

DHL celebrates 40 years of success

DHL, one of the world's leading logistics providers, celebrated its 40th anniversary on Friday, 25 September 2009. Citing the company's pioneering spirit, strong customer focus and critical role in facilitating global trade, Frank Appel, CEO Deutsche Post DHL recounts the secret of DHL's success over the last 40 years.



“In 1969, three men set out to do the impossible and conquered the moon. A few months later, Adrian Dalsey, Larry Hillblom and Robert Lynn founded DHL and made the world a little smaller,” Appel said. “DHL pioneered the international express industry, making it possible for documents to reach recipients overnight instead of a few days.”

Forward expansion

The express company quickly grew to encompass global forwarding and supply chain management, through the strategic integration of leading forwarder Danzas Air & Ocean in 2002 and supply chain/logistics expert Exel in 2005. DHL was thus able to offer a comprehensive suite of services through its global network that spans over 220 countries and territories. Today, DHL is a leading industry provider in its various segments: No 1 in Air and Ocean Freight, No 1 in International Express, No 1 in Contract Logistics and No 2 in European Road Freight.

By initially offering international door-to-door delivery of timesensitive documentation, DHL enabled companies and organisations around the world to build their business and widen their impact.

DHL is continuously looking to reinvent the logistics business through the introduction of innovative processes. Some of these have become industry benchmarks, such as the use of Radio Frequency ID for inventory management and a technically-advanced tracking system that monitors and, if needed, redirect shipments in real time anywhere around the world.

DHL also launched a first-of-a-kind Innovation Center in 2007 to develop marketable, highly-innovative logistics solutions that are flexible and ecologically-sound. It also established the Global Customer Solutions which provides highly-customized solutions to key customers to meet all their logistics needs globally.

Green services

The company is said to be the first to offer customers a greener option of sending their shipments around the world through DHL's Green Services, which aim to offset the carbon emissions of the company's various delivery vehicles. In 2008, the company made a public commitment to improve its carbon efficiency by 30% by 2020.

Secret of success

At the core of these innovative developments, is the company's focus to effectively use the most modern technology to address its customers' needs. Said Appel: "Very early on, we recognised that the company's success lies not only in listening to what our customers want, but, more importantly, acting on it quickly and effectively. Very often we anticipated what our customers want and addressed these even before they ask."

Driven by this principle, DHL established trade routes to countries like Russia and China in the midst of the Cold War. When the curtain fell, DHL was able to instantly provide massive support to a multitude of companies in entering these "new" markets through its in-depth knowledge and logistical capabilities. Local businesses also benefitted, as they leveraged new trade lanes to export their products to a global market.

Emerging routes

DHL continues to break new grounds by establishing clear market leadership positions in various emerging markets such as the BRIC economies - Brazil, Russia, India and China - which are touted to be the agents of future trade development growth.

Appel concludes: "Our employees and customers have brought DHL to where it is today. Through them, we are determined to sustain our pioneering spirit, which for so many years has enabled us to offer solutions that help our customers reach their goals. By proactively and continuously encouraging innovative practical thinking, we are confident that we will overcome the current economic situation and are well-positioned to sustain our global market leadership - for now and for many more decades to come."

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