

The buzz about Roambee

Roambee's GPS portable, rugged trackers are enterprise grade and designed to monitor goods in the supply chain for multiple industry sectors. Muthanna, General Manager, Roambee Solutions tells us more about its real-time tracking and telematics solutions



Muthanna, General Manager, Roambee Solutions, is upbeat about his company's technological applications and industry solutions especially for the chemicals, automotive, F&B and pharma sectors as he makes the case for his company's indigenous technologies in telematics and vehicular technologies.

"For the automotive industry our services enable multiple real-time solutions. Examples include the tracking of vehicles from the manufacturing factory to all their dealer locations, predicting ETA (expected time of arrivals) for deliveries of all raw materials to improve JIT (just in time) and JIS (just in sequence) inventory, and management real-time vehicle inventory at VPCs (vehicle processing centres)," explains Muthanna.

"Additionally, real-time condition monitoring of shipments ensures safety and damage, tamper, and theft-free transportation of hazardous, high-value, or fragile items such as batteries, engines, glass and other materials," he continues.

Since Roambee sensors also identify 'shock' impact in real-time they are used for the condition monitoring and tracking of fragile items transported in re-usable containers such as bins, totes between hubs.



“For food and beverage Roambee offers better control and manage inventory through ‘virtual zone-level’ monitoring in warehouses through door to door delivery with real-time tracking of from containers to individual shipments, electronic proof of delivery (on ePod), time and quality reporting, and predictive ETA,” says Muthanna.

“For pharma many of the advantages, solutions, and benefits outlined earlier may also be applied to the goods, assets, and needs for pharma, especially with regards to cold-chain monitoring and risk mitigation,” continues Muthanna.

Tracking ability

Roambee Bees are unique in the following ways asserts Muthanna. “Bees have a sensor platform that includes temperature, humidity, tilt, shock, ambient light, motion, and pressure, all in one package that most market devices can’t begin to compare to. Plus, none have the additional end-to-end integrated visibility solution or on-demand business model that Roambee has,” claims Muthanna.

Roambee supports three communications protocols whether cellular, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and works indoors, outdoors, and in-transit with a high level of location accuracy due to its high performance active antenna. They have battery life of 100 days when transmitting at one-hour intervals.

Furthermore, bees are portable and can be shipped through common postal carriers, specialised courier services, as well certified for airline transport on many carriers. Roambee’s global sim allows bees to function in 190 countries.

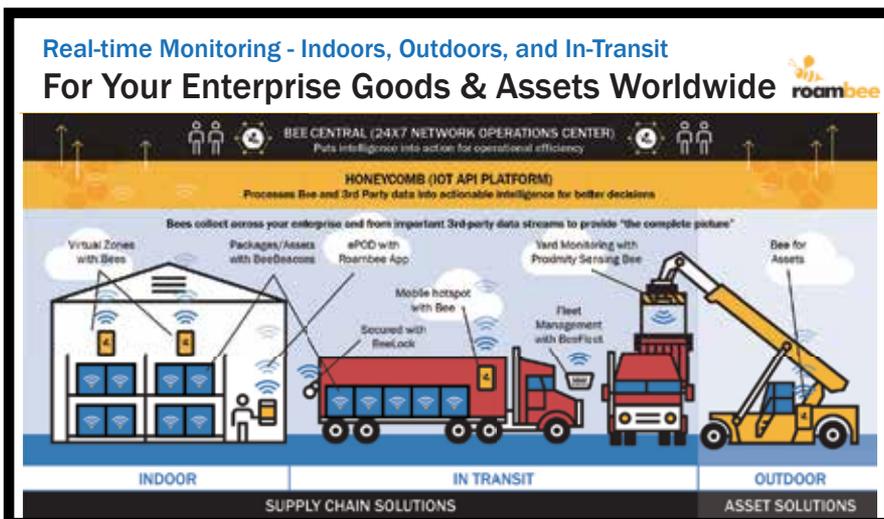
“Bees are a two-way communication device, which allows Roambee to push new software or gather specific diagnostics if a device ever goes ‘rogue’. Bees have a variety of operating modes, which makes the device suitable for road, rail, air, ocean, or multi-modal shipments. Also, bees are certified ‘flight safe’, switching off automatically at certain altitudes, retaining important reporting data, then sending that data when Bees re-enter an approved altitude,” Muthanna points out.

