

## **EPISODE: #20 Hosting Brant Ring, Chief Executive Officer of ConGlobal**

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Greetings and welcome to the 20<sup>th</sup> installment of our podcast series the work force let's drop to you by Tarrant County college in North Texas I am Shannon Bryan executive vice president for corporate solutions and economic development and I will be your host moderating strategic conversations with employers and economic developers on all things related to preparing growing the workforce today and future. Today my guest is Brant Ring, Chief executive officer at ConGlobal. Welcome Brant Happy to have you here today.

### **Brant Ring:**

Thanks for having me, Shannon.

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

For those of you who are not aware of ConGlobal, ConGlobal is North America's largest integrated intermodal services provider with operations at over 120 locations across the US, Mexico and Costa Rica. Grant, we want to hear more about the company. Tell us about the mission, the vision, and the values. Tell us about your organization.

### **Brant Ring:**

You bet. And again, thanks for having me. I appreciate the invitation to speak to your audience and I really appreciate the partnership that we continue to build out.

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Absolutely.

### **Brant Ring :**

So at ConGlobal we want to be the world's go to experts in terminal operations In more simple terms, what that means is if you have an industrial terminal that requires specialized operations of specialized equipment we want to play in practice today. What that means for our industrial terminals is that we centre on loading and unloading finished vehicles or automobiles to and from railcar for our class one clients. So the railway network across North America, which includes BNSF Railway, which is just down the street, but also all the others like Union Pacific, Norfolk Southern, and the Canadian Railroads as well. The second part of those industrial terminal operations is, is loading and unloading trailers and containers to and from railcar for those same Class 1 railroad clients. And then finally on the third part of the rail side of our business, we switch rail cars to and from those facilities. So we place rail cars for loading or unloading and we serve those same Class 1 railroads as well as some of the other industrial clients as well. And then finally, our last line of business, fourth line of business that today is our About network Oftentimes more commonly referred to as container yards and that's where we take in animal trailers and containers and we Estimate repairs, we make repairs, we make modifications, we store that equipment, we sell that equipment along with the supporting intermodal equipment like chassis, we do that same thing. So in that basis, our client base is the global shipping line community. Internal equipment providers. Railroads also use the container yards as well as neighbouring warehouse and distribution operations. All in all, we operate well over 100 sites across the US, Mexico, Costa Rica.

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

OK. And can you tell us a little bit more about like the competition in this space, who are, who are, who are your competitors in this space?

### **Brant Ring:**

Absolutely. So anybody who's operating in the industrial space, I would say you know can be a competitor in terms of there are drayage companies that operate container yards along with trucking. We have competitors in our space that do railcar loading and unloading for trailers and containers. On the intermodal side, we call that we also have competitors. On the automotive side or finished vehicle side that load and unload finished product to and

from railcars. So it's a hyper competitive environment because of the global nature of the supply chain and all of those that we touch.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Of the 100, so it's 100 locations you said in those three countries, correct?

**Brant Ring:**

Roughly, yeah.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

And about how many employees does ConGlobal employ?

**Brant Ring:**

Yeah, it takes about 3000 experts. That's how I like to refer to our workforces experts to serve our customers and run our business across North America.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

And how many of those are do you currently have here in North Texas?

**Brant Ring:**

So we operate about 12 sites, about a dozen sites here in North Texas.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

And you and I met because you are in North Texas up at the Alliance location, correct?

**Brant Ring:**

That's right. We have wonderful partners in Hillwood Development Company and we've partnered them on a small suite north of Alliance just north of your campus up there.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Yes, absolutely. It's been a pleasure getting to know you and getting to know the operation. So Brent, you serve as the Chief executive Officer, the CEO of ConGlobal. Can you tell us a little bit about you and how long have you been with the company and what led you to this role?

**Brant Ring:**

You bet. So I'm quick.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

You're smiling.

**Brant Ring:**

I am smiling. I'm going to tell you why. I'm quickly approaching three years with ConGlobal. So if you do the math, yes, that means I made a pretty material professional change right on the very front end of the pandemic. So a few of those people that I hold very close to me thought that was a bit out there that's probably for another episode prior to ConGlobal I spent the almost twenty five years would be as if rally and i must say i have to say what an honour and privilege was to spend so much time with such a historic iconic well respected well at company that's long been true and that remains true today in my last decade their ahead responsibility for terminal operations which is the connective tissue to of ConGlobal there ahead had responsibility for real car fleet size in distribution terminal operations and customer service and within those areas I also got the chance to explore and deploy some emerging technology so was really there and over that period of time that I got connected to turmoil operations and really fell in love with normal operations and the potential that there was for transforming that critical piece of the supply chain tie in with advanced in emerging technology.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

That's a great story. And for those of you who are here listening that aren't aware, BNSF railroad is actually headquartered here in Fort Worth Texas. And so you made that transition from being an employee to then working with a company in which you now serve them as a customer, correct?

