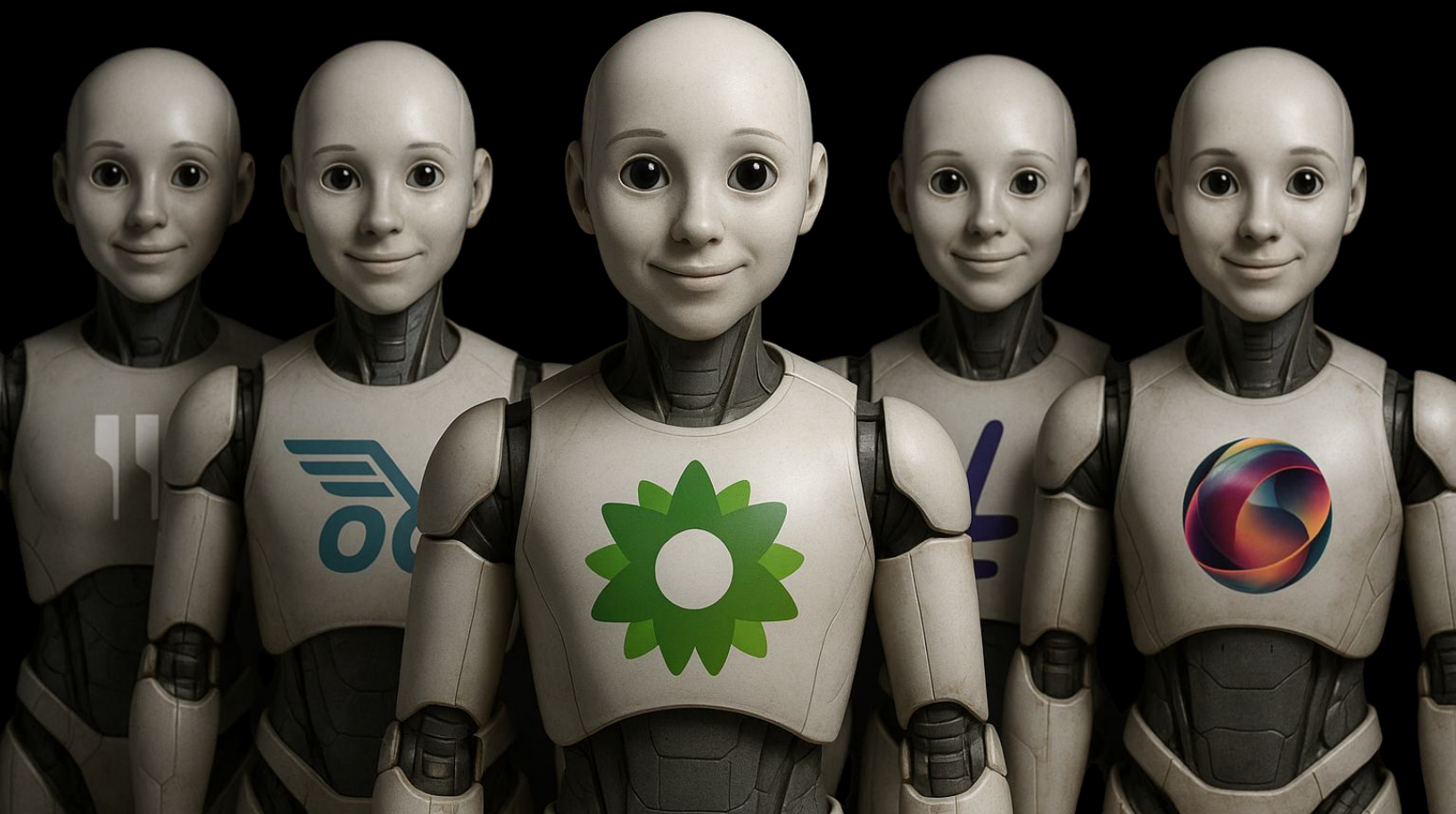


# arrival.

THE AGE OF AI IS HERE.  
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE LOGISTICS SPACE?





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**03** NOTE FROM THE CEO

**04** Q2 REWIND

**05** ARRIVAL:  
THE AGE OF AI IS HERE.

**07** RISK, REWRITTEN

**09** HOPLITE SPOTLITE:  
PETER CASANOVA

---

# A NOTE FROM THE CEO:

## RICH KRUL

---



Someone asked me recently—half-joking, half-sarcastic—“*So, are we having fun yet?*” While we both laughed at this because of the general grind of logistics and business ownership and all of the other fun things that life throws at us, I couldn't help but reply truthfully.

*"Actually, I really am."*

If this experience has made one thing clear, it's that I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be. Logistics is home for me. I'll be in this industry for life, in some capacity or another. I've found my people—wired just like me. And we're all nuts.