Additionally, the Roambee portfolio includes BeeBeacon which extend the Bee’s capability in by adding granular level tracking and monitoring capability

For chemicals, Roambee’s real-time cold chain monitoring solutions works indoors, outdoors, and in transit for end-to-end visibility. “Real-time monitoring alerts customers to issues and variances in temperature, humidity, or tampering thereby allowing them to take action before the issues with goods and assets become expensive problems,” Muthanna elucidates.

From bulk container to individual packages, Roambee’s solutions keep companies informed with insights on prediction of theft risk hazard and spoilage risk, predictive ETA for all deliveries from hub to forward locations, as well as tracking of reusable containers between hubs.

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and BeeFleet, designed especially for fleets inventory management and optimisation.

Operating systems

Roambee's platform is cloud-based and simple to use. Right out of the box, it integrates with most ERP systems, using the brand's open APIs (application programming interface). Also, the Roambee portal allows cross-team and multiple real-time access of information to multiple team members.

Customer data is secure and private, complying with strict geo laws around data management. Since it is an on-demand service, there is no upfront CAPEX (capital expenditure) investment in hardware, software, or data connectivity.

Applications and upgrades

"Roambee's software is as simple to use as Facebook and WhatsApp, and the company has made it easy to ramp up quickly through Roambee's tools and portal. Training is often accomplished through an on-line on-boarding call, but can also be done on-site at companies' facilities around the world if needed," asserts.

According to him, to date, response has been very favourable, as evidenced by our steady growth of business across broad range of businesses around the world. The company is highly responsive to customer input and values customer feedback, especially with regards to challenges they may be unique facing.

As a case in point for example Muthanna indicated that customers told the company that feature releases need to be faster than what the marketplace offers, so Roambee now offers updated cloud releases every four weeks.

"Customers said they want to be able to upgrade firmware over the air, so Roambee now uses its two-way communication capability to support this need. At the customers' requests, Roambee is currently working on greater localisation of software for unique regional needs around the world," says Muthanna.

Internally, based on the real-time data, Roambee recognised a customer need for actionable information, both current and future, in addition to the real-time alerts. So the company developed proprietary pattern and predictive analytics

to identify and flag disruptions and risks in their current supply chain.

In Muthanna's opinion although Roambee is relatively new to the Middle East, reception in this region has been good thus far.

"I recently had the pleasure of meeting more than 30 of Dubai's industry leaders at a Roambee-hosted event. They said that better, real-time supply chain visibility is critical to collaborative and transparent operations, which in turn are critical to the UAE initiatives around growth and globalisation. Given our strong credentials, Roambee technology seems ideally suited to address needs," avers Muthanna.

Industry in the Middle East is well poised to embrace **IoT (Internet of Things)** in the supply chain and logistics. This is especially true given the need for cold-chain monitoring as well multi-modal global capability given the huge number of ports and airports moving goods and assets in, out, and across the country. "Also, last-mile delivery visibility is a critical consideration now in terms of meeting customer demands and service expectations," notes Muthanna.

"The business and supply chain landscape is rapidly changing, and businesses understand they need to be faster, more transparent, and better informed to stay competitive," he concludes. ■

Why Roambee?

Roambee's roaming technologies have the ability to go anywhere in the world. "Bee" because bees are hardworking, diligent, and work together for the good of the Hive. Their role as pollinators is critical to the success of the ecosystem, connecting a wide variety of plants and animals and being a part of their collective health, growth, and success.





