

American Chain Spotlight

May 2026



HELLO MAY!

We welcome May with a lot of Global Uncertainty, the Tariff's that were imposed are now in the process of refunding. Oil prices are at record highs with little signs of recovery soon . The four year Transportation Recession seems to be behind us.

As you will read in this Spotlight, manufacturing is coming back to America and that is good for our members. We are targeting to take advantage of this .

Mexico has just passed China to be the number one exporter to United States and we are setting a strategy to position our members to take advantage of it.

I am proud of our team and their recent accomplishment to update our website to reflect the new direction ACWI is taking.

Bailey lead the efforts with assistance from Brandon. You can check it out here acwi.org .

Chris is headed to the WERC Conference in Jacksonville, Florida later this month, so please let him know if you are attending.

We continue our 115 anniversary celebration with monthly posts honoring our long history. Thanks to our new members joining and our sustaining members support.

Please feel free to reach out to the team members. Thank you.

Best regards,
Chris

**YOU CAN HAVE
EVERYTHING
IN LIFE YOU WANT,
IF YOU WILL JUST HELP
ENOUGH OTHER PEOPLE
GET WHAT THEY WANT.**

~ZIG ZIGLAR

ACWI QUARTERLY MEMBERS CONFERENCE CALL

**MAY 5TH , 2026
4:00PM EST**

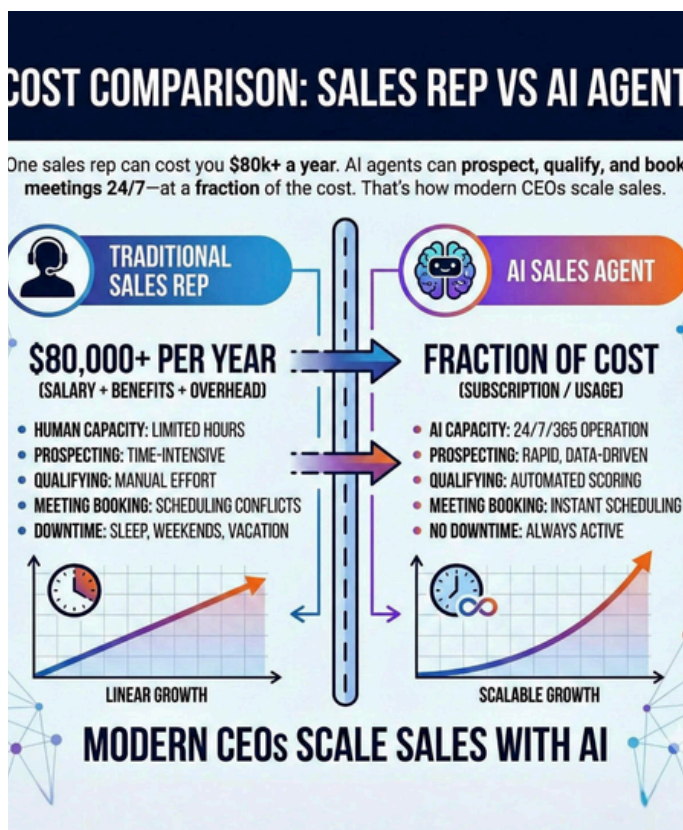


LINK WILL BE EMAILED

**OUR WEBSITE GOES LIVE ON
MAY 6TH!**

AI VS TRADITIONAL SALES

AI is reshaping how companies scale — offering 24/7 outreach, faster lead qualification, and lower cost structures. As adoption grows, businesses are rethinking how to balance human expertise with automation to drive more efficient growth.



INDUSTRIAL MOMENTUM

As ACWI celebrates its 115th anniversary, our team took a look back at our history and uncovered some fascinating advertisements. ACWI was founded 20 years after IWLA, which originally began as the American Warehouseman's Association. Below are two trade ads from 1900 and 1926 that highlight the early days of the industry.

January 2, 1926 THE TRAFFIC WORLD 3

American Chain of Warehouses, Inc.

ESTABLISHED 1911

MEMBERS

SHIPPERS
Ninety Warehouses offer your Sales and Traffic Departments Modern Facilities for your Storage Stocks and Experienced Organizations for the Handling and Distribution of your Merchandise.

American Chain of Warehouses serve all territories.