We're proud of what we've built at Hoplite. The support from so many of you has meant the world to us. It inspires the team to go the extra mile every day. We push a little further, communicate a little faster, and think a little deeper as a result. And so far, it's been a winning formula. We're very excited to see the growth so far and where this ride will take us next.

Are we having fun yet?

You bet your ass we are.

Thank you—truly.



# Q2 REWIND

LOOKING BACK, DRIVING FORWARD



# arrival.

**From repetitive tasks to predictive insights, the AI wave is crashing into freight—and the smartest brokerages are already riding it.**

The freight world has always been defined by hustle—tight deadlines, relentless problem-solving, and phones that never stop ringing. But for the first time in decades, that cadence is beginning to shift. Automation and AI aren't just buzzwords anymore; they're operational realities. From email triage to predictive pricing and workflow optimization, artificial intelligence is starting to handle the grind—so brokers can finally get back to brokering.

At the center of this movement are startups like HappyRobot, FleetWorks, Levity, CloneOps, and Vooma. Each of them is taking a swing at reshaping how freight gets moved. But at Hoplite, we chose to bet on **Augment**—a company quickly building one of the most advanced agentic AI systems in the game.

We sat down with **Justin Hall**, Chief Commercial Officer at Augment, to understand where this revolution is headed—and why he believes the companies that adopt AI early will define the next generation of logistics.

## "We're Building Teammates, Not Tools."

*"I was a skeptic at first," Justin told us. "But when I saw what agentic AI could do—when I saw how it could operate like a junior employee, learn over time, and eventually become the most knowledgeable teammate in the room—I knew this was going to change everything."* What Augment is building

isn't just automation. It's an AI assistant, nicknamed "Augie," that observes, remembers, and learns from every shipment, email, load note, and SOP it touches. The long-term goal? Give every rep in the industry a digital teammate that never forgets a detail, never calls in sick, and only gets smarter over time.

*"Right now, the average rep spends their day buried in 500 emails, juggling six platforms, and barely touching the work that matters—optimization, analysis, and shipper strategy," Justin explained. "Our mission is simple: take 80–90% of that tedium off their plate so they can be logisticians again."*



“The people who wait a few quarters to ‘see how it plays out’ are going to lose. Companies like Hoplite are already doing the work. And when AI fully matures, they’ll be lightyears ahead.”

- Augment CCO Justin Hall

## Why Hoplite Bet on Augment

When Hoplite was launched, we made a conscious decision to do more with less. That's why the name was chosen—Hoplite warriors were small, agile, and tactical. They punched above their weight through discipline and teamwork.

*"We felt like we demoed everything,"* said our co-founder Rich Krul. *"There are a lot of solid players out there, but Augment felt different. Their team's experience, their vision—it just aligned. We could feel that they were building for what's next, and it would help us scale much more efficiently."*

We're now deploying Augie to help streamline customer service, carrier operations, and internal workflows—starting with some of the lowest-hanging fruit and building toward full back-office automation. As Justin put it, *"We want to serve every shipment, every mode, every workflow—from order to cash."*

“ There are a lot of solid players out there, but Augment felt different. Their team's experience, their vision—it just aligned. We could feel that they were building for what's next, and it would help us scale much more efficiently.”

~ Hoplite CEO Rich Krul ”

## The ROI Can Be Personal

AI isn't just about margin enhancement (though that's part of it). It's about reclaiming time and purpose. *"The people we're building for—call them the Christinas and Johnnys of the world—are commuting at 5am, answering a thousand emails a day, and burning out,"* said Justin. *"And at the end of that 12-hour day, they never touched the strategic work they were hired to do."*

At Hoplite, we believe fixing that matters. Not just for efficiency, but for culture. Our

goal is to give our team real work-life balance, and AI is one tool that can help us get there.

## A Competitive Edge

There's no doubt we've been in a freight recession. Margins are tight, volumes are inconsistent, and cost-to-serve is under the microscope. But while some companies are waiting for market conditions to improve, others are building systems that will make them twice as efficient when the rebound hits.

*"The people who wait a few quarters to 'see how it plays out' are going to lose,"* said Justin. *"Companies like Hoplite are already doing the work. And when AI fully matures, they'll be lightyears ahead."*

To us, that's not speculation-- it's preparation.



**Augment** is a logistics-focused AI company developing agent-based tools that assist with repetitive and operational tasks in freight brokerage, shipping, and carrier management. Its platform is designed to integrate with existing systems to help teams save time, improve accuracy, and retain institutional knowledge. You can reach their team at [www.goaugment.com](http://www.goaugment.com).

# RISK, REWRITTEN.

When we talk about trailblazers in our industry, there's really only one name that comes up when it comes to Mexico insurance: Mark Vickers.

