term success.

For **BERO Brewing**, the non-alcoholic beer brand founded by Tom Holland, the first year was less about turbulence and more about thoughtful construction. They understood that growth would come quickly and used their collective experience from past roles to make deliberate choices about systems, partnerships, and process—choices that stabilized their supply chain early and enabled them to scale confidently. Still, the brand wasn’t immune to the natural complexity of a fast-moving launch. As Senior Vice President of Operations Neha Soi recalls with a laugh, “the first few months were a total shit show,” not out of dysfunction,

but simply because so many moving parts come online at once for a young brand. It’s a feeling any emerging company can relate to: rapid momentum meeting rapid decision-making.

Together, their disciplined approach and early operational investments reveal a clearer, calmer blueprint for how young brands can turn early complexity into a controlled, long-term operating rhythm.

“ **The first few months were a total s*** show...**

-BERO SVP of Operations Neha Soi

”

Building Deliberately From Day One

When BERO launched, the team brought decades of experience from Starbucks, Taco Bell International, aerospace logistics, L’Oréal, Coyote Logistics, Mars Petcare, and Lemon Perfect. That collective background shaped a fundamental belief: sound systems must

come before speed.

As Soi explains, “We wanted to take the lessons from our past lives and build BERO in a way that would support growth long before the scale arrived.”

Instead of waiting for volume to dictate structure, BERO implemented an ERP—NetSuite—immediately, then layered in a TMS to ensure transportation data was centralized and accurate from the start. This wasn’t the typical startup approach; it was a strategic one.

Senior Director of Operations Macy Chambers saw the payoff almost immediately. “Having all of our data in a TMS in year one means everyone sees the same information,” she said. “It reduces manual touches and gives us reporting we simply didn’t have in past environments.”

Every SKU launch, distributor onboarding, and retailer request happened with process beneath it. The brand didn’t eliminate the inevitable learning curve of a new company, but they controlled it.

“We built things methodically,” Soi adds. “It took time, but it’s proven to be one of the best decisions we made.”



BERO Co-Founders Tom Holland & John Herman

The Human Element: Communication & Partnership

Even with strong systems and clean data, BERO leaders emphasize that transportation success ultimately comes down to people. For Chambers, communication is the defining metric.

“I know mistakes are always going to happen—it’s transportation,” she said. “There are things you can’t control. But what can be controlled is communication. That’s my biggest non-negotiable.”

When she first spoke with Hoplite, the conversation earned a trial run, but it was the execution that differentiated the team from the typical brokerage pitch. Hoplite delivered timely updates, proactive problem-solving, and transparency when issues arose.

“You can’t control whether a driver gets stuck in traffic,” Chambers added, “but you can control letting me know prior to missing a delivery. Or handling issues so I don’t even have to know about them—that’s even better.”

“There are things you can't control. But what can be controlled is communication. That's my biggest non-negotiable.”

-BERO Senior Director of Operations Macy Chambers

For Soi, the visibility created by BERO’s ERP and TMS made it easier to see which partners were delivering consistent results. Strong performance surfaced quickly in that environment, and Hoplite stood out early. She described finding the team as “a huge, huge win,” noting that being able to clearly show which partners handled the majority of their freight—and why—added



confidence and credibility to their internal decision-making.

The partnership deepened further after an in-person meeting at Expo West, where a simple conversation surfaced that BERO had more partials moving out of Denver than initially recognized. Chambers credits that face-to-face interaction with unlocking a solution that might never have emerged through email alone. Hoplite returned from the event and built a dedicated partial network tailored to BERO's volume, reducing costs and improving consistency. "Being in person is so important," Chambers said. "The conversation led to cost savings and a stronger partial network out of Denver."



Bero & Hoplite at Expo West

When Structure Meets Instinct

Despite their emphasis on systems, both Soi and Chambers believe intuition still plays a vital role—especially in the early years. One of BERO's biggest early decisions—changing manufacturers at the eleventh hour—was driven almost entirely by gut.

"We were this close to signing," Soi recalls, holding two fingers inches apart. "And something didn't feel right. Your gut rarely fails you."

Experience sharpens that instinct—and in

young companies, instinct often guides the decisions that shape the next five years.