Call upon our nearest Representative for further information regarding facilities in any city:

STORAGE · MERCHANDISE · DISTRIBUTION

1925 Directory, with Full Information Regarding Facilities of Each Member, Available Upon Request

O. V. HUKILL, Eastern Representative
415 Greenwich Street
New York City

P. F. CASSIDY, Western Representative
203 S. Dearborn St., Room 905
Chicago, Ill.

VOL. XLV — No. 17. **The American Trade Journal** PRICE THREE CENTS

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1900. PRICE THREE CENTS

JOIN THE AMERICAN WAREHOUSEMAN'S ASSOCIATION

United for Better Storage — Stronger Business — Greater Progress

THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

- STANDARDS** — Promote uniformity and efficiency in warehouse operations.
- REPRESENTATION** — Your interests before legislative and regulatory bodies.
- INFORMATION** — Access to the latest methods, resources, and industry news.
- CONNECTIONS** — A network of warehousemen across the country, sharing experience and opportunity.

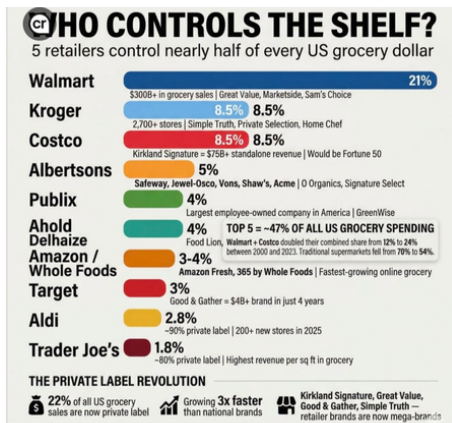
Whether you operate a single warehouse or a nationwide storage system—
YOU ARE STRONGER WITH THE ASSOCIATION

ROBOTICS IN MOTION: AUTOMATED FULFILLMENT AT SCALE

Zalando's latest warehouse showcases how far robotics has come, with automated systems now picking, moving, and fulfilling orders directly from shelves. As technology continues to advance, these solutions are reducing reliance on manual labor while increasing speed, accuracy, and scalability in modern fulfillment operations.

Learn more here: <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DW4qoJCDOYi/>

SHELF POWER: WHO CONTROLS THE GROCERY DOLLAR



Control of shelf space is more concentrated than ever. Just a handful of retailers account for a significant share of U.S. grocery spending, with private label growth continuing to reshape the landscape. For warehouses and logistics providers, this level of consolidation means fewer decision makers but larger, more complex supply chain demands.

SMARTER INVENTORY

Hershey is leveraging advanced supply chain technology to enhance visibility and automate decision-making across its operations. By using real-time data to better align sourcing, production, and distribution, the company aims to reduce inventory by \$100 million while improving overall efficiency and responsiveness.

Source: <https://www.supplychaindive.com/news/hershey-100m-inventory-cut-supply-chain-tech/816785/>

Antone Gonsalves
Reporter

Share License Add us on Google



Hershey milk chocolate candy bars are displayed on a store shelf on May 3, 2024, in San Anselmo, Calif. Hershey's technology is helping the company detect changes in supply and demand. Justin Sullivan via Getty Images

HUMANITARIAN LOGISTICS GAPS

A 2026 analysis highlights a major gap between the growing complexity of global disasters and the ability of organizations to respond efficiently. Many still struggle with coordination, funding, and execution, despite logistics being critical to delivering aid. Over 80% of organizations report challenges managing logistics activities, from transportation to warehousing and partner coordination. The report emphasizes that improving planning, technology adoption, and overall "logistics readiness" is key to strengthening response efforts.

Source: <https://www.alanaid.org/2026-analysis-of-humanitarian-logistics-survey/>

U.S. “STEALTH” MANUFACTURING BOOM



The U.S. is experiencing a quiet manufacturing rebound, with output and shipments increasing even as factory employment remains relatively flat. Growth is being driven by high-value sectors like AI, semiconductors, and aerospace, where productivity and technology are leading expansion rather than workforce size.

This shift highlights a new reality: manufacturing is becoming more efficient and less labor-intensive, meaning companies are producing more with fewer workers while relying on advanced technology to scale operations.

Source: <https://www.wsj.com/economy/america-is-in-the-middle-of-a-stealth-manufacturing-boom-af0702af>

STANDING OUT IN A CROWDED MARKET

A recent breakdown of over 5,000 trade show exhibit evaluations highlights a simple reality: most companies blend in—and get ignored.

The difference between exhibitors who generate real leads and those who don't comes down to clarity, positioning, and how well they communicate value. It's not about being the biggest booth—it's about being the most memorable and intentional.

In today's market, showing up isn't enough. Companies that win are the ones that differentiate, communicate clearly, and give people a reason to stop.

Source: From Booth to Breakthrough – Supply Chain Exhibitor Insights (YouTube)

INDUSTRIAL MARKET REALITY CHECK

The warehouse market remains tenant-favorable overall, especially for mid-size facilities, but the dynamics are becoming more nuanced.

Leasing activity is strong among larger, creditworthy companies, though decision-making is slower due to internal complexity. Meanwhile, concessions like free rent and tenant improvements remain attractive, even as base rents hold steady.

