

ROB GARRISON

CEO & CO-FOUNDER, MERCADO LABS

- + RETAIL SUPPLY CHAIN EXPERT
- + 3PL & TRANSPORTATION LOGISTICS
- + FEATURED SPEAKER
- + PUBLISHED AUTHOR
- + DYNAMIC LEADER
- + GLOBAL STRATEGY & EXECUTION
- + SUPPLY CHAIN TECHNOLOGY
- + LEAN OPERATIONS



THE MERCADO STORY

Mercado was an idea that came to me suddenly...after 25 years of thinking about it. Looking back, the advantage of spending all that time developing the idea and then turning it into this amazing business, was that it allowed me to go from youthful exuberance to useful exuberance. Turns out that I needed that much experience in order to acquire the necessary domain expertise that would allow me to turn this idea into a reality.

International Trade is a massive business which effects every aspect of our daily lives. If you look around the room where you are reading this, you will find that nearly everything that surrounds you—as well as everything that you are wearing—was imported. Where did it come from? Who made it? Was it ethically sourced? Were the workers who made it treated fairly? Our product aims to answer all those questions and more. At the same time, we are also solving the vexing business challenges created by the manual and opaque processes that currently underpin and plague this industry.

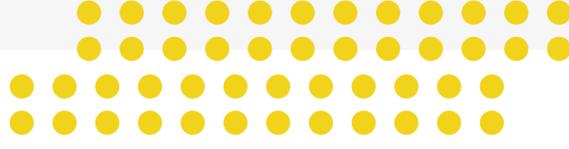
MY BACKGROUND

International Trade is my accidental passion. I was a construction worker in a suburb of Chicago when I was given an opportunity to work in an entry level role for an ocean carrier agent called SEAPAC (now OOCL). Soon after joining, I was asked to travel to New York, then London. Each of those experiences lit a fire in me that made me want to see and experience the rest of the world, and learn everything I could. For someone from a small town who had previously only been outside of Illinois to Wisconsin and Minnesota, these were truly life altering trips.

I have since been to 67 countries and from each of those trips I have learned much about life, cultures, people and business. I also changed my vantage point several times within this industry; moving from an ocean carrier to an importer, and from an importer to a third party global supply chain company. I was blessed to be able to see all three sides of the importing equation and work in a wide variety of roles—from startup to large enterprise—as well as in nearly every business discipline—from operations to product development.

All of that has led me here, where I now believe that technology has progressed to the point that the massive complexity of the importing business can be managed much more efficiently, much more transparently, and most importantly: much more collaboratively. I was very fortunate to meet my co-founder, Lee Grover, who has created solutions for NASA, worked on the Human Genome project, built automated facilities for Coca Cola, and is currently working with Tesla, and so understands the intricacies of complex system and how technology can be leveraged effectively to improve them.

You can read the biography of Lee Grover [here](#) and of my other co-founder Brian Nacci, who excels at creating solution and exceptional customer experiences [here](#).



CAREER SUMMARY

Highly accomplished Global Supply Chain executive with 25 years of experience providing strategic vision and leadership to Fortune 500 companies. Impressive history of building agile, technology-enabled supply chains. Established track record of forging high-growth partnerships, positioning organizations for success and launching innovative technology solutions that significantly improve end-to-end supply chain efficiencies. Recognized as a respected thought leader, featured industry speaker and published author offering expertise on Supply Chain challenges, trends and best practices. Award winning, notably a two-time recipient of the coveted Five Star Award, FedEx’s highest honor presented by the CEO to recognize innovation, collaboration, service excellence, profitable business contributions and exemplifying the spirit of teamwork. Created and executed lean retail supply chains for major shippers such as AutoZone, Michaels and Five Below, and has earned service awards from Walmart, Hewlett Packard and Apple for excellence in global operations management, quality assurance and continuous improvement.

CURRENT: MERCADO LABS

Currently Robert is the CEO and co-founder of Mercado Labs—an International Trading Platform solving the myriad challenges of the massive global trade industry through innovative technology, unique solutions and a comprehensive education curriculum.

FEDEX

As Vice President of Global Transportation, led the development and implementation of complex global expansion to 27 countries, driving compound annual growth of 41% and achieving the target of \$1 billion in annual sales for FedEx Trade Networks.

UPS

As the Vice President of Supply Chain Design, Robert worked closely with key Enterprise clients and the Executive leadership team to enhance customer supply chains, lower costs, improve transit times and upgrade service delivery. Additionally, he conceived and implemented a logistics support center, spearheaded the creation of an order management system and rolled out a global visibility strategy that resulted in high-performance value chains.

SEARS HOLDINGS CORPORATION

MICHAELS STORES

Robert’s retail supply chain expertise is rooted in his experience as the Vice President of Transportation for Sears Holdings Corporation and Director of Sourcing and International Transportation for Michaels Stores. Robert has successfully managed a global P&L of more than \$1 billion and is highly knowledgeable in all aspects of retail shipper operations, including sourcing, order management, international and domestic transportation, procurement, compliance, carrier management, integrated services and 3PL operations.

AMERICAN PRESIDENT LINES

Began career with APL, and worked through a series of increasingly responsible posts, with the last as head of the Eastern Region.



Demonstrating true industry expertise, Robert has an innate ability to identify and capitalize on opportunities for supply chain improvements and employs strategies that drive explosive growth in the competitive global markets. He has strengthened the performance of every company he has served. Robert has a Bachelor of Arts in Marketing from Baker University in Kansas and serves in many industry leadership roles in the Dallas area.



FEATURED SPEAKER

Retail Industry Leadership Assoc.
Strategies for Managing International Excellence
Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals
Lean Supply Chain Management



PUBLICATIONS

Apparel Magazine
Supplier Management
Integrated Solutions for Retailers
Six Steps to a Smooth End-to-End Supply Chain



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

FedEx Five Star Award
Two-time Winner
Service Excellence Awards
Walmart | Hewlett Packard | Apple