From launching Borderless Coverage to shaping the industry standard at Reliance Partners, Mark's passion and deep expertise have helped carriers, brokers, and shippers mitigate risk and build safer, more streamlined cross-border programs.

We were lucky enough to have Mark on our podcast, The Ramp Up. Here are some key takeaways from that conversation:



**Bryan Rekowski:** You mentioned you have shippers as clients. How are you currently working with them?

**Mark Vickers:** We really just standardize things for them. We'll go to the shipper and lock in pricing and terms, so they know that no matter who they're using, they're going to get all-risk coverage in Mexico. Then their logistics partners get those same rates, which standardizes how claims are resolved, how pricing is handled—really all risk management across the board. That, to me, is the gold standard right now for shippers doing business in Mexico: to mandate a borderless coverage program.

**Bryan:** How does a shipper decide whether to hold a Mexico coverage policy themselves or require their provider to carry it?

**Mark:** Usually, a shipper will want to try us out first. They'll start with a few trusted motor carriers or brokers they've worked with for years, and have us provide coverage on a few lanes—typically those where they know there are theft hotspots. Once they get a feel for it, they'll want coverage across more of their network. But an

annual Mexico cargo insurance policy can be expensive, so it's often more cost-effective for a freight broker to buy the coverage—or for the shipper to buy policies only on high-risk lanes or with select carriers. It's a balance between risk and cost.

**Rich Krul:** How have policies changed since you launched Borderless Coverage?

**Mark:** The first version of our product didn't include theft and had a high deductible. For it to really work, I had to get the deductible down—ideally under \$5,000, and even better under \$1,000. I also had to include theft.

One of the key things I had to negotiate out of the policy was the requirement that Mexican carriers have \$100,000 in cargo insurance. Most Mexican carriers don't have any coverage at all—they're only required by law to carry a few cents per pound. So the policies never paid out.

We eliminated that language entirely. Now, we only work with underwriters who agree to that. We've dropped the deductible, added all-risk protection (*including theft and even acts of God*),

and brought pricing down. Even though theft is up, the cost isn't what it used to be—because the volume of cross-border freight has grown so much.

**Rich:** What would you recommend as a best practice for shippers just starting out in Mexico?

**Mark:** Overlay everything you're doing with a borderless coverage solution to make sure cargo is insured at full value. That way, you're not relying on a waiver of liability.

What a shipper's interest cross-border policy does is force carriers, brokers, and shippers to work better together in a claim scenario. Before, if a load was stolen, the shipper would call the broker, who'd say, "Well, you signed a waiver," and the shipper would still expect accountability. Then the broker would call the carrier, and it would turn into a finger-pointing contest.

A true all-risk shipper's interest program in Mexico—especially one that includes theft—eliminates that. It forces collaboration. And when something goes wrong, the shipper gets a check for the full amount.

**Bryan:** What needs to change to get theft under control?

**Mark:** Look at Kenya—they passed a law requiring motor carriers to carry a minimum level of cargo insurance. I don't see that happening in Mexico anytime soon, but if the country wants to capitalize on this nearshoring wave and become a true manufacturing powerhouse, policy and infrastructure need to evolve.

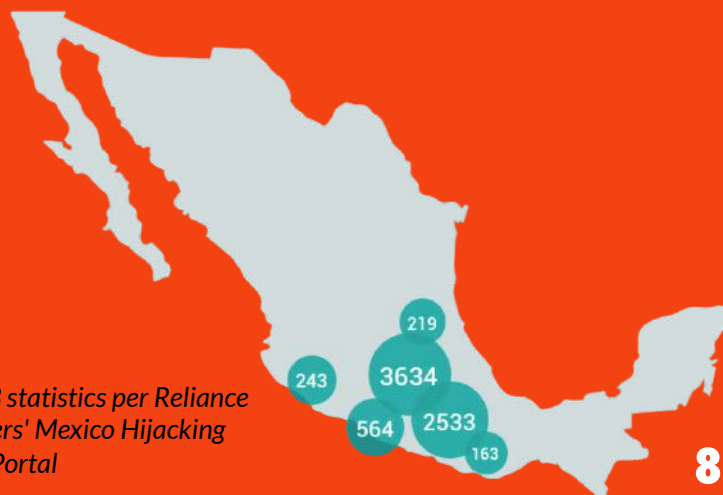
President Claudia Sheinbaum needs to get serious about trucking insurance requirements. Until that happens, a lot of companies are going to hesitate before expanding their footprint in Mexico.

It would be a game changer—not just for Mexico, but for the U.S.-Mexico freight relationship as a whole—if a mandatory cargo insurance law were put into place.



