AT&T Business

FedEx Supply Chain's network overcame tornadoes and COVID-19 thanks to AT&T

- **Business needs** – A way to support operational continuity for clients in technology, retail, e-commerce, consumer and industrial goods, and healthcare who depend on FedEx Supply Chain.

- **Networking solution** – AT&T enabled FedEx Supply Chain to continue supporting its customers, even in the face of tornadoes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Business value** – Business continuity and outstanding customer care

- **Industry focus** – Logistics

About FedEx Supply Chain

FedEx Supply Chain, which is part of the FedEx Logistics suite of services, is a third-party logistics provider. They deliver best-in-class solutions to solve business challenges. Based on their strong relationships with customers they deliver tailored, technology-based solutions.

The situation

FedEx Supply Chain built their infrastructure with redundancy. That way, they could keep delivering for their customers who rely on them for logistics, e-commerce, fulfillment, and distribution services. Still, operations were already being strained by coronavirus-caused demands when a deadly tornado outbreak in Nashville damaged one—and destroyed another—FedEx Supply Chain business center. The company needed to resume operations quickly to fulfill thousands of orders.

Solution

Prudent planning and a strong relationship with AT&T Business allowed FedEx Supply Chain to overcome the tornadoes' devastation and the pandemic's challenges. AT&T delivered Managed AT&T VPN, AT&T Dedicated Internet, and voice services, helping the company quickly resume operations and continue to meet commitments to its customers.

The intersection of experience and innovation

Logistics is key to business optimization. Few companies are equipped to manage the complexity of today's supply chains. FedEx Supply Chain understands how to make each customer's business components work together.

Supply chains are an interconnected network of products, technology, and people. The comprehensive logistics solutions of FedEx Supply Chain cover sales, demand planning, fulfillment, and every other business component, making it easier for companies to focus on their core strengths.

Customers turn to FedEx Supply Chain to increase scalability, speed to market, and profitability. "Managing the supply chain, and particularly tracking inventory, can be extremely challenging," said Tim Carkin, FedEx Supply Chain IT Project Coordinator. "We handle that burden for our customers, so they can focus on what they do best."

FedEx Supply Chain has developed a strong reputation for delivering integrated supply chain solutions. The intersection of experience and innovation has made it a leader in value-added warehousing and logistics services.

Deadly destruction and a looming pandemic

Just as the coronavirus began its initial spread in the United States, Nashville sustained a deadly tornado outbreak. One of the tornadoes, the sixth costliest in U.S. history, caused widespread power outages and knocked out wireless and landline communications.

Bob Kauffman, FedEx Supply Chain IT Implementation Services Manager, said the storms destroyed one of their two Nashville business centers and damaged the second. "One center was completely leveled," he said. "Nothing was saved. And parts of the roof were ripped off the remaining building. All the circuits were down."

FedEx Supply Chain team members came together. They embodied their motto, Safety Above All, making sure all employees, vendors, and customers at each facility were safe and accounted.

However, the tornadoes struck just as COVID-19 had put pressure on FedEx Supply Chain and one of their largest technology customers. The customer was experiencing a surge in business as employees around the globe began working from home. "Every hour that their operations are down is money being lost," Kauffman said.

FedEx Supply Chain needed to resume operations quickly to fulfill thousands of orders for its customer and the other companies and individuals that were depending on it.

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>
> **Tim Carkin**
> IT Project Coordinator, FedEx Supply Chain

Back to business in record time

A relationship built on trust between FedEx Supply Chain and the account team from AT&T Business laid the foundation for a strong disaster response. FedEx Supply Chain was able to continue doing business in the aftermath of the devastation.

"After the tornadoes, we had to get business back up and running," Kauffman said. "We immediately reached out to let AT&T know what happened, and they were there for us. Our team came together, and people began working around the clock."

As AT&T started to stand up a temporary network, FedEx Supply Chain was able to secure a temporary lease on a nearby building. As a result, AT&T was able to implement a long-term solution that included Managed AT&T VPN, a network-based MPLS VPN solution that provides unmatched network security, privacy, and performance. AT&T also deployed AT&T Dedicated Internet service and voice services at the new location. FedEx Supply Chain was able to resume operations very quickly.

A well-designed network, including redundant data centers in the two FedEx Supply Chain buildings in Nashville, facilitated a quick return to operations. "We were able to recover the data pretty quickly," Kauffman said. "If we hadn't had a decent backup recovery plan for our customer's data facility, we would have been in a world of hurt."

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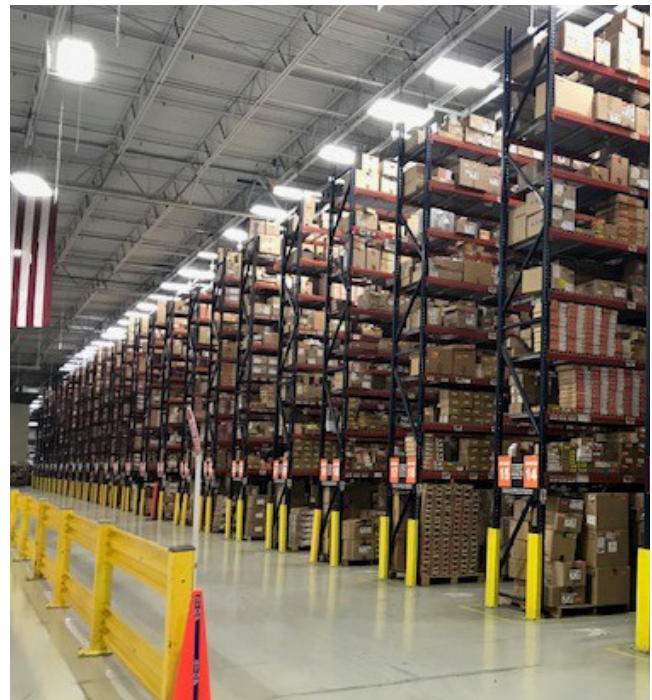
FedEx Supply Chain executives and the company's customers were pleased with the solution and the speed with which it was implemented. "Literally within three days we had the circuits up and running," Carkin said. "Normally, it's a 60-to-90-day process. I'm still pleasantly shocked about that."

Preparedness pays off

The investment in business continuity planning by FedEx Supply Chain paid off in the aftermath of the Nashville tornadoes. "Our IT group does a lot of disaster recovery planning and drills," Carkin said. "We have disaster recovery sites in data centers around the country."

FedEx Supply Chain was able to recreate the infrastructure it needed to support its large technology customer in record time. "We can put up brand-new buildings and new infrastructure, wiring, and circuits,"

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Kauffman said. "For this case, we got an entire operation up in two and a half months. That's probably one of our best records for a building of that size. We're thankful to AT&T for helping to make that happen."

Carkin said the speed of the recovery was the biggest benefit of working with AT&T. "Information services are the lifeblood of any operation," he said. "Whether it's logistics or hospitals or schools. AT&T was able to get our data services back up fast. They helped get us back into business in a situation where our building was literally destroyed by a tornado."
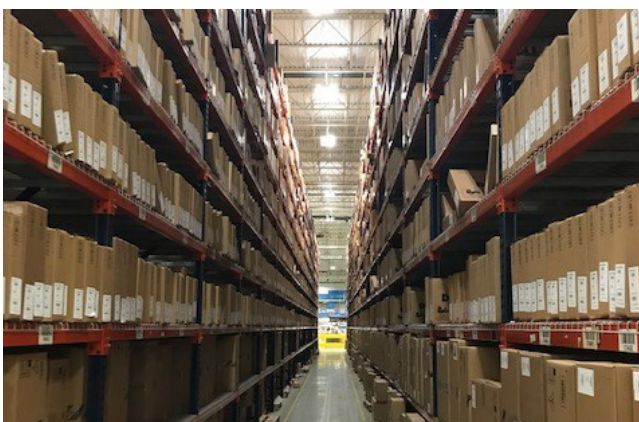
Managing demand during the pandemic

The solution also enabled FedEx Supply Chain to manage the new market demands of its technology customer due to COVID-19. "We had just begun addressing COVID when the tornadoes hit," Carkin said.

The pandemic meant that one of the largest technology customers of FedEx Supply Chain was inundated with orders for computers to support home-based workers and students learning remotely. The sudden demand had created a strain on the FedEx Supply Chain Data Center Network.

"It was really important to get them back up," Carkin said. "This really affected people's lives. They needed computers for communications, schooling, and working from home. All the things we know now are part of the new normal. That made it even more important to get them up and running as quickly as possible."

A key to ongoing success

AT&T upgraded the FedEx Supply Chain network within 24 hours. This process normally takes weeks or months. "That was a difficult time," Carkin said. "AT&T stepped up with quick assistance."

Thanks to its highly reliable infrastructure, FedEx Supply Chain continues to connect people and products globally to support customers' profitability, scalability, and speed to market. Its custom-tailored solutions create a supply chain that is a key to ongoing success.