A major tension in the market: newer Class A developments are sitting vacant. Many landlords are choosing not to lease below projected rates, effectively waiting for rents to rise rather than resetting asset values.

Supply and demand are expected to tighten, with projections showing demand outpacing new deliveries through 2026-2027, which could drive rent growth upward.

At the same time, long-term pressures are building:

- Zoning restrictions and community pushback limiting new supply
- Data centers competing for land, pushing warehouse development aside
- Power availability emerging as a critical factor in site selection

The result is a market that feels tenant-friendly today but is quietly setting up for future supply constraints and rising rents.

Source: Market insights + Ports Report Summary

RETHINKING WAREHOUSE AUTOMATION

Traditional warehouse automation strategies are being challenged by today's multi-channel fulfillment demands, where operations must support e-commerce, retail, and wholesale simultaneously.

Instead of relying on a single system, companies are now evaluating different automation approaches based on flexibility, throughput, and operational fit. The shift reflects a new priority: building systems that can adapt to complexity while maintaining speed, accuracy, and scalability.

Source: <https://progressivegrocer.com/rethinking-warehouse-automation-multi-channel-world-0>

3PL MARKETING EFFICIENCY SPLIT



A new benchmark shows a widening gap in how effectively 3PLs are converting marketing spend into pipeline. In Q4 2025, results diverged sharply between top and bottom performers, with some companies generating significantly stronger returns than others.

The median company produced just \$4.84 in pipeline per \$1 spent, while higher-performing firms far exceeded that, highlighting how a small group is pulling ahead with more effective, repeatable strategies. The takeaway: outcomes in the same market are becoming increasingly unequal based on execution.

Source: <https://www.freightwaves.com/news/3pl-marketing-spend-efficiency-diverged-dramatically-in-q4-leadcoverage>

3PL GROWTH IS SHIFTING

3PL adoption has nearly maxed out at the top, with 99% of Fortune 100 companies using 3PLs. Growth is now shifting to the mid-market and smaller shippers, who are entering with simpler needs.

At the same time, large enterprises still have room to expand services, creating two paths forward: deeper partnerships at the top and new customers at the bottom.

Source: Armstrong & Associates, Convergence 2026 Report



A&A INSIGHTS

Your 3PL Market Pulse

WORKFORCE RISK IS RISING



A warehouse fire causing an estimated \$600 million in damage highlights a growing and often overlooked risk: employee disgruntlement.

The incident, tied to a frustrated worker, shows how unresolved issues around pay and working conditions can escalate beyond disengagement into real operational threats.

The takeaway:

Most disengaged employees simply check out—but when frustration turns into active resentment, it can pose serious risks to safety, operations, and the bottom line.

Source: Forbes - “The \$600 Million Fire And The Hidden Risk Of Employee Disgruntlement”

FLOW OVER SPACE

Traditional vs Flow-Optimized Warehousing

Metric	Traditional Warehouse	Flow-Optimized Warehouse
Inventory View	Asset to be stored	Signal of flow health
Operational Speed	Slower due to congestion	Faster due to clear aisles
Flexibility	Trapped by lease	Elastic scale

Many warehouses believe they have a space problem—but in reality, it’s a flow problem.

Warehouses are dynamic environments where product should move efficiently. When layout and processes aren’t optimized for movement, congestion builds and capacity feels tight, even when space still exists.

The takeaway:

Focusing on flow—how product moves through the facility—can unlock more capacity and efficiency than simply adding more space.

Source: Jonathan N. Brooks - Warehousing Flow vs. Space Problem

NO GOING BACK

Supply chains haven’t just changed—they’ve permanently shifted.

Disruption is no longer temporary or cyclical. It’s now the operating environment, where volatility is constant and predictability is limited. Companies that are still built around stability and long planning cycles are increasingly out of sync with how the world actually works.

Source: Luis Solana - “Supply Chains Have Crossed a Point of No Return”

WEBINAR

Marketing has long been overlooked in logistics—often treated as an afterthought instead of a growth driver. Many companies rely on strong operations alone, assuming execution will bring business. But in today’s competitive and volatile market, that approach creates gaps.

Without a clear marketing strategy, companies struggle to differentiate, scale consistently, or adapt to shifting demand. Many leaders also don’t know what to ask for, leading to wasted spend or missed opportunities.

The shift is clear:

Marketing is no longer a “nice to have”—it’s becoming a core function that drives visibility, growth, and long-term positioning.

Source: [youtube.com/watch?si=Ou5-jnwr_J8a-UNo&v=KpzTttrX_Q&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?si=Ou5-jnwr_J8a-UNo&v=KpzTttrX_Q&feature=youtu.be)