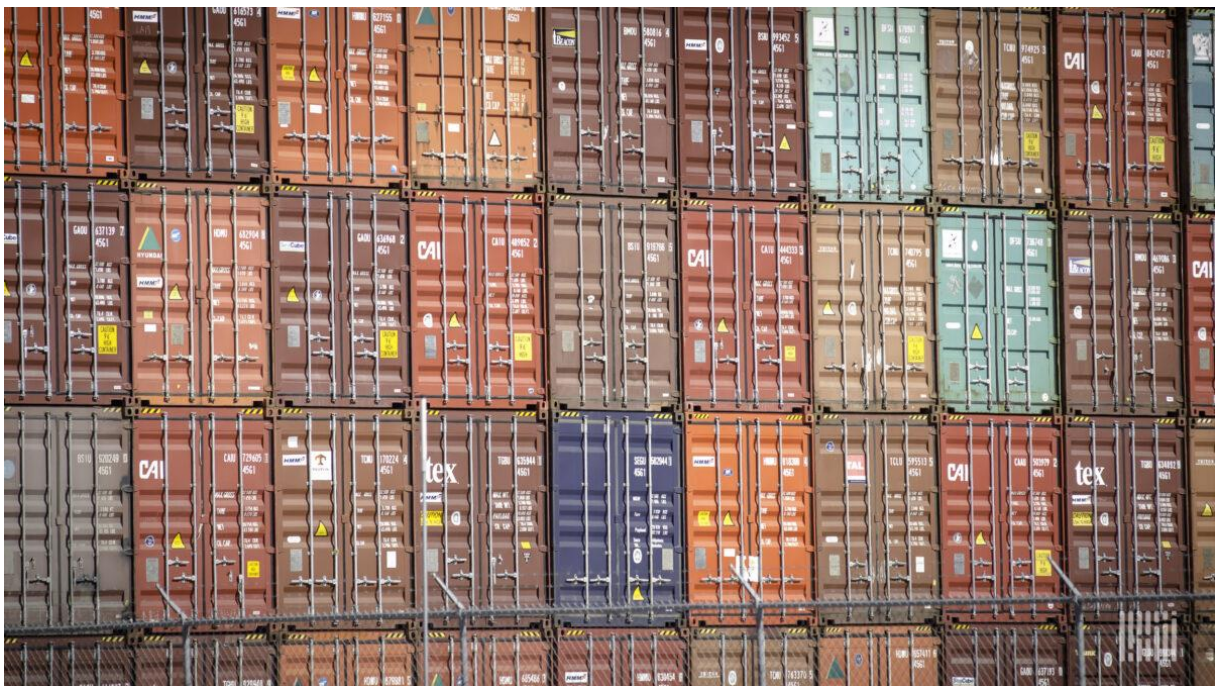# FreightTech Friday: Collaboration is the answer to supply-chain woes, says Beacon

TruckParkingClub.com hits a milestone, and Grip provides a new fulfillment offering

[Grace Sharkey](#)

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Beacon CEO discusses the importance of collaboration. (Photo: Jim Allen/FreightWaves)

Before founding collaboration software Beacon, CEO Fraser Davidson's natural curiosity about how food, people and products are moved across the world came from a stint at Uber.

After seeing the hurdles of building Uber products, Davidson started talking with supply-chain companies about the challenges of global trade.

In an interview with FreightWaves, Davidson shares his startup experience, detailing the problems [Beacon](#) is helping shippers solve and what the future of FreightTech looks like for our industry.

Questions and answers were edited for clarity and length.

FREIGHTWAVES: What problems did you observe in supply chains that led you to found Beacon?

DAVIDSON: There were two things I observed. Again and again I would hear the same themes — rarely did they have a full picture of what was going on in their supply chain. They spend most of their time chasing people around trying to figure out what's going on. That is often why customers would complain of terrible service, but it was something that seemed normal for most people working in the space.

I started to get the broad-stroke view of supply chains as being opaque, lacking transparency, with people working in the space hoping that everything would just work out in the end.

But that can't work anymore because the other problem is e-commerce. The problem now is Amazon and a one-click, same-day delivery. None of it can function in the way that customers expect in an opaque world.

FREIGHTWAVES: E-commerce isn't going away anytime soon. How is Beacon addressing these issues?

DAVIDSON: We cannot change consumer behavior. I think that behavior really is something that we all have to take responsibility for because it's also human nature.

Human nature was at the work we did at Uber. Often, if you ask Travis Kalanick what the root of success was for Uber, he would say that it was all built around the fact that consumers are fundamentally lazy and seek more and more convenience. We want things faster, cheaper and in good quality, and that is just not sustainable.

So we started building a freight forwarding platform with that in mind and working toward eliminating the opaqueness through collaboration, something that we observed was happening more in the tech industry in general.

You have Figma for designers, Jira for engineers, and other common workplace tools such as Google Docs and Slack.

We took a step back and had a realization that the supply chain is in many ways the ultimate collaboration problem because you've got fragmented groups of people in different countries working with different companies, all working with a common goal.

Beacon has centralized all the data, all the communications, and now we can open up the conversation for automation.

Collaboration is also going to take customization. The primary use case for our product was the internal team being able to log in and create a custom board that shows shippers everything that is arriving into Long Beach.

Suddenly, Long Beach's team is asking for a different type of view as well.

So now that we have the visibility data and communication data combined, we can create this custom social network of collaborators, binding operations together.

FREIGHTWAVES: How do you see automation and AI working its way into Beacon's technology?

DAVIDSON: Once all the conversations about freight and the data are living in the same place, automating and implementing AI becomes more natural because then the AI is just making recommendations in the communications channel.

First, we need to get people working together correctly. It's going to need a fundamental shift in how people work together in the supply chain. That is what is actually broken.

Related: [GoodShip raises $8M to ramp up procurement platform features](#)

Brief Bytes

TruckParkingClub.com announced Monday that it has surpassed 400 property member locations, offering thousands of instantly reservable truck parking spaces nationwide. Addressing the critical truck parking shortage, this milestone highlights the platform's ability to add parking capacity quickly. Traditional truck parking construction is expensive and slow, costing $100,000-$200,000 per space. TruckParkingClub.com's rapid growth, adding hundreds of spaces weekly, provides a scalable solution to that problem. Co-founder and CEO Evan Shelley credits the team's dedication for this achievement and aims for continued expansion. Read more FreightWaves articles about TruckParkingClub.com [here](#).

Fulfillment technology provider **Grip** recently [introduced](#) Pulse, an order management system tailored for direct-to-consumer brands dealing with frozen and refrigerated items. Pulse offers real-time inventory management, live carrier tracking, and multidirectional updates with Shopify and other POS systems. Integrating with Grip's fulfillment centers, Pulse provides comprehensive operational insights, slashing shipping costs by up to 30%

and reducing failure rates by 25%, according to the company. Read more FreightWaves articles about Grip [here](#).

Manifold Freight, a Seattle-based spot freight software startup, secured $1.9 million in seed funding on Monday to enhance spot freight opportunities for carriers. Founded by ex-Convoy leaders Andrew Huff and Oliver Jones, Manifold aims to optimize ad hoc shipment pickups. The funding round was led by New Stack and Y Combinator, with Manifold recently graduating from Y Combinator. Leveraging their extensive industry experience, Huff and Jones seek to streamline operations in the $800 billion freight industry, boosting carrier profitability and improving shipper service.