**Brant Ring:**

That's right. So when that backdrop, I knew ConGlobal and the platform and the people of ConGlobal by way of being a customer of ConGlobal. So with that perspective, when the recruiter called and explained the ConGlobal opportunity, it seemed like a logical next step. And a wonderful opportunity that provides all of us a ConGlobal, a chance to really play a meaningful role in transforming. That's an overused word. It really means improving the supply chain, starting at the endpoints.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So just a natural progression makes sense. So great and funny how life happens there. So I want to go back to the question about I guess skill sets. You just mentioned that you have 3000 experts. So tell us a little bit about the skill sets and the types of jobs. That ConGlobal needs in their workforce.

**Brant Ring:**

You bet. Happy to talk about our experts. I love doing so. Most of our work happens in an outdoor production environment. And any more conventional work environment or office environment happens in support of those experts that are working in the outdoor production environment. I want to say that all of that work is important work and its admirable work. I just, I have so much genuine love for the people that step forward to do this important work. It's real work. It's around the clockwork. It's hard work. And all that's true, whether it's on the front lines or in support of those experts, because we. As consumers demanded of our supply chain, our requirements as consumers requires that 24/7 365 attention that we always talk about. And that makes our work simultaneously demanding and rewarding because what we do holds a place of importance and impact on the day-to-day lives of all those we serve. So when I answer the skill set question, which was your question, I do often surprise audiences with my answer. So often folks think that I'm going to recite a certification or a license. Or educational requirement go to this school TCC get this Degree, there we go.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Nice plug. Thank you. Very appreciate that.

**Brant Ring :**

Go to this school, get to this, get this degree or get this license, but what we really need, and it's not cliché, what we really need and what we look for. Are really skills that one learns? Very early in life. We look for the ability to work in teams. We work for, the ability to be trustworthy, to be reliable, have a willingness to learn, a willingness to challenge historical ways of doing things. And our corporate values really actually provide a great set of guideposts for those skills that we're looking for. So Shannon, I think the way that I was summarizing, we look for the person 1st and the credential second. Does that make sense?

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

It does, absolutely. And I love that. And it's very progressive thinking these days. So you're looking for what some people call the soft skills or I prefer to call the essential skills because they really are the essential skills in life today.

**Brant Ring:**

They really are the essential life skills of today. I think it's long been true. I think it's becoming more prominent in today's workplace and workforce. Companies realize that those soft skills are essential skills. Those people based skills are the overriding factor for success. For the

individual, for like the team and for the for the organization. Those other credentials that may be somewhat differentiating are just added to those people skills.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

I always say it's almost that the. Technical skills have become the commodity where the soft skills of an individual are now the value based skill scans and characteristics that that individual's need to have and especially today with supply chain type positions, there's obviously a big focus on that and so it's even more imperative.

**Brant Ring:**

Right. What's the old cliché? Higher for talent, train for skill.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

There you go. Absolutely true. Today, so Speaking of that Tend to transition off of that topic is well, so professional development. Once you hire the individuals, what is professional development look like within ConGlobal? I'm curious to know what kind of learning and development past you have established for those Individuals.

**Brant Ring:**

Absolutely. So we clearly have a skill set module where we will train skills, we will train mechanics, we will train operators and equipment. Those are the skill tests and there's very rigorous discipline programs. For those technical aspects of it, but we also have that complement that with leadership development. So we run our experts through leadership training that really speaks to what our mission is, what our vision is and what our values are. And those values are things that we hold true and I say values, not priorities. Because priorities can change. Values don't. And so we really spend a lot of time training, working with our experts and our workforce to understand what our expectations are in terms of how we interact with each other and how we interact externally with customers. Prospective customers. Investors, owners, it's really the set of expectations that we hold for a show. That's very much part of how we train and develop our workforce.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Funny you should mention that. I'm facilitating the course tomorrow on the values of organizations and the values of the employees that work with those organizations and how important that is to culture. Can you speak to us a little bit about what those values are of ConGlobal?

