

Intro/Outro ([00:05](#)):

It's time for supply chain. Now broadcasting live from the supply chain capital of the country. Atlanta, Georgia heard around the world, supply chain. Now spotlights the best in all things, supply chain, the people, the technologies, the best practices and the critical issues of the day. And now here are your hosts.

Scott Luton ([00:33](#)):

Good morning, Scott Luton and Greg white with you here on supply chain. Now, welcome to today's episode, Greg. We've got a good one in store today. Yeah, I'm looking forward to this. So we've been talking to our guests for quite a while now. It's great to have him on the show. Agreed talking. You know, he'd been in Atlanta for 25 years now talking to him about that, talking about Puerto Rico, talking about logistics and global business, and he's with an international logistics provider with over 340 sites in 17 countries doing big things in critical sectors, including e-commerce. So stay tuned for a great conversation at Greg quick programming. If we get started here, if folks enjoy this conversation, any advice for them? You know, Scott? No, not really. Yeah. Let's of course, of course they should listen wherever they get their podcasts from. And also don't forget our YouTube channel click to subscribe, ring the bell.

Greg White ([01:28](#)):

So you never miss a thing. Perfect advice as always about a one only Greg white, but you know, we're going to get a lot more advice from the world of logistics and supply chain. A lot more with our featured guests here today, Mario Rivera, vice president development with ADI logistics, Mario, how you doing? Doing good. Are you guys doing very good? You know, we were talking kind of in the pre-show, but it's been a little while since we initially kind of got together and compared notes and whatnot, and we'd forgotten that you've been in Atlanta, you're a fellow at Lannon and we were talking a little bit Atlanta sports, Atlanta businesses, the Atlantic music scene. So that was a neat rekindling. Uh, we'll have to do this in person next time. We definitely should. Yeah, no I've been here. What, 25 years? I, uh, it's my it's my American home.

Mario Rivera ([02:15](#)):

Of course I was, uh, I came from Puerto Rico originally, but, uh, gosh, I've been here longer than, than I was there, so always enjoyed it. So let's talk about that. Let's talk about Puerto Rico because that's where you grew up, right? Yeah, yeah, no, I was born, born in Puerto Rico, born in San Juan. I, uh, I moved, uh, in grade school. I was what, 12, 12 years old, my father, who was a doctor, uh, got a job, got a job in the U S and we moved to Baltimore. And, uh, I spent a couple of years there in Baltimore, which was, you know, a bit of a rude awakening. I remember landing in Baltimore for the first time and it was snowing here. I was coming from, Oh my gosh. I didn't even think about that from the Island. And, uh, I, I did enjoy it it my time and it snowed. And then went back down to Florida

Mario Rivera ([03:00](#)):

To, uh, go to high school. I spent my high school years in a town called coral Springs, Florida. I don't know if you guys know, but near Fort Lauderdale. And, uh, from there I, uh, I came to Atlanta to go to school. I went to Georgia tech. I'm a, I'm a yellow jacket and I actually went to Georgia state as well. So I'm a product of Georgia and Atlanta education. And yeah, I've been here what, 25 years. So,

Mario Rivera ([03:25](#)):

So I want to, I want to go back a little bit, uh, you're sharing some things HSA. I want to ask them more about if you can, I'd love to get an anecdote about, you know, you know, born and raised in your formative years in San Juan. I'd love for you to kind of share one pastime there or food item or family memory with our audience. What's one thing that really sticks out from your time there,

Mario Rivera ([03:47](#)):

You know, a couple of things we used to spend a lot of, a lot of people know Puerto Rico for the rainforest. I think probably one of the things that most, most tourists visit. And, uh, we spent a lot of time as a, as a family in the rainforest. We, every Puerto Rican has kind of their spots in the rainforest they visit sort of the, the family knows. And, you know, you usually have sort of your, your little map and your way of getting there, the secretive and it's you try to keep it that way. And so I remember spending a lot of time in the rainforest, a lot of time, traveling the Island, visiting different beaches all over the Island. And you know, of course everybody knows Puerto Rico for our food. Uh, I would say one thing we do really well is cooked pork.

Mario Rivera ([04:26](#)):

We know how to roast pork. They got, I remember seeing recently a top three list of countries that know how to do pork and Puerto Rico is number one. And I think my phone goes alone should put you at the top. Well, phone goes great as well. Yeah. Maybe another, another interesting story is I actually attended military school for most of my youth in Puerto Rico. Wow. No, it's always interesting when I, when I tell people about that, because they're like, ah, you know, I guess you were, you were a bad kid at that age already, but you know, in Puerto Rico we have a whole circuit of military schools that are really just private schools. You go and you go to school, you go home. So it's not about, they're not remedial schools as they tend to be thought of here, they're more, uh, there's private schools and, you know, the, the discipline of wearing uniforms and doing a PT in the morning. And you know, every time I tell a story, people sort of cringe a bit thinking, uh, this is not a good thing, but I just, probably one of my fondest memories

Mario Rivera ([05:25](#)):

Prepared you well getting into to make it through Georgia tech and the amount of discipline that's required, what you majored in, but I bet it helped prepare your path.

Mario Rivera ([05:34](#)):

It sure did. You know, I don't like to, I have kids now that are nine and 10 and they're starting to ask about, you know, I have to tell them about their, uh, their schoolwork and I'm being disciplined and getting their work done. And then, you know, having caring about the product and the work you do. And they're always asking me about, uh, you know, what I did, I have to lie to them a little bit and not admit I probably missed more classes than I care to admit, but, uh, but yeah, no, it was a, the discipline of staying up late, even when you have a little too much fun, you gotta, you gotta get your work done. So, uh,

Mario Rivera ([06:11](#)):

GSD get stuff done. Yeah. So let me ask you this more. I appreciate you sharing kind of, uh, that father perspective, you know, as a father of three myself, I can relate as well and they never listened to you, but that's okay. Tell us about, you know, if we were to interview your family, your kids, your colleagues,

you know, your extended family, what's one thing that they would point to and say that right there is Mario Rivera.

Mario Rivera ([06:39](#)):

Well, that's, that's a tough question. Uh, you know, I would say, um, I'm kind of a type a personality. I, uh, I don't want to say a perfectionist, you know, I, to, I'm not always looking for perfection, but I do, I might be a little intense at times, but, uh, that's probably what my family and kids would tell you. And I think during these pandemic here where we're all at home together, I think they've, they've, they felt that pretty strongly. And, uh, sometimes asked me to, to go for a walk and leave the house, but, uh, burn some of that energy off debt. Yeah. You know, I, I don't, I don't like to stop, like keep moving, you know? And, um, and I think, uh, you know, in my professional career, that's, uh, I guess one thing maybe if you asked the customers or my colleagues, uh, I think they would tell you that, uh, you know, I pay attention to detail.

Mario Rivera ([07:27](#)):

I, um, being in sales, I think it's, it's very important to, to listen to people. You know, a lot of times we're always sorta thinking about the next answer for, uh, somebody who's done talking. And, uh, I think it's just a key way of connecting with people is always to be engaged and, uh, uh, make sure you listen to us those little details and those anecdotes and stories that they tell you from time to time and be able to recall them later. So, uh, I don't know, maybe, uh, uh, being intense and detail oriented. I'm not making myself sound too, uh, too appealing there.

Mario Rivera ([07:58](#)):

No that's who you want to work with. Right? You, you, especially in this day and age, and especially in supply chain logistics where the details are or everything, so am ready to go to work with Mario and I, the logistics now. So

Greg White ([08:11](#)):

I think you've got to be engaged too. So you know, that you're constantly seeking, let's say seeking perfection, right. Not demanding it necessarily, but seeking perfection, but also stopping to hear what people are saying. That's a really, really important thing to engage with people like that and to learn what they're about and, and how you guys can share professional experience from those anecdotes. I mean, that's what we're doing here, aren't we, in a way is we're learning about who you are and that it's a great context for learning about how to work with somebody. So now that we know a little bit about you, how have you applied that intensity and engagement, you know, as you, as you think about it in your professional life, tell us a little bit about some of the things you've done before ID logistics kind of leading up.

Mario Rivera ([08:59](#)):

Yeah. I mean, I think I've always had a great deal of curiosity and in, uh, you know, try not to, to be a well-rounded professional. I, I think, you know, so far it's, it's, I've had a decent journey in my, in my career. Uh, really, I didn't even start in logistics. I, uh, having gone to Georgia tech, uh, you sort of, there's always a bit of a, of an it or computer science element to everything we do. And so I really, I began my career really as a computer programmer web developer database administrator, you know, I had some aspirations early on to, uh, own a business and, you know, be, uh, essentially, uh, a web services all around type of individual. And I did for a few years there, I did do that. I actually, uh, focused

on building websites and installing a point of sale systems for a lot of restaurants here in the Atlanta area.

Mario Rivera ([09:54](#)):

And it was going well, but I guess I got the, the sort of, um, I started getting a little scared. I got married. I was thinking about having kids. And you start thinking about having a more kind of solid career and thinking about, well, I went to school and studied industrial engineering, which really has nothing to do with these other things. So I better start getting into a role that, that I can show some progression in what I studied. Uh, and that's when I got into logistics, I started, uh, with the home Depot actually, uh, as a logistics engineer and, and a lot of great place to me that place moves a hundred miles an hour. And really just turns about seeking perfection, a lot of great professionals, you know, even today I, a lot of the people that I was, you know, sort of quote on quote in my, uh, freshmen class with, at the home Depot have gone on to do some great things.

Mario Rivera ([10:47](#)):

But yeah, I mean, I'm an engineer by training. I started as an engineer in the, in the industry. I began first as a, the type of engineer. That's really doing a lot of tactical work at facilities and transportation facilities and programs. And I started to become more of a sales engineer. I started, you know, I think there was maybe a recognition that I, that I did well in front of customers, as you know, so the salespeople would bring me along to a lot of their engagements. And so then I became more of a design engineer, more of a pre-sales type engineer. And then from there, I, as I've spent time doing implementations of facilities, you know, setting up warehouses and setting up operations and different things, I've operated a few facilities. I did that for a short period of time. Uh, that wasn't necessarily my favorite stop.