While data, process, and structure ensure stability, intuition helps determine when to pivot, which risks to take, and which partners to trust. For BERO, both elements work in tandem.

“ We were this close to signing. And something didn't feel right. Your gut rarely fails you. ”

-Soi

A Calmer, Clearer Blueprint for High-Growth Brands

Across BERO's first 24 months, a consistent theme emerges: success comes from deliberate structure, transparent insight, and the right partners—not from brute force. Their early investment in systems, thoughtful process design, and careful partner selection helped them establish control far earlier than most young brands. And throughout it all, trust, communication, and intuition remained the connective tissue that held everything together.

What this approach unlocked internally is equally important. Instead of operating in a constant reactive mode—common for emerging brands—BERO has been able to move decision-making upstream. Problems are identified earlier, alignment is easier, and the team can focus on strategic expansion rather than daily firefighting. Their structure didn't slow them down; it created clarity and a cleaner runway for growth.

Hoplite fits naturally into that philosophy. Rather than acting as a transactional broker, the team became an extension of BERO's operating rhythm: communicating changes early, solving problems independently when possible, and bringing forward ideas like the tailored partial network out of Denver. For a young brand, that level of partnership reduces friction in ways that systems alone can't.

Ultimately, BERO's early journey highlights a broader truth: the first 24 months aren't just about surviving launch—they're about engineering the conditions for longevity. Brands that embrace infrastructure early, surround themselves with capable partners, and trust their intuition where the data ends often find themselves scaling with confidence rather than scrambling under pressure. With structure beneath them and the right relationships beside them, BERO isn't simply keeping up with growth—they're shaping it.



Hoplite & BERO

**MEXICO
MARKET
UPDATE**

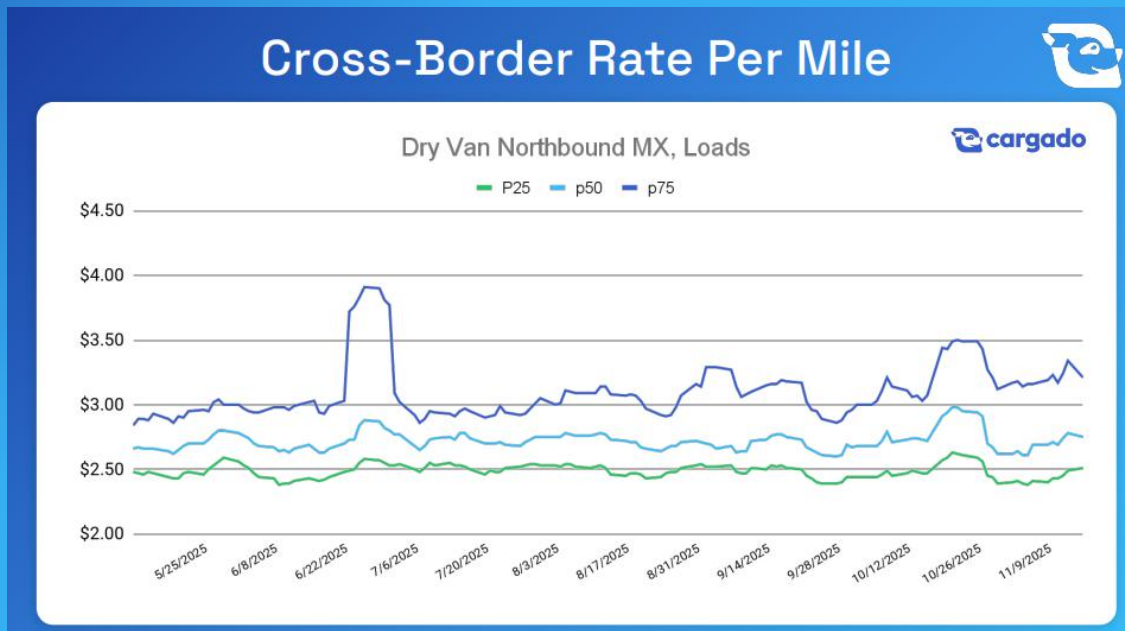
Despite 2025 turbulence—tariffs, theft, political tension—Mexico's cross-border market is growing fast. Auto, Electronics, and Machinery are driving volumes, foreign investment just hit a record \$41B, and maquilas continue expanding. Short-term risks remain: theft, safety, and weak infrastructure. Without stronger policing and roadway/border-lane upgrades, bottlenecks and higher costs

will persist. Recent protests slowed traffic but won't create lasting change. Cross-border trade is nearing \$1T, and these issues must be addressed.

Cargado Unloaded shows strong northbound engagement:

- Dry Van: 431 carriers, 62% bid coverage, 1.4-minute fastest response—still a seller's market.
- Open Deck: 29% coverage, 1.9-minute fastest bid—moves quickly when priced right.
- Reefer: 29% coverage, thinner but responsive, fastest bid at 3.5 minutes.

Carrier sentiment: Rates remain low, some carriers are parking trucks, and repossessions are shrinking capacity. Increased inspections and ICE checkpoints in the South are sidelining more drivers and tightening the market further.



cargado



HOPLITE SPOT-LITE



GUILLERMO SANMIGUEL

Brilliance in Cross-Border



Meet Guillermo Sanmiguel, Hoplite’s cross-border Swiss Army knife. Whether he’s wearing one of the many hats in his closet or the many hats required to keep Mexico freight moving, Guillermo brings unmatched energy and consistency to the team. Honored to feature him as this quarter’s HOPLITE SPOTLITE!

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

Guillermo Sanmiguel: I’m 27 years old and someone who loves learning new things. I’m naturally curious and always looking for ways to grow. I value creativity, personal development, and the constant pursuit of new experiences. I’ve learned that life becomes more meaningful when you stay open to change and explore the things that genuinely interest you.

Q: How did you get into logistics?

GS: Funny story—back in 2019, a friend of my sister’s was inviting her to apply at Coyote Logistics. I was being a bit nosy and overheard words like sales, commissions, and fun environment. That was enough for me to start researching Coyote. I found a job posting online, took my shot, had great interviews, and was hired within two weeks. I ended up being the last person added to the training group. Everything happens for a reason—this was meant to be.

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

GS: I’ve always been on the Carrier Sales side, and the most rewarding part is the relationships I’ve been able to build with transport companies across Mexico and the U.S. I’ve been fortunate to meet great people, learn from them, and understand what happens on the other side of the transportation industry. Behind every scheduled load and every moving truck, there are hardworking people making it happen. Knowing who you work with makes life a lot better and a lot less complicated.

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

PC: The ideal carrier communicates clearly, is reliable, and understands the importance of partnership. I value carriers who are transparent, proactive, and committed to working together—not just to move a load, but to build a long-term relationship. Teamwork and trust make all the difference.

QUICK HITS



GUADALAJARA, JL



SENIOR CARRIER SALES REP



SEPTEMBER 2024

WHY SHOULD A CARRIER WORK WITH HOPLITE?

“ Fair business and treating people right are core to how we operate, and carriers notice that immediately. ”

Q: What made you decide to work at Hoplite?

GS: I joined Hoplite because I saw a team that values growth, collaboration, and doing things the right way. I wanted to be part of a company where I could make an impact, learn from great people, and contribute to something meaningful in the logistics space. The vision, the energy, and the people made it clear that this was the right place for me to challenge myself and grow my career.

Q: Why should a carrier work with Hoplite?

GS: Carriers should work with Hoplite because we prioritize transparency, consistency, and strong communication. We value long-term relationships—not just single loads—and we work hard to make every experience smooth, predictable, and fair for our carrier partners. Fair business and treating people right are core to how we operate, and carriers notice that immediately.

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

GS: Outside of work, I enjoy staying active, connecting with friends, and creating moments that matter. I appreciate good energy, meaningful conversations, and experiences that help me grow. Anything that challenges me—whether physically, mentally, or creatively—is something I try to pursue. I bring that same curiosity and growth mindset into everything I do.

Q: What is your favorite hat?

GS: I have a bunch of hats from sports teams I don't really know or follow—I just like the colors and designs, so they end up in the collection. Lately, I've been rocking the Chicago White Sox hat. I really like their logo.



CATCH US ON...



P O D C A S T

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
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MEET THE HOPLITE TEAM





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