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## thought leaders

The Rainmakers

### the rainmakers

**For our 2008 Rainmakers, success is about more than fame and fortune. It's also about making contributions to the logistics field and advancing the profession.**

By [DC Velocity Staff](#)  
From the [July 2008](#) issue

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Some measure success by salaries and titles. Others use a different yardstick altogether. Take the 12 professionals selected as our 2008 Rainmakers, for example. When asked about their proudest professional accomplishments, one spoke of his work spreading the gospel of Lean. Another mentioned the satisfaction of providing logistics support to the brave men and women in uniform. Yet another cited his involvement in his company's groundbreaking program to hire people with disabilities to work in its DCs.

As in the past, *DC VELOCITY* worked with members of the magazine's Editorial Advisory Board to select the Rainmakers. The selections were made from a list of candidates nominated by board members and Rainmakers from past years. This year's honorees come from all parts of the profession, from the military to vendors to practitioners. But whatever their role, they have this in common: they've all made a lasting contribution to the profession.



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**A:** I would take a course on the history, geography, and culture of China. China is one of our fastest-growing markets. I have spent a large amount of my time over the last five years there.

China is going to continue to have a huge influence on our world, and it represents a huge growth opportunity for businesses and leaders who understand how to win in China.

**Q: What advice would you offer a young person considering a career in logistics?**

**A: You must first approach your career and role as a total business leader. This means understanding the business model and what is required to win from a total business perspective.**

**Second, you must develop your skills to be an end-to-end supply chain leader, starting externally with your customers. Lastly, you must deliver your current role and responsibilities with excellence. The key to future success is approaching every role and every day in this order. You should constantly learn how to be a great coach and inspirational leader. People will never remember your results, but they will remember the positive impact you had on their lives and development.**



**Joan M. Paddock**

**As the longtime president and now chairman of the Coalition of New England Companies for Trade (CONNECT), Joan M. Paddock gets heard in Washington.**

**CONNECT's mission is to inform policy makers about how trade legislation and regulations will affect their businesses. Together with CONNECT's staff, volunteer board of directors, and Washington counsel, Paddock has helped give New England's international trade community a voice in Congress. The grass-roots advocacy group also offers educational seminars and organizes an annual conference.**

**Under her leadership, the Southborough, Mass.-based organization has grown to include members in every aspect of international trade: from large shippers such as L.L.Bean, Hasbro, and CVS to customs brokers, carriers, third-party logistics service providers (3PLs), law firms, banks, and others, large and small.**

**Paddock—known to all as "Joni"—understands firsthand how trade policy affects business: During her 30-year career, she has held import operations and management positions at companies like Reebok, Staples, and APL Logistics. She later was a partner in a small consulting firm that specializes in customs matters. While she still does some consulting, she now devotes most of her time to CONECT. It's a very demanding schedule, but Paddock doesn't seem to mind. "When you can do something you love, it's not like work," she says.**

**Q: How did CONECT get its start?**

**A: While I was working for Reebok, Congress was debating footwear quotas. The company's trade counsel, Peter Friedmann [now CONECT's Washington counsel], advised senior management to talk to Congress. They appointed me, and with Peter as my mentor, I went to Washington to talk with the Massachusetts delegation. They didn't understand that footwear companies were becoming importers and that for them, importing was a good thing. They told us they only heard from labor unions, not from companies that were in favor of trade.**

**We realized that we needed to have a voice for manufacturers like Reebok, Morse Shoe, and Converse that were also importers. CONECT was launched in 1991 with about 14 members, and by 1999 we were able to hire [Executive Director] Carol [Turner]. That's when things really took off—she promoted the group and personally called on companies that would benefit from joining. Now we have about 700 individual and corporate members.**

**Q: What do you see as CONECT's main focus?**

**A: Our core mission is advocacy work. For instance, this will be the 17th year we'll bring a group of members to Washington for what we call our Washington Briefing. We'll meet with congressional delegates and members of the Senate Finance Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, CBP (Customs and Border Protection), and so on to learn about and discuss topical issues like free trade agreements.**

**It's important for Congress to hear from constituents at the grass-roots level. We're not asking for completely open trade. The message we're bringing is that companies want free *and fair* trade.**

**Q: Has CONECT been successful in getting its message across in Washington?**

**A: We do get phone calls from congressional representatives asking for feedback. Congressman (John Joseph "Joe") Moakley was the first. He was very much pro-union, but he also recognized the importance of trade to his district, and he wanted a balanced view.**

**Now, we regularly get calls from [lawmakers]. They know what we represent, and they want to hear what we have to say. We had a fair amount of influence on establishing permanent normal trade relations with China and Vietnam.**

**Q: How has the organization changed over the years?**

**A: A larger percentage of our members are coming from other states, and we're seeing more interest in exports. So we're branching out geographically and are collaborating with groups that can help small and medium-sized enterprises. We've had some very successful co-sponsored events in Connecticut and Vermont and are working on arranging a breakfast with Sen. [Olympia] Snowe in Maine.**

**Our annual conference has expanded to include economic and supply chain trends, such as where manufacturing and sourcing is going, and more sessions about exporting along with the usual import and customs-related topics.**

**We've also added new seminars over the course of the years to reflect members' interests. And even though CONECT is mostly about education and advocacy, we recognize that providing networking opportunities where members can meet and share ideas with each other is important, too.**



**Ken Ruehrdanz**

**Ken Ruehrdanz has been a key player in the logistics field for more than two decades.**

**Currently Dematic's industry manager for warehousing and distribution, he has been involved in the development of automated system solutions for production, warehousing, and distribution operations for the last 25 years.**