New roles for container lines in e-commerce

Container lines must adapt or another entity will step in to fill the need. The opportunities for sea cargo lines lie in their ability to break away from homogenisation of their services and their brands. Tom Craig, President, LTD Management, discusses the need to develop and implement transportation solutions that work for ocean carriers

Container lines are an important and an integral part of international logistics and the trade network. Yet they can be vulnerable and also be a weak link and player in supply chains, especially with e-commerce supply chains that require velocity and dependability. They are subject to supply chain erosion and are susceptible to performance risk. This situation is not new, but its impact has increased with e-commerce.

Container lines formulate prices around ports and port services providers. It is part of the commoditisation of the service. What if they instead charged based on transit time and schedule reliability? It would elevate ocean carriers' role. Additionally, it would create the much-needed differentiation for them and help customers to manage inventory velocity. It would distinguish customers and buyers, rate chasers from service chasers. It could also provide indirect assistance for vessel planning and utilisation.

The challenge is more muddled. There are two buyers of sea freight - forwarders, OTIs (Ocean Transport Intermediaries)

and BCOs (Beneficial Cargo Owners). As a result of a devil's bargain made years ago, buyers and sellers traded rates and volumes in contracts. Now the weaknesses in those contracts have created a price and service slide. Parties are selling and parties are buying an undefined and non-premium service.

The performance of BCOs is often measured by logistics costs, such as ocean freight. Fierce competition created a push for even lower pricing. Carriers, whether for market share or vessel utilisation, accepted that situation. With de facto revenue caps, lines formed larger alliances, reduced services (canceled sailings, slow steaming) and added larger ships--a push at both the P&Ls (profit and loss) and balance sheets. The result has seen financial chaos including losses, debt and a mix of M&As (mergers and acquisitions) and bankruptcies.

Cutting corners

Part of the cost-cutting by lines included reducing customer service staff. Carriers raised the cut-off, defined by volume to have direct sales calls in the hope of meeting revenue targets. What happened



Retailers are being 'Amazoned' from the Amazon effect and from Amazon (and select others) taking over their business. The retail bankruptcies and store closing validate the need for transformation--and that includes their supply chain. Transformation is not an option, it is a necessity.

E-commerce, with Amazon, Alibaba, and a few others, has created a dynamic selling transformation. It is now about omnichannel---selling duality. And meeting customer order-delivery expectations is driven by the new Supply Chain.

Brace for change

The speed of the disruption, chaos, change, and transformation for BCOs, logistics providers, and logistics intermediaries is incredible. It is dynamic, not static. The gap between leaders, laggards, and those resisting change is widening. Amazon is not playing to the same 'business model' that all sides have become used to and ingrained as standard practices.

Add in other factors, many tied to technology, and the future of all present players is filled with both opportunity and risk. Disintermediation from digitisation is possible for retailers and forwarders, even for retailers--so what does it mean for manufacturers? The need for new services, even 3PSCM (third-party supply chain management) and SCaaS (Supply Chain Management as a Service) promise strong potential. Throw out the old strategy. Change, transform or face the consequences.

E-commerce is growing. Its service demands are different than from what has been expected, offered, and accepted. Lines must adapt to this market segment and its service requirements. Or customers will find their own alternatives and new providers.

This also presents a window to break the shortcomings for all stakeholders. The e-commerce sector with its robust future will expand. Global revolutions of selling and supply chain management are emerging. A fresh wind of change and transformation is blowing providing opportunities for those service providers willing to adapt and seize the challenges as they come along. ■

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was that many customers experienced a lack of customer service employees to address grievances or queries. Thus businesses moved to forwarders. This gave more leverage to even lower rate pursuers than the BCOs.

However, things are changing. A fresh wind has blown in with the e-commerce phenomenon. The global e-commerce

market, both B2C (business to customer) and the larger B2B (business to business) have to provide order-delivery velocity. That velocity requires inventory velocity. Retailers, manufacturers, and wholesalers that do not adapt and change to the customer demands and customer control of their buying will learn lessons perhaps the hard way.