

Delivering solutions: how FedEx's CIO uses innovation to solve complex challenges.

With over 100,000 vehicles, 30 million shipments, and eight billion transactions to manage during just one day of the peak shipping season, FedEx's business is beyond complicated. And what keeps it all moving smoothly? Technology.

Having served as FedEx's Chief Information Officer for two decades, Rob Carter is an expert on innovations in technology and wireless networks. Here are some takeaways from his interview on iHeart Radio's [The Restless Ones](#) podcast, sponsored by T-Mobile for Business:

“The technology at FedEx is really the central nervous system for the company. The planes don't fly; the trucks don't roll; the packages don't sort; customers can't connect and see their shipments—unless the technology is robust.”

Rob Carter, Chief Information Officer, FedEx Corporation

Extending capabilities through partnerships.

To serve over 220 countries in a hyper-connected world, FedEx has “built, rebuilt, and re-invented the technology that provides the pulse of the business,” according to Carter.

“The idea of being restless is absolutely true for us. We're always looking for ways to extend the strategic capabilities of the systems to make the business operate more efficiently, to make it more frictionless and seamless for our customers,” he said.

But they haven't done it alone. When it comes to developing new solutions, Carter employs what he calls the “two wings of innovation” approach, in which he leverages both internal and external resources to bring new solutions to life. Instead of building each component of a new solution on their own, FedEx makes the most of crucial partnerships to develop innovations that will serve users more effectively in the future.

As one example of this, the company is currently partnering with DEKA Research & Technology to develop autonomous delivery bots. Additionally, FedEx regularly and directly communicates with customers in various industries, like medicine and technology, to learn about new solutions and quickly bring to life the ones they need most.

Putting the data to work.

Of course, with each new technological innovation comes an exponential amount of data. Another way Carter and the team overcome the intricate challenges FedEx faces is by leveraging that data to gain critical insights.

According to him, “we couldn't scale the business, and we realized we couldn't scale it with quality, if we didn't have very accurate and detailed records of how the packages move through the networks.”

To ensure shipments are moving as they should, FedEx uses sensor technology to get unprecedented, end-to-end visibility into packages, aircraft, and vehicles. With these insights, the company can make crucial adjustments to the supply chain that help prevent issues from occurring during the shipment process. Plus, the same sensor technology can also help the company find a single package within of a facility filled with hundreds of thousands of them.

The team also uses global commerce pattern data to predict emerging areas of the world and determine where to invest resources, increase inventory, or create new manufacturing cycles. And while they can't change the weather, big data does help FedEx outsmart it. By looking at weather trends, FedEx anticipates the impacts weather events may have and dynamically flows shipment volume to areas that will be less impacted.

Creating consistent connections.

According to Carter, FedEx couldn't keep its physical networks of fleets, facilities, and shipments moving without reliable digital networks.

“We've tied together our entire network—from vehicles to aircraft facilities—in ways that can light up shipments as they're moving... That would only be possible in this world where we have high-performance networks that provide coverage and the ubiquity of connectivity.”

Rob Carter, Chief Information Officer, FedEx Corporation

Carter believes that the “four horsemen” notion of dominant design will help create more consistent networks, servers, digital storage systems, and software. According to him, consistency across technologies will only increase in the 5G era, creating enhanced high-performance networks and experiences that will connect even more people, businesses, and things across the

...ment, high performance network and experience and our business ecosystem people, technology, and range of services on

planet. And for FedEx, that's the whole point.

"Our stated purpose here is 'We connect people and possibilities around the world.' And through that, businesses prosper, communities flourish, and people thrive," he said.

For the full story, [listen to "Innovation at the Speed of Delivery"](#) from iHeart Radio's [The Restless Ones](#) podcast.

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