Mario Rivera ([11:41](#)):

Where was that? Is that this is all a rider. Oh, okay. But it said that, yeah. And I spent what a 10 years a rider, great company. I have a lot of good relationships there still. And, um, you know, they, they, they treated me well and trained me well. And then I got into sales, I got into business development. I think I started to realize that, you know, in many ways, uh, there were other individuals doing quite well, uh, with their finances, from my work. And, uh, I decided, you know, maybe this is something I can do for myself. And, um, you know, I feel like there's always this sort of, this sort of belief that, uh, you know, you're, you're either a, a technical engineer and a geek, or you're this, you know, sort of talking head sales guy. And, uh, you know, I don't think that's true at all.

Mario Rivera ([12:31](#)):

I think, uh, the best salespeople are the ones who know what they're talking about. And, um, I decided, you know, I can do this and, you know, I can still be an engineer and I can still know how to talk to people and engage them and make them feel comfortable in doing business with my company. And, um, I've been doing that now for, for 10 years. It's actually what brought me to ideality sticks. Um, I, uh, had an opportunity to, to, to come to this company. I was really looking for a while. I love brighter, and it's still a great company in my thoughts. They're very focused in North America. And, uh, you know, I, I speak a few languages. I speak French, I speak Spanish. I, you know, obviously came from Puerto Rico. And, um, I kind of wanted the feel of having colleagues in other countries and having, uh, some international component to my day-to-day work, even if it's just in, in conversations with colleagues, uh, you know, today, my, while I worked Friday logistics and we're a global company in 17 countries, you

know, my focus is North America. Uh, but I do get to commiserate and, you know, be engaged in different discussions on, on global, uh, matters. And it's sort of satisfying that, that bit that I was looking for.

Mario Rivera ([13:45](#)):

Can I interject real quick? Yeah, of course. Cause Greg, uh, Mario used the word well-rounded earlier. And as, as he's described, described some of his professional journey, some that we already knew a lot of other, that we didn't know, Mara, you may be one of the most well-rounded individuals we've had on here in the last few weeks. I mean, what prompted you to learn,

Mario Rivera ([14:06](#)):

You know, I was in high school and, um, and you already knew Spanish. I already knew Spanish and you know, it seems, uh, well, we'll take you back to that whole perfectionist. I, uh, I had a lot of friends of mine who were saying, Oh, well, we'll take Spanish and we'll ACE it, it just didn't seem right to me. I don't know. I, uh, I said, you know, I needed to learn something new.

Mario Rivera ([14:26](#)):

Of course I was cherry picking a bit with, with, uh, learning, being fluent in French, but just to hear your journey, um, and from, from the restaurant industry and, and technology there to rider, to running sites and operations to now sells and business development and kind of that well-rounded persona that you offer customers really is when you say well-rounded,

Mario Rivera ([14:49](#)):

Oh, I was going to say, I need to interject. I wouldn't say I'm necessarily fluent in French. And I, and I have to caveat that because I have some French colleagues who might listen to this. Yeah,

Greg White ([15:00](#)):

Yeah. You can go what? Well, you know, I think there's a couple of other things that I think are interesting too, is your realization at a point that you needed to really kind of focus on something that fed the family. And I think that, honestly, I think a lot of people have that moment. I just don't think they're honest enough to say that that's, that's something that kind of shifted their purpose so that, you know, there's, I mean, there's a lot to unpack there. So I'm curious as you think about how you, you got to ID logistics and things like that, any kind of epiphany or Eureka moments in that past where you would say something really shifted your focus or shifted your direction either career or personal wise.

Mario Rivera ([15:42](#)):

Yeah. You know, I think a couple of things, I mean, I think early on when I, when I was running a business, uh, and doing web development and working with restaurants, as I mentioned, there, there came a timeframe for, it was about a three to four month timeframe that I remember that I had no sales coming in, no leads. And, you know, I think at that age, sort of the realization of like the difficulty of prospecting and it's, and it's still still to this day, I've been doing it for, you know, over a decade. And I'll tell you, it's when I have projects in front of me, I I'm in my element when I have those periods, where it's, I go, I need to go look for projects. It's I still don't enjoy the, the prospecting and the chasing. And, uh, you know, that's, it's a very difficult thing to do.

Mario Rivera ([16:31](#)):

And I think when I encountered that for the first time, at a young age, I said, wait a minute, I need to find something where this doesn't have to be the primary way I succeed. Uh, and it, funny enough that years later I'd come back around and I'm back into that type of role. But, uh, you know, I think that was one of the early ones that sort of pushed me towards, towards finding something a little more stable. Uh, but then also, you know, I recall in particular one and it's really a, a silly thing, but I was doing a project with a pretty large company. I probably won't mention any names, but let's just say everybody has one of their products in their house right now. And I was working for Ryder and I was representing, uh, one of our salespeople who was trying to sell this project to them.

Mario Rivera ([17:15](#)):

And really, you know, the customer was all on board. It was a, it was a pretty innovative kind of solution. And it took a lot of faith and then taking that step with us and, you know, the customer is basically saying, look, I, I, I love what you're saying. I love this concept, but it's, it's a lot of investment. I, I need a path. I need some, we need some short term wins to, to generate revenue, to get rider into the fold and get you guys, uh, promoted so that we can take this bigger step. And, you know, we were about to, we may, we, it was a team of all these people. I mean, gosh, she was probably a good 10, 12 of us in this pursuit team. And we had come to a roadblock. And, you know, I remember, uh, actually after a dinner where we'd been together out as a, as a group having dinner and, you know, we were sort of like, what are we going to do?

Mario Rivera ([18:07](#)):

And I went, I went to my hotel room that night and this very simple concept came to me, completely unrelated to the project. But just the realization I've seen from, from all the data I've been analyzing as the engineer that I basically found this one concept that we could, we get essentially shift the way they were doing something in their supply chain. And with a very simple idea, you know, we generated like \$25 million of savings in this thing. It was a game changer. It was a game changer. It completely changed the relationship. You know, when I left rider, that would have been eight years later, it was a, you know, a hundred plus million dollar account for rider. And, you know, I remember thinking to myself, I was like, you know, if I can, if I have the ability to, to make this kind of a change, then, uh, you know, I should be doing this on my own. I should be leading. I should be trying to be the one in front. And I, I hate to use the term because a lot of sales leaders use it, but, uh, being, uh, being the spear or the tip of the spear, which I hated when it said to me by my, by my sales leader. But, uh, yeah, there's something to being in front of being on the spot, having to deliver under pressure. And, uh, it's, I find that exciting.

Greg White ([19:26](#)):

Well, I think that, you know, the encouraging thing I think for people to take away is you don't, you're not really selling anybody, anything. You're solving something for someone and providing them value. And the service that you provide is what you really delivering. So I think if people think about sales as trying to jam something down somebody's throat, that they don't need, that's the wrong approach anyway. But if they think about it, the way you did, which is, you know, go away and say that, you know, I'm sure you had some moments where you were going, do we really even have a solution for this company? And if so, what is it? And then you come up with something that's the essence of, of a sales relationship or business development relationship is providing a value that somebody will pay for.

Mario Rivera ([20:11](#)):

So couldn't agree. I couldn't agree more. And I think, uh, you know, I, I don't know that every sales lends himself to that, you know, I think we, we are in, uh, in supply chain w w we're solution providers. And I think it's, it's a highly technical sale. I think in my experience, you know, my colleagues and the sales individuals that I have working for me, the best ones are always the ones who grew up through the, through the technical aspects, through the engineering, through the operations, through implementations, they've seen problems, a they learn how to replicate solutions that worked before and just tweak them a bit to the situation. And yeah, certainly if your, if your approach is always to have a single, a single solution and always try to push that, push that, regardless of the situation, I don't think you can be very successful and it goes back to, you know, listening.

Mario Rivera ([21:08](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I was just gonna say, uh, you know, listening, sometimes we always think it's about saving money or it's about doing something cheaper. And, you know, I have found situations where like, if you listen close enough, there's, there's people who they're willing to pay more. They, they just want a problem to go away. Yeah. You gotta listen to what the problem is, is it's not always the cost. In fact, I mean, I think sometimes when you go against the grain in that way, when you stand in front of somebody and say, look, we can solve this, but it's going to cost you more. It's just not the type of thing that, uh, that you're accustomed to, to, to be in total that a sales person should do. But, um, in the end, you know, some of those problems, these are the people we're dealing with. They're human beings, too, that families, you know, they don't want to be called every night because they're having a problem in their operation and getting on a call and having to deal with things. And if you can offer a solution that takes these, these grievances and these problems away, it's, it's, it's worth it to them. And, you know, that's, that's where the value comes in.

Greg White ([22:11](#)):

So I think that's a great perspective. I think people often are trying to sell an ROI, but the truth is you're not really selling people towards things. A lot of times you're selling them away from a pain what's that, that pain that they are dying to resolve. And how do you take that away from them? And it, it, and it sounds like you've, you've nailed that concept. So I got to ask you this, I really have to know this personally. And that is, you know, when you think about all of the knowledge that you've accumulated from living in Puerto Rico, living in the States as Puerto Rico loves to call us the States, right. You know, learning three languages, uh, you know, go into college, changing your career, going from a role that you didn't like to that being your role in terms of leadership. Is there any bit of advice that you would give to your young self or current young people in the industry that you just think would be critical for them to know?

Mario Rivera ([23:09](#)):

Well, two things, I mean, going back to, to when I, to that Eureka moment, when I first got scared of away from, from running my own business, uh, because, uh, I was afraid to prospect and sell, you know, and I think there's a book out there right now. That's basically says every everything in life is selling, you know, whether you do it directly or not, you're always having to promote something and convince people of something, even when you're in an operations role, any role you're in you're, you're always interacting with people and a sense when you try to convince them of something to do something the way you'd like it done, or the way you feel it should be done, you're selling. And so I would advise people to kind of have a different perspective on what selling is and realize that it's really about influencing people, learn how to influence people in a positive way, not just by strong arming them or forcing them into your position.

Mario Rivera ([24:10](#)):

I think that can, I can take you a long way. And then secondly is, you know, this, this, this is one of my pet peeves. You know, when I, when I have employees that, um, or people I work with who try to really corner themselves into a role, it's like, well, this is my role. I'm, I'm the project manager. And, you know, um, it's not my responsibility to do that, or, you know, I'm in it, and it's not my responsibility to do that. That's that's for the engineer to do. And, you know, I, there's nothing that bothers me more. I, to me, it's, you know, we all need to wear multiple hats now. Yeah. I mean, you, you have to understand what your position is and you have to deliver on, on what your responsibilities are. But I think, you know, in today's environment where everybody's so matrix, everything gets done and with such so much collaboration that you, you have to remember, the end goal is, you know, the end goal is it depends on what you do and your business, but for me, it's to satisfy a customer with a logistics solution.

Mario Rivera ([25:12](#)):

And, you know, if, if that means I got to call the it guy and get into a conversation about what it infrastructure we're going to use in this building, because you know, this person has a concern about it, or, you know, I need to call the engineer because, you know, we need to discuss some specific solution around how we're going to do the order preparation or whatever it is. You know, I think you have to be willing to roll up your sleeves and get involved in different aspects. And, uh, you know, that that's how you, when you help, when you help your teammates, that's how you build camaraderieship. And then when you need help, they'll help you. And I mean, without this kind of collaboration, uh, you won't be too successful. And I, uh, I find that, you know, maybe now it's me getting, getting a little older, but as I sort of interact with some of the younger kids that are coming out of college, I find that there's a lot of, there's a lot of that attitude of highly, highly specialized. This is what I do. That's somebody else's responsibility. And I mean, that's, that's killer for me. Yeah. But it's hard to come back, uh, from my, uh, from my judgment. And once I, once somebody starts to, uh, go down that path right down that path. Yes. Yeah.

Mario Rivera ([26:29](#)):

Don't get on Mario's bad list is what we're learning here. So let's with all that in mind. I think it really, I think the last few segments, uh, for folks looking to break into really for that matter business, just supply chain, logistics, but business and, and, and progress on a rat, more rapid pace. I think you've already shared a ton there, Mario. Let's talk about ADI logistics now for the three folks that may not know may not have heard of Audi logistics. I know y'all have grown dramatically and expanded dramatically. And we laid out earlier, we're going to over 340 sites in 17 countries. Tell us about what the company does.

Mario Rivera ([27:07](#)):

So we're, we're a logistics service provider. We're a three PL or, you know, depending on what term you want to use. I guess the distinction we would have is we're highly focused on contract logistics, warehousing solutions. I mean, we, we do transportation management, but we're not, we're not an asset-based carrier provider. I think, uh, you know, the company had th their, the roots in France founded by three gentlemen that, that are still essentially running the company. So learning

Mario Rivera ([27:36](#)):

French really paid off for it. It didn't,

Mario Rivera ([27:38](#)):

It, I think it helped him be interviewed. Let's say that. Yes. Although, you know, I find that I find it unless you can speak it perfectly, you're better off. Uh, but, uh, you know, these guys are really highly technical guys sorta was the same background as me, you know, there were, there were engineers, they were operators. And I think they, at the time the company was founded 20, 25, well, 22 years ago, now they were realizing that, that things were moving in a direction where automation was coming into play. And, you know, if you want it to succeed, you really needed to embrace that. And I think they did that very early on. And, you know, when you, when you go to our operations today, you'll find a lot of highly automated facilities. Now, you know, I, I hate to say that sometimes cause sometimes people think, you know, automation is my as its costs and, you know, th th there's a tendency to just automate for the fun of it.

Mario Rivera ([28:39](#)):

Yeah. I would say we, we follow a very methodical and sort of, um, logical automation, right? And this is in all star Wars. You know, some of these things are small concepts, but just, just finding innovative ways to make the work more efficient. And I think that's kinda permeates in our, in our DNA, in the company and the, in the time I've been here, I've been very impressed with technical capabilities. And so that's what we do. Well, I would say we, we, we run warehouses very well and we have a tendency to take oversights. I mean, that's a lot of our businesses is we're walking into existing operations and we're really analyzing what's there and trying to build off what's there. And, you know, through incremental changes, making things better, making things more efficient, you know, again, not, not, it's not always for the purpose of eliminating head count.

Mario Rivera ([29:32](#)):

It's sometimes it's for the purpose of re-purposing that head count to do new things. You know, now we're with e-commerce growing the way it is, you know, many of these operations that existed in the past for retailers just to, you know, pick pallets and, and move them to make boxes. They're having to rethink these things. Right. But you know, many of these companies have huge existing buildings, buildings that they've invested a lot of capital into, and they can't just walk away from them. And it's about how to transform them to deal with the new, the new order. And then, you know, the fact that we have this completely different process that you have, you know, when you, when you talk about e-commerce, it behaves completely different than the traditional distribution used to, and right. But you have to do both, you know, you'll have these facilities out to do both.