**Brant Ring:**

Absolutely. So we work together to develop our corporate values after some time together and what I love about what we've put together is it was. Not top down. So of course, those of us who lead the company had the privilege of leading the company, have some thoughts on what the values for our corporation should be, for our organization should be. But we also bowled from the front lines things that were important to our experts. And so we put that all together and what we come up with is something I'm really quite proud of. So our first value is Zero harm, and that means that we will work safely and we will protect those around you, which includes the environment and communities that we serve. Second value is service quality. Set high standards and deliver a remarkable customer experience. I like that because it involves the customer experience and it involves high standards. It's OK to have high standards. We want to deliver a remarkable customer experience, but in the supply chain as of late, sometimes that remarkable customer experience. Is how you respond when things aren't going so well. It's easy to deliver a remarkable customer experience when everything is going well. And the last couple of year's things haven't been going so well. Teamwork. You heard me talk about teamwork, Shannon. Embrace differences, celebrate authenticity and partner with each other and those we serve. So the partnership that you and I are building between our organizations is very much part of our values. We intend to partner with those that we serve and do business with.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So important? Absolutely.

**Brant Ring:**

Of course, integrity. We endeavour to do what we say, to do the right things the right way for the right reasons. And the last one, I shouldn't really have a favourite. All of these values are very, very important. But I love what the team has come up with here because we understand our reputation in the industry. I understand my reputation in the industry around innovation. And sometimes innovations get connected to technology. But innovation doesn't always bridge to or link to technology. In fact, my favourite definition of innovation actually comes from MIT. And that is innovation is the process of taking an idea. From inception to impact. So nowhere in there does it reference technology. You can innovate without technology. And so our final value is human ingenuity. We are a learning organization that uses our expertise to build lasting solutions and capabilities. I love that we reference human ingenuity.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Right. Thank you so much for sharing those values. Those are very impactful. I love the technology reference. Regarding innovation, you're right. You don't have to have technology to be innovative, that's for certain. And the authenticity piece, that's great.

**Brant Ring:**

And if I might add on the technology piece. We're not pursuing technology to transform our company to replace humans. It's just time to. Suspend that narrative. When's the last time that somebody invented something with technology on a Monday, deployed it on Tuesday, and sent people home on a Wednesday? It just doesn't happen. The technology that we're pursuing is not to replace humans. We are a people centered business. We will always need people driving our business forward. The technology that we're pursuing is to drive an increase the impact of our experts and our people. So we will always need people driving this business and the technology that we're pursuing is to just enhance their impact.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

And efficiency, I there to say efficiency and impact for sure. Well, that's a great segue to the next question. Brant, what is your view of the future of transportation, logistics, and supply chain?

**Brant Ring:**

I like to talk about this in the context of how the skill sets of our employees will change. And how institutions like TCC can strategically align with us going forward so virtually everyone is aware of jobs and careers for creators. Of advanced technology. But as technology is increasingly adopted, I believe that we need to highlight, identify and train. New career paths will be opened up for users of this technology. All the headlines are with start-ups and founders who are creating technology. We need to put more emphasis on the users of that technology. So the future of our workforce will be users of advanced technology. They'll become more. Fixers than finders. So the technology will help us find the people, continue to help us fix. Does that make sense?

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

It does. It makes perfect sense and that's one of the things I'm always talking to employers every single day and working with an institution of higher education is that especially you know, North Texas right now we are bringing in so many highly innovative companies that have great technologies or just great innovative platforms and. One of the things is that sometimes we need your help in building those programs, and so how do you see? That working brand pertaining to partnership between business and industry and higher education. Because in today's world, we need your help building programs to make sure we can produce the right skill sets of the students coming out that are going to go to work for you not only today but the workforce that you're going to have three to five years. From now,

**Brant Ring:**

Absolutely, Shannon. I think it really starts with these kinds of conversations and the kinds of conversations that you and I have been having for some time, I think regular conversations. To keep us aligned with what the workforce of tomorrow expects and requires as well as what the employers of tomorrow expect and require and merging those two things together. So it starts with the conversations, a conversation like the ones that we have been having, but it also includes coming to see it. Let's get the educational experts, leaders of higher education to come see these operations. Come see the kinds of things. That were that some of the challenges that we're facing in person and see some of the solutions that we're deploying so that we together we can craft programs and curriculum around those challenges.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

That is so imperative building those bridges. So I look forward to building that bridge with you, Brant and TCC and ConGlobal absolutely going to build a great bridge together. So the pandemic you mentioned earlier, the pandemic brought many changes to the world of workforce, business and industry. You mentioned the interruption ConGlobal experience on your website, which I was reviewing yesterday. Specifically, you reference your journey to decarbonisation. Tell us what that means and what are you doing to reach a place of Zero harm which you mentioned as one of your values.

**Brant Ring:**

It really is one of our values. That means we strive to ensure that we do our work in a way that will not harm people, products, equipment. Or the environment and communities that we serve. And those last two parts are very important and I would say they are increasingly in the narrative and the conversations that I'm having every day, every week. The important role that industry plays in taking care of our environment in the Community that we serve. Of course, the events of the past two years have shown us that health, global economic, social systems, the very, the very world we live in can be fragile, but it's ultimately resilient. So within this backdrop, industrial transformation and collaboration like this have never been more important. And so in practice, what does that mean? We're working with our customers, we're working with our business partners to deploy. Solutions with sustainability in mind. It does require collaboration to make sure we're meeting our customers' needs to make sure that we're partnering with right folks. What it means in real terms are things like deploying alternative energy sources. Deploying equipment that uses alternative fuels. We actually have the largest fleet of electric vehicle yard trucks operating an intermodal facility in California as we speak. So the entire intermodal facility for that rail client is 100% electric vehicle their trucks and we expect to have the second such facility for that same client in California by the end of this year. So you'll see us continue to pursue alternative fuels. Alternative fuel vehicles. You'll see us. Consider how we manage waste, how we consume, how we manage the waste after we consume so that we can continue to be good neighbours and good global citizens. That's important. It's part of our values, as I've already mentioned, but it's increasingly important to customers, it's increasingly important to employees, and it's increasingly important to the investment community.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Absolutely. We're talking a lot right now around corporate social responsibility, which is all part of that. So that leads me to my next. Question. Are there any other initiatives around corporate social responsibility in the works that ConGlobal? And how do you think this has an impact on leading talent to your organization, especially the younger generation?

**Brant Ring:**

I love this question. So I shared that what our vision is, is to be the world's go to experts and terminal operations, and a good vision has an aspirational element to it. Meaning that you're not quite sure if you ever get there or not. It's just a little bit out of reach, which leads us through to the mission. That's the purpose, right? Why do we get out of bed every day? And

it has to be a mission that every employee, every expert can get behind, from the front lines to our corporate offices. So our mission here ConGlobal. Is to take care of each other, our customers and our business. In that order. Because if we don't take care of each other, there will be no us to take care of a customer. And if there's no customers, there's no business to take care of. And it's actually quite easy to measure. So if we all do something in our day-to-day to take care of one another or something to take care of a customer or something to take care of our business. We've got a good day. If we do something across all three elements, we've had a great day. And when enough of us string together in a series, a series of shifts, series of days, weeks, months, we're taking steps toward this mission. And all those little things add up to big things. And I would emphasize that the importance of purpose is not unique to the younger generation. Today's workforce newer and more experienced or seasoned. They all want purpose. They want to have a purpose and they want to work with and for people with and for organizations that have purpose. That doesn't mean purpose instead of profits, or purpose instead of prosperity. Its purpose. And prosperity. The two can coexist. It's just that today's workforce. Today's workforce is no different than prior workforces. It's just that today's workforce. Seasoned or newer? They're more vocal, more upfront about expecting both of those things. So it's why our daily mission to take care of each other. Our customers are our business. It resonates. It's bigger than self, whether self is an individual or an organization.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

True. And today's workforce has so many multi generations and it's one is feeding off of another. That's a big topic every time I talk to a CEO or an executive of a company. So it's really important to have those conversations absolutely and to have that focus.

**Brant Ring:**

And I love that today's workforce is more vocal. And more upfront about the expectations that they have of leaders, more upfront about the expectations they have of the organizations they work with. I think that's always been something that workforce desired. It's just now. More common to talk about.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

It right and we feel a little more I guess clear or able to talk about it without some kind of repercussion as of the days of old.

**Brant Ring:**

Absolutely. So progress Right.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Exactly. Progress innovation, exactly. So Brant, how many job openings does ConGlobal currently have across the company? And I'm curious to know how do you recruit talent?