## MEXICO CARGO HIJACKING DATA\*

- In 2023 Mexico recorded 7,862 violent cargo truck hijackings, up 3% compared to 2022.
- Overall, during 2023, Mexico's northern border states accounted for less than 1% of the total number of hijackings, while the central Mexican states of Mexico State, Puebla, and Michoacan accounted for 86%.
- In Puebla, the number of hijackings increased by 45% compared to 2022.
- The border states with the highest incidence of hijacking are Nuevo Leon (49) and Baja California (12).
- Two other hotspots to watch are Veracruz and Oaxaca where hijackings are up 58% and 26% compared to 2022.



\*2023 statistics per Reliance Partners' Mexico Hijacking Data Portal



For more information, visit Mark and his team at [www.borderlesscoverage.com](http://www.borderlesscoverage.com)



# HOPLITE SPOTLITE



## PETER CASANOVA

Freight & Fairway Finder



Meet **Peter Casanova**, seller extraordinaire and Day One Hoplite hire. Peter is always cool under pressure, builds extremely tight bonds with his customers, and consistently finds the fairway off the tee each weekend. We highlight him for Q3 as our **HOPLITE SPOTLITE!**

**Q: Tell us a little about yourself.**

**Peter Casanova:** I'm a Minnesota native, born and raised in Lino Lakes. I headed north for college at the University of Minnesota Duluth, which was a perfect fit for my love of the outdoors. Leaving the scenery in Duluth wasn't easy, but I've since settled in northeast Minneapolis, where I've been diving into the local brewery and restaurant scene. It's been a blast exploring everything the city has to offer, especially when good food and great beer are involved.

**Q: How did you get into logistics?**

**PC:** A friend of mine was working at Coyote and insisted I had to check it out. I decided to explore the opportunity, went in for an interview—and the rest is history. I began my journey in Carrier Sales, and about a year in, transitioned into Customer Sales. I'd always been drawn to sales but didn't fully anticipate how challenging and rewarding the logistics side would be. It's been a very fulfilling ride ever since.

**Q: What is the most rewarding thing about your role?**

**PC:** For me, it's all about creating satisfaction. There's something incredibly fulfilling about seeing a product move through each phase of the process, and then knowing I played a key role in making it happen. Walking into a store and spotting an item I helped deliver gives me an undeniable sense of pride. But the best part is knowing that people are enjoying those products because of the work I put in.

**Q: What is the ideal shipper or customer you like to work with?**

**PC:** I enjoy working with customers who move products I'm genuinely passionate about—especially if those products overlap with my personal interests or hobbies. It makes the collaboration feel more meaningful and energizing. I also value partners who bring industry experience to the table and understand the highs and lows of logistics. When they've navigated the ebb and flow of the market themselves, it creates a sense of mutual respect and a smoother partnership.

### QUICK HITS

 MINNEAPOLIS, MN

 SENIOR SALES EXECUTIVE

 JANUARY 2024

### WHY SHOULD A SHIPPER WORK WITH HOPLITE?

“At Hoplite, we treat every customer like they're our only one...” ”

**Q: What made you decide to work at Hoplite?**

**PC:** It all came down to the people, the team and the Founders. From the moment I connected with Rich and Bryan in my first interview, it was clear we shared the same mindset and drive. The talent at Hoplite was impossible to ignore, and the vision they had for building something special—especially the culture—made it a no-brainer. I knew I wanted to be part of that journey from day one.

**Q: Why should a customer work with Hoplite?**

**PC:** At Hoplite, we treat every customer like they're our only one. Our team is made up of seasoned logistics people who live and breathe supply chain. One of our biggest strengths is cross-border, especially with our dedicated team in Mexico, who help make the process nice and smooth for everyone. We always put the customer first and I think that's something to be proud of.

**Q: What do you like to do outside of work?**

**PC:** If I had it my way, I'd be out on the golf course every day. It's one of those endlessly addicting games I know I'll be chasing mastery in for life. I'm also a huge Minnesota sports fan—especially the Vikings and the Wild—but I've been all in on the Timberwolves ever since Anthony Edwards joined the team. Beyond sports, I spend a lot of time exploring with my dog, Winnie. Whether we're heading up north for hunting trips or just wandering around the neighborhood, she's my constant companion and makes every adventure better. Dogs really are man's best friend—and Winnie proves it every day.



**CATCH US ON...**

# THE RAMP UP

The Ramp Up is a Podcast by Hoplite Logistics detailing their journey from a pre-launch startup as a Logistics brokerage.

Co-Founders Rich Krul and Bryan Rekowski share their perspective as the business has continued to evolve, while also talking with industry professionals about every aspect of growing a business.

POWERED BY  
**HOPLITE**  
LOGISTICS



# MEET THE HOPLITE TEAM





***H*HOPLITE**  
— LOGISTICS