Mario Rivera ([30:23](#)):

And so how do you, how do you create, you know, uh, as they like to say, omni-channel, which is the buzzword, right. But how do you create these multiple environments within one physical building to satisfy everything that, that needs to be done for, for their customers? And so I'd say that the ideal logistics, you know, the, the company has in the 21, 22 years, we've been open, you know, 17 countries. So, I mean, that gives you a sense for, there is a, the ID stands for international development, and it's sort of the mantra of the business. You know, they want to get into new countries every, every year, every couple of years, uh, the us is sort of the latest entry. You know, we, we started the U S subsidiary in 2019 terrible time to,

Mario Rivera ([31:09](#)):

It sounds like, sounded like good timing at the time. It didn't it. Well, yeah,

Mario Rivera ([31:14](#)):

It's, uh, things will get back. And of course the U S market is squandered. It is the, well, you maybe China us in terms of the largest logistics markets in the world. So, I mean, there's plenty of work to be done here. We have a lot of global customers, many of which are American companies that we're doing business for them and around the globe. So at least that's given us, you know, some warm introductions to customers that we're performing well for globally. And we're asking them to give us an opportunity here in the U S to, to show them what we can do. So I it's, it's, it's been a bit of a challenge. I really more in the sense of, uh, because of the travel bands, you know, we've had, we had a lot of, uh, the company has a particular, uh, way that they like to start new countries. And, and they actually really bring in a lot of seasoned and trained talent from other parts of the world to sort of help the new subsidiary, uh, acclimate to the ID logistics way. And this, this hasn't been possible this time around, you know, so

Mario Rivera ([32:17](#)):

Culturally in best practice and automation speaking. Yes,

Mario Rivera ([32:21](#)):

That's right. I mean, it's, it's to bring, you know, obviously the way we've entered the U S market was through an acquisition. Uh, and so there, of course there were, there was already a, a talent base here in, uh, in a base of operations that were very focused on e-commerce. And so, yeah, well, I mean, we would have had individuals from France from Brazil is another large subsidiary that we have some plans on bringing some individuals to supplement the team as we grow and develop, because, you know, Hey, best probably you got to share best practices. Right. And there has been a successful model for the company to open 17 countries and 22 years. So we want it to follow this and we've had to adjust, but, you know, I find myself on a lot of a very early morning or very late evening calls because, you know, we're still trying to, to have that collaboration, but unfortunately we can't do it in person, but

Mario Rivera ([33:18](#)):

We've all grown quite a bit. Right. We've been tracking a bit on across social media, different press releases. I think y'all just came out here lately with your annual report for 2020, clearly you're a big player internationally. And e-commerce, and if you're gonna, if you're going to do that, automation is going to be critical, especially in the States, Greg, you're not talking a lot about some of the talent, uh, limitations that we find ourselves in coast to coast. I want to do this. I want to ask you that. So Somara, now that we've got a good sense of ADI logistics and we know what it stands for now, a little tidbit there. So as vice-president development and innovation for Ivy logistics, what, what is, uh, what are a challenge or two that you love, you know, day in, day out, week in, week out. Um, you've kind of spoken to some of these, but what's the favorite, your favorite part. Yeah.

Mario Rivera ([34:07](#)):

Yeah. And then just speak a little bit about kinda the mindset of the company, right. Development and innovation. I, you know, when I first took the role, I thought it was interesting because in most other three peels I've been at and other colleagues that I have, you know, you have this, you have the people who sell, and then there's the people who innovate. They're totally different groups. And this, in this company, they, they, it's very important to the leadership that the same individual responsible for business development and growth is also responsible for leading innovation because they see that one, but gets the other, I mean, we grow because we innovate. Maybe I don't, I hate to say better, but, you

know, we try to innovate at a pace, uh, that outpaces our competition, I guess you would say. And, uh, you know, that's, that's been very refreshing to me.

Mario Rivera ([34:59](#)):

I, uh, as an engineer, it's, it's, um, solving problems. So when I'm, when I'm doing these sales, uh, first and foremost, I'm thinking about, well, what's a creative way for me to do this process that it's not done today. Right. And that, you know, that that's always been one of my, part of what I love about being in business development is I get to touch a lot of different problems. You know, where, when you aren't, when you're an operator, you tend to operate for an account or maybe a particular vertical same thing when you're, you know, maybe folk as an engineer, focused on a particular, uh, customer, et cetera. You know, I, I do multiple projects a month could be in CPG. It could be in medical devices, it could be in retail. Uh, it could be a highly automated operations e-commerce it could be, you know, uh, we're moving milk in pallets.

Mario Rivera ([35:52](#)):

I mean, you name it. And so it's, you know, being able to touch the different, all these different, uh, companies and actually learn about companies. It's amazing how you, you start to learn about as a consumer, you know, all, you know, our brands and you, there's always this sort of naive correlation to, Oh, a brand as a company. And then you start to learn about, well, there's these companies out there that own hundreds of brands that, you know, they're moving milk, but they're also moving, you know, cameras and razors. And, and even within one, at one corporation, you, you have really just a myriad of different products and processes of that to support. Uh, so it's interesting to learn about, you know, the, about these companies and how they're made up, and then, you know, how they grow up, how they, they begin with one brand and then that fund some other piece of the company that they acquire.

Mario Rivera ([36:44](#)):

And, you know, I find, I find all that interesting. I like to invest. I, um, I've been investing since I was a fairly young and, uh, I think it sort of helps in your research as well. You know, when you, when you understand companies and you know, how they're positioned in the market, it helps you be a better investor. So, uh, yeah, I think to me, that's, that's my favorite part of the job is just, uh, the variety of projects and problems that I, that I get to face and, uh, try to try to find an innovative solution to solve and, uh, convince somebody that we're the right person to do it.

