

PLM Fleet

Food Logistics Specialist

Food contamination, wastage and foodborne illness cost billions of dollars annually in the United States. Inadequate safety measures can lead to severe consequences, including health hazards, negative impact on brand reputation, loss of customers and decreased revenue. As a result, food safety is vital for any brand committed to delivering high-quality food and maintaining a positive brand image. To stop the rising instances of product recalls, the FDA has implemented increasingly stringent food safety regulations, obligating food businesses to deliver products safely with good quality standards. As food manufacturers look to deploy technology-driven solutions capable of effectively managing food safety, quality and compliance across the entire supply chain, certain technology providers stand out because of their extensive experience and unique capabilities within the industry.

PLM Fleet is one such industry pioneer that has created flexible and customer-specific cold chain and compliance solutions to deliver products safely to their destination and meet compliance requirements. The company's cloud-based solutions, PLM TrustLink™, and PLM ColdLink® provide a high-level of real-time visibility; delivering track and trace capabilities within the supply chain to drive complete transparency, traceability, and trust all the way from producers to consumers. "TrustLink creates a nesting parent-child relationship between the supply chain and product, which documents all the critical tracking events and key data elements, from creating/birth, scanning at the first warehouse to its final destination," says Don Durm, vice president, customer solutions at PLM Fleet.

Founded in 1972, PLM Fleet was initially focused on offering trailer leasing services for the industry. After being acquired by a leading Japanese conglomerate, Marubeni Corporation, the company pivoted into trailer leasing solely for the temperature-controlled industry. Over the next decade, PLM Fleet expanded its focus on comprehensive cold chain management which came to fruition when the company developed its latest PLM TrustLink™ solution after conducting extensive R&D and pilot implementations at several client firms. Today, PLM Fