

It's who you know AND what you know

What is the name of the company you work for?

Logistics Plus Inc., also known as LP for short.

What does this company do?

Lots of stuff! We do anything from transportation, warehousing/fulfillment operations, global logistics, business intelligence, and supply chain solutions. In short, we are a provider of logistics and international supply chain management solutions. We move, store, manage and provide technology solutions for the transport of freight domestically and internationally. At the core we are a solutions company, constantly challenging ourselves to find ways to say yes to our customers! (no matter how crazy the request).

What is the size of this company?

Logistics Plus is a +\$300M privately held company that has roughly 400+ employees worldwide (about 280 of those employees operate here in the US).

How long have you been with this company?

I've been with LP for a bit over a year now, but it definitely feels like much longer with just how much stuff happens here.

What is your job title?

I am currently a Logistics Engineer within our LP International Department. I am more focused on our Importer of Record services, while also engaging directly in International Freight and Warehouse Operations/Management.

Describe your day to day job/work related tasks and activities.

No day is exactly the same as the one before or the one after ☺ people also have the opportunity to jump into multitudes of tasks, but normally the below are some of the tasks that I am

responsible for on a day to day basis:

- Communicating with suppliers, manufacturers, clients, customs brokers, freight forwarding agents and multiple internal departments in order to plan and coordinate international and domestic shipments. This involves utilizing logistics principles to streamline (optimize, reduce waste, etc.) the supply chain and distribution processes of IT equipment/goods.
- Codifying, procuring and researching product data information alongside internal/external customs entities in order to determine export/import licensing requirements.
- Overseeing and updating electronic documentation, shipment data and warehouse inventory management information within our internal Transportation Management System to ensure that our system and external-facing data visualization platform is providing clients with the most accurate/current data available.
- Preparing and mapping out critical processes at a detailed and high-level view into presentation materials to better visualize and deliver internal training/education to employees. This enables our employees to become familiar with existing and new processes, while establishing procedures for recording, evaluating and reporting quality data (which also acts as an indicator of our distribution process performance).

Why did you choose to pursue this career

My decision wasn't particularly influenced by the

percentage of a specific gender (and maybe I don't notice it as much as a male), but more so because I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity that LP presented to me in such a diverse and complex field.

What are the best things about your career?

A lot of things! But here are some of the highlights:

- There's definitely a lot of room for flexibility, creative thinking and big picture problem solving that is encouraged in this field. The environment helps foster critical outside-the-box approaches because, ultimately, you have to get something from point A to B effectively and efficiently with just your resources, tools and wit (very important!).
- This might not be a pro for some people, but I love the fact that communicating with people constantly and building relationships is an essential part of the field. From warehouse personnel, management, customs agents, truck drivers, and more you get an opportunity to gain a lot of insight and perspective from all the different aptitudes that put together a logistics supply chain.
- At LP, you have a great deal and sense of autonomy to make important decisions and make mistakes (to quickly learn from and improve).
- I believe the culture/environment at LP really harbors the "work hard, play hard" attitude, and it helps keep everyone in good spirits, united and determined toward a common goal.
- Another little plus is that the people I work with (and



Ricardo Rodriguez, Logistics Engineer



even those I don't that are around the office) are just fantastic, extremely dedicated and absolutely hilarious. There's a great deal of diversity in every sense here at LP, with the common problem solving and relationship traits that fit LP's culture for our growth.

What are the challenges faced in your career?

There are plenty of challenges that drive us forward (which is what keeps the job engaging). Some of these include but aren't limited to:

- Dealing with different time zones from around the world. This includes many late nights and early mornings in order to make sure that projects and shipments are in motion and meeting requirements.
- For a lot of international work, you have to consider country-specific requirements and intensive pre-compliance processes when importing/exporting any type of equipment (can increase lead times and overall cost). Some countries have easier trade channels

between each other, some have more restrictions and strict processes to ensure goods are safe for use and compliant with their own standards, while some might not even let you ship certain things.