**Brant Ring:**

Great question. I'm not goanna give you a price precise number because it will be inaccurate the minute I leave the building fair. Enough. But it's better to understand that we have many jobs open and we're always hiring. Why? First, because we're growing, we're opening new sites, we're building new capabilities. So that provides existing employees a chance to advance, which creates openings down the line and creates opportunities for new and different talent to join our organization. And yes, in spite of the present headlines ever present headlines around layoffs, the competition out there for talent is still very, very high. And so we recruit using all imaginable and familiar formats. We have in-house recruiting professionals. Sometimes we supplement with contracted recruiters, we hold job fairs. We market online. We build partnerships with a variety of educational institutions like. TCC Community colleges, today's universities, yes. Today's podcast is a great way for us to

hopefully tell our story and recruit. Though our best and most impactful recruiting tool. Is our culture. There's absolutely zero substitute for having existing teammates refer us to those that they hold close to them. So how we run the company, how we interact with each other, that is by far our best recruiting tool.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So the internal word of Mouth.

**Brant Ring:**

Internal word of mouth is it really is high impact for us.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

I think that will always be the tried and true.

**Brant Ring:**

I hope so.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Yep, absolutely. So, all right, random question for you, Brant. I always like to know from the leaders that I interview. What books are you reading right now for your own professional development?

**Brant Ring:**

And for the audience, I'm smiling. I should probably concentrate on one at a time, Shannon, but that's just.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

That many, huh?

**Brant Ring:**

That's. Not how my mind works, though. I wish I could do that, but it's not how it works, so I'm in the midst of several. So the latest ad is from strength to strength by Arthur Brooks. So in his words, it's a road map to finding purpose, meaning and success as we age. So yes, that's probably gives you a good sense for how well I've handled entering my 50s. But again, that's probably for another episode I'm nearly through a book called The Obstacle is the way by Ryan Holiday, so this one's been out a while. It's been out since 2014, but a friend of mine gave it to me during an especially difficult time for our business, and it's founded on an 85 word paragraph that Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote to himself for himself, often quoted by the concluding Maxim. Quote the impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way. So in real words, it's a book about embracing challenges, overcoming obstacles, and working through adversity. And Next up will be a book called Love and Work by Marcus Buckingham. I can't wait to get into it as it's about, you know, how you do what you do, what you love in a world that's really not set up to help us do that. So for those of us like me. Lucky enough to be doing what we absolutely love. Its how can we translate that into those that we work with, so that we might unlock lasting change by calling on the very best of ourselves for all of us? So it's quite a book, it's quite a list and I'm working my way through.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Sounds like you have quite the library in your office or at home. Everywhere. I love it. Thank you. I will be adding those to my list to take a look at for sure. So in closing here I always ask our guest any advice for our young people or any people who are looking to make a career change in the field of supply chain and logistics.



**Brant Ring:**

Yes, thanks for giving me that opportunity. Is I will reinforce? Their supply chain and logistics jobs. Those are jobs that are important. Necessary, admirable work. It's real work. It's hard work. It's rewarding work. So for those who may be listening and thinking that it's, quote UN quote, an old industry and not advanced, look again. You simply cannot operate these large scale enterprises large scale operating footprints. Without being advanced and there's so much opportunity to continue that transformation and be part of something special that has purpose and really moves our societies forward.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

And bring it with that being said, we've had lots of conversations today around what a wonderful company ConGlobal is. You have a lots of job opportunities open. We have lots of student here at TCC, we have lots of community members. How does someone find you and find out about the jobs that you have open right now if anyone's interested?

**Brant Ring:**

You can follow us on social media. We have a big social media presence. All of the usual suspects twitter. LinkedIn is a big one for us. Our website, itsconglobal.com, although I will warn everybody that as you've heard us reference ConGlobal, a lot of that will be changing in the coming weeks. So I think if you just search us out on ConGlobal, you'll find this and we look forward to talking with anybody who might have interest in in joining our team.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Wonderful. Any last closing remarks brant that you would like to tell our listening audience today about ConGlobal or.

**Brant Ring:**

Just thanks for having me, Shannon. It's always a great day when I get to talk about ConGlobal and the folks that make it go every, every day. So I got to start my day doing that. So I'm off to a great start today and it's, it's always been especially fun to speak to someone like you who are in your organization, who are generally interested in the work that we do. So I appreciate the invitation, appreciate your interest and thank you for your partnership.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Absolutely. We thank you as well. And TCC looks so long future of her relationship with ConGlobal and you and your organization. So Brant, again, thank you so much and I would like to welcome the Listen audience and please tune in for next month's edition of the Workforce Lens. Thank you.