Greg White ([37:20](#)):

So you do face a ton of different situations, just because of the breadth, the variation of companies that you work with. And then you throw in, uh, this seismic, societal disruption, whatever you want to call it of, of COVID and how that's changed the world. And you mentioned e-commerce how that's changed and accelerated e-commerce and how that's changed, how companies not only how they do operate, but how they view operations. I think it's a major opening for companies like yours, where com where a lot of the brands and a lot of the retailers are re they're reimagining their core business and understanding that they are really good at acquiring or promoting or developing brands. And not as good, maybe not as strong at the logistics aspects of it. So that's a huge opening, but it, with all of that as a backdrop, when you think about what's coming or what you've seen, or what could be not only for ID logistics, or maybe not even only for retail or e-commerce or manufacturing brands, what has, what really has your attention in terms of challenges or opportunities or future visions around supply chain?

Is there anything just jumps out at you that I don't know if I would say keeps you awake at night, but it, you know, it at least intrigued you.

Mario Rivera ([38:41](#)):

Yeah. I mean, I would say, I mean, not to sound too, what's the word not to regurgitate where you probably see in many of our supply chains, but, you know, micro fulfillment. I mean, just the notion of, I mean, talk about bringing, you know, the ultimate collaborative model to distribution, right. And it's with the, with e-commerce and the way it's grown and especially been accelerated through this pandemic. I mean, it's, it's, it's become very clear. They also, with our big gorilla giant of, uh, Amazon quite frankly, is a competitor to every company in this country. I don't care what you do. They're calling they're coming after you. And, uh, you know, I think that part of how we, we compete with this is more companies like ours. And then, you know, the people with the products, the people that can distribute, we all have to collaborate in a more distributed way.

Mario Rivera ([39:39](#)):

And you know, this notion of having distribution nodes all over the country, rather than, you know, these massive warehouses, um, it's how customers want it. Now, the challenge that comes with that is anything, why do, why do we have these massive warehouses? And that type of model is cause your economies of scale, you know, you don't, if you have a hundred small facilities compared to two or three large ones, uh, of course there's an economy of scale to having your larger facilities, but you sacrifice service. So how do you balance the two? And, you know, I don't know that I, that I know the answer, but I could tell you, there's actually a couple of really interesting companies out there that, um, that I think are, are trying to solve this. I'll mention a couple of them. There's a company called stored, right?

Greg White ([40:25](#)):

That's who I'd thought of first, when you mentioned micro fulfillment,

Mario Rivera ([40:28](#)):

Our mothers there's flax in Seattle. There are several out there where they're, what they're trying to do is really, they're trying to create this software layer or this cloud layer that, that acts as a connector to a lot of these physical providers, you know, people that actually have buildings and trucks. And can you do the work, uh, and rather than having, you know, necessarily a company like us, it more, any other three PL that, you know, you're trying to basically cover the whole country, build a whole network. I mean, they seem to be sort of more trying to connect everybody all over the world or all over the country for me are really all over the world when you scale it so that customers will go through them, right? They, they sort of another layer like everything else, you know, I think in our business and our life, I mean, we create these layers of abstraction and, uh, you try to get economies of scale at each layer.

Mario Rivera ([41:23](#)):

And, you know, as a, as a logistician and somebody who studied and, and lives this stuff, I, I find that very fascinating as an employee of ID logistics. I, I find that a little scary too, because threatening right to some degree, it is a threat, but I think, you know, it's up to, it's up to us to find a way of working with these companies, create the right partnerships, make sure that we don't get left behind and try to be too rigid with, with our business model, our approach, and be willing to, to entertain some of these partnerships. And, you know, we, we will have some relationships that are direct with our own customers and, and we'll have some relationships that go through other, you know, call them

aggregators, right. Individuals that are bringing us business based on their model. And, uh, at the end of the day, we, we just have to be the expert set at executing and moving things and getting orders prepared, whether it's a, you know, directly for our customer on behalf of someone else. And, uh, you know, that's something I I'm looking at. I, um, as part of my job, you know, I need to look to develop those kinds of relationships. So I certainly, you know, try to reach out to some of these folks and, and get myself connected to what they're doing. And then hopefully, uh, you know, something will, will, uh, will pan out from them, but

Greg White ([42:43](#)):

It's worth, I see it as an augmentation of what you do not necessarily replacement. It's another segment of the market that's really highly specialized. So I think there's room in the marketplace for, for those tiers to me. And, you know, you're the solution guy, Mario. So I'm sure I'm, I'm not telling you anything, but we owe this to our, to our community as well. To me, I think the core thing is that is identifying those areas where the retailers and the brands and, and other companies moving products where they want augmentation of their capabilities and their logistics network and how each one of these players applies to that. Right. I mean, you know, you may not be the right solution for the four models of refrigerators that Whirlpool needs in mobile, Alabama that's stored, right. But for somebody who has a hundred or thousand or 10,000 skews that they need fulfilled in a couple of days, yours is a much better solution for that. So I think as company companies will recognize what that segmentation is.

Mario Rivera ([43:49](#)):

Well then on the consumer side, uh, the great silver lining here, as we've talked about throughout 2020, really late 2019 throughout 2020 to start 2021, a deeper recognition and understanding of how supply chain works and the latest lesson, which is coming to consumers via the vaccine distribution, is that final mile or that final miles, depending on how, how great the challenge is, you know, and that despite despite it all, I mean how aware the consumer is getting, because they're already savvy, as we all know, and, and it's deeply impacting their new and ever evolving rapidly evolving, uh, uh, buying preferences and just consumer experience preferences for that. So it's really a neat time to be in the industry. It's neat time to, uh, sit down and talk with you, um, Mario, and learn more about your unique perspective. You personally, and as a leader and ID logistics, I appreciate your time.

