

40 YEARS OF PERFECTING OUR LOGISTICS FORMULA!



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“Forty years ago, logistics was not directly associated with the transport business,” says Steven Gottschalk, founder and Group CEO of Value Logistics. “Nowadays, thanks to staggering digital developments and new technologies, logistics and IT hold their own in the transport business. In fact, one can even go to university and study a degree in Logistics – not so when I was starting out.”

Gottschalk launched Value Logistics on 1 May 1981. The company’s first commercial truck was a used 1976 petrol-driven 2-ton dropside Mazda, which now sits at the entrance to Value City, the company’s largest super-hub in Tunney, Johannesburg. On 1 May 2021, Value Logistics’ 40th birthday, Gottschalk got behind the wheel of the Mazda and led a convoy of 550 vehicles out of Value City’s gates and onto the road. At the same time, four other Value Logistics convoys set out from their hubs in Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein. It was a symbolic display of the company’s history and current capabilities, and a way for employees to celebrate their company’s success in a COVID-19-compliant manner.

SMART TOOLS, SMART PEOPLE

“The past four decades have been extraordinary,” says Gottschalk. “Our logistics business has evolved into a science that requires the best IT to manage, control and optimise our warehouses and fleets. Our drivers, for example, are not simply highly skilled behind the wheel, but are also trained to use smart tools such as POD scanners to ensure that all deliveries are recorded in real-time on our master system.”

The basic principle of logistics is to move product from A to B. The rules are simple: do it correctly, cost-effectively and on time. Value Logistics uses relevant technologies to augment its human and fleet capabilities to ensure that its customers’ needs are met on time, every time.

“Our use of advanced IT solutions to manage our fleets, gather data and ensure driver and vehicle safety is not necessarily unique,” says Gottschalk. “However, where we differ is that we own our vehicle infrastructure and have specialised teams in areas such as data analysis and simulation and fleet safety and security. We even have a fuel bureau, which works closely with our planning department. Every delivery is optimised to ensure the best routes, maximum capacity loads and satisfied customers.”



VALUE LOGISTICS SHIFTS INTO SIXTH GEAR FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

Steven Gottschalk, founder and group CEO of Value Logistics, celebrates four decades of success, talks the evolution of logistics and discusses the importance of smart tools and smart people

Technological disruption pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there’s no doubt that the past year has fast-tracked change within the transport and logistics sector, particularly regarding e-commerce and remote working.

“In January 2020, our proactive IT team called our attention to the pandemic and motivated for increased spend on smart tools, systems and devices,” explains Gottschalk. “When the country went into lockdown in March 2020, our entire company was fully set up to work off-site. It was a seamless shift that enabled us to set up a national home deliveries business to support our customers’ businesses in just two months during peak lockdown.”

Over the past 40 years, the company has consistently invested in its infrastructure, vehicle assets, people, customers and services – even during tough economic times. The company’s growth has always been in response to its customers’ needs. For example, when it’s customers’ needs shifted in the early 2000s, it launched its distribution business to provide the requisite supply

chain solutions. What began as a truck rental and transport business has become one of South Africa’s leading fully integrated logistics providers. Nowadays, Value Logistics supports its customers from point of origin to delivery with a fleet of 4 500 trucks and forklifts, 21 nationwide depots, 350 000m² of warehouse and operational space, advanced IT systems and more than 4 300 employees.

“We’re a local business, which means that we can make fast decisions in the best interests of our customers,” says Gottschalk. “This gives us a lot of flexibility and control. Technology has certainly enabled our growth and success, but our smart tools and IT systems work for us – not the other way round. At the end of the day, our customers’ cargoes make it safely and cost-effectively from point A to point B, thanks to our smart people.” ■

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