- Tight timelines on complex projects. You might not always have an exact blueprint of the time it takes to accomplish a project (even with estimates), so you have to be able to adapt, make decisions on your feet and figure out ways to get things moving in order to meet customer requirements. A lot can happen from start to finish in any project.
- Issues with communication. Sometimes you may encounter situations where parties aren't communicating accordingly or have a disagreement on certain information, which can make it difficult to get projects moving and get things done when your customer requires more frequent updates.

What is your educational background?

I have been lucky to have a diverse education in Venezuela, Panama and the US that has enabled me to focus on people, processes and technology. I successfully earned the International Baccalaureate Diploma in Panama after completing the program with Social Science and STEM-related coursework. I studied Computer Science at FSU Panama for a year and I now have a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from Penn State Behrend.

Is this the career you chose initially, or have there been changes in your career choices?

I wasn't entirely certain of the professional career I wanted, but I had envisioned an idea of the type of work I would be more interested in. Over the years I was able to better define that what I wanted would be related to

managing teams of people as a leader in any particular industry.

What led to those changes?

In Venezuela I had contemplated the world of STEM but I hadn't gotten enough exposure to those professional fields to be certain when I was younger. In Panama I got the chance to do some company visits while in high school / college and a few internships (in distribution and in banking) as well as additional visits when I was headed into college in the US. These helped me start understanding what I liked/didn't like about my potential career future. Some extracurricular experiences at Penn State helped me further cement this idea of management/leadership when I got the chance to be President for our MUN organization for a couple years and Vice President for the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers (IISE) at Behrend.

What has led you to your current career?

Relationships/ connections paired with my educational background to put it simply. The president of IISE at Behrend at the time (who is now also a work colleague) had reached out to me after she did an internship at LP while I was looking for jobs and helped me set up an interview. I met qualifications (in aptitude and attitude ☺), things clicked right away with the company and I've been loving working here ever since. I didn't have a full idea of what the world of logistics had in store but I'm grateful I got to start getting involved professionally in it because there's so much to learn.

What qualities are important for you to hold the position you have?

You have to be able to think on your feet and deconstruct problems from a big-picture point of view in order to find areas to optimize, increase efficiency, reduce waste and

map out to help you resolve them. My position involves a lot of cross-organizational cooperation across multiple systems, so learning how to engage with others and build strong relationships is absolutely key. It involves a lot of creative problem solving as moving freight never quite goes exactly as planned, and sometimes clients have specific needs for which a built solution might not already exist (so we have to build one!). You also have to be able to operate with multiple software platforms and different disciplines to organize, visualize and report data in a way that adds value to our team and customers.

How do you prepare for an interview for this position?

First off are some of the more common elements you see across interview prep. Make sure you learn about the company and the industry you're potentially getting a job in, clean up your resume to show the areas in your experiences that relate to that job, be ready to explain why you're interested and how you could add value to the company. Think about your main vision (where do you see yourself in several years' time), how your career goals can help you reach that vision within the company for mutual benefit, remain open-minded and present your attitude, and last but not least, list out your skillset. The reason attitude is listed first is because this job in logistics presents a lot of unexpected challenges that require quick thinking and unorthodox solutions, so your

approach to critical thinking and creative problem solving can weigh in heavily (we are problem solvers after all haha). You should be able to show strong aptitude as well, as the job does require familiarity and ability to work with Transportation Management System software and many other digital tools, including the implementation of complex Logistics principles. However, your willingness/ability to learn those tools can help you find a good opportunity and position here.

What would people be surprised to know about your career?

It's easy to be able to hop into multiple projects and multiple disciplines as long as you have the right attitude, discipline and drive to learn. That the more questions you ask, the more knowledge and questions you get, because oh how ever-expanding and interesting the world of logistics is (you can never learn enough). It's kind of crazy that logistics can be as simple as delivering shirts to a local store or as complex as shipping oversized oil tankers across the sea to international locations. Another thing is that there are a large variety of jobs in the industry (from transport, to IT, to customs, to forwarding, etc.) for people with different interests as moving goods continues to be an essential need in today's world.



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