Mario Rivera ([44:45](#)):

We're happy to have you back on, and you have to give us an update as we get deeper and deeper into 2021, but congrats on all the growth, congrats on the real meaningful innovation, not the lip service, you know, the buzz word innovation. I mean, when you're w uh, when you're in a global supply chain, logistics, transportation, warehousing, you name it, it's gotta be real. Uh, cause it's the only way to keep up with the, with the ever increasing volume, which is, uh, is, is, is pretty exciting to say the least. So let's make sure Mario that folks know how to connect with you and ID logistics. Uh, you know, I'd love to, we're talking about some, what was the rum, what we were talking about prior to coming on today, rondelle buddy Leto. Roman the little barrels is what it means from a little barrels. So who knows, maybe one of our listeners is going to want to compare notes over some of this delicious rum or beer, or what have you, let's make sure we know how to connect get y'all connected. So what's the best way to reach out to you, Mario?

Mario Rivera ([45:44](#)):

Sure. I mean the easiest way of course is always through LinkedIn. Uh, you know, I'm, I'm out there, Mario Rivera on LinkedIn, of course, uh, ID logistics, uh, as a page as well. I'm always monitoring them, but you know, actually I'd be, I'd be curious. We've we've just recently launched a new, a new site, a new landing page for, for customers. So, uh, I would love for y'all to visit me there it's, uh, solutions.id-logistics.com. And I think it, yeah, to, to grade single, single paid, you know, a lot of times I find, yeah, it's again, modern times. It's a, you know, the days of these huge websites with hundreds of pages, it's like nobody wants to navigate the same more. So we've tried to create a very, it's a single page. It has everything you need. It talks about our solutions, our industries, uh, and it gives you a very quick and easy way to, to basically connect with us there. And it's solutions really good solutions that id-logistics.com and, uh, you know, I hope to connect with some of y'all out there. And, uh, it was a pleasure speaking with you guys. Thank you. I told you I was a bit nervous, but uh, you know, you guys really do, uh, make guys feel, feel comfortable. So I appreciate that guys done good.

Mario Rivera ([47:03](#)):

Yes, you're too kind. You're natural. I mean, there's, there's so much knowledge between your ears and just over the last hour, we'll be able to scrape just a little bit out and share it with our community, but love also the, the give forward stuff. You are doing audio logistics. I recently came across some of the logistics training that you're offering to folks in Brazil, especially young people in Brazil, uh, giving back to some of the nonprofits through your, your successful 2020. Keep that up. We'll have you back big, thanks to Mario Rivera, vice president development and innovation at ADI logistics. Thanks so much, Mario.

Greg White ([47:37](#)):

Thank you guys.

Mario Rivera ([47:39](#)):

So now we're going to talk about Mario as if like he's not here or like this part. So Greg, as we were at right before we sign off, there's so much knowledge Mara's journey and his path is an intriguing one again. So well-rounded, and we need that in, in supply chain, but what's one, what was one of your favorite parts as it relates to this conversation we've had here with Mario?

Greg White ([48:02](#)):

Yeah, I think, I think except for his kids, probably Mario doesn't need to apologize for being somewhat of a perfectionist. And I think that's really the obviously lens to what he's doing to the story that he told about, you know, finding a solution for, for a customer. I mean, somebody that thinks that deeply, that wants to solve that, that badly. That's incredibly powerful. And especially in this market where we've got such an incredible need for solutions and most of us, particularly in the retail and the brands, we have no earthly idea how to solve some of these problems. There are new problems for a lot of companies who haven't delved into e-commerce or haven't really grasped how to innovate and how to optimize in their logistics environment. So having someone with that goal and, and of course not only the ability to solve, but the ability to show you the value of that solution and frankly, with the education, I mean, to be able to back it up so that you can know that it's a good solution that's being presented to you. That's a really, really unique, I mean, that's, to me, that's the big takeaway here, right? Mario is the right cat for the job.

Mario Rivera ([49:15](#)):

I'm looking at him through my 17 pages of notes and a lot of what Mario speaks to here today, especially that, that relentless passion for getting to the root of the problem. It makes me right away. Think about Charles, the famous infamous Charles Kettering, you know, problem, well stated as a problem, half solved, and it may not have gotten exactly right, but it's so important to know exactly what the problem is because so many folks stay on surface level band-aids unsustainable solutions and appreciate Marez passion there. So to our listeners, hopefully you've enjoyed this conversation. It's really Frank, very informative conversation as much as Greg and I have. If you're want to check out more conversations like this, be sure to find us@supplychainnow.com, make sure you connect with Mario and Audi logistics. We'll have those notes in the show notes. There's links in the show notes where after one click here, that's our commitment to you. And on behalf of the entire team here at supply chain, now they will challenge you like with challenge our team every single day, do good, give forward and be the change that's needed. And on that note, we'll see next time here on supply chain now,

Speaker 1 ([50:23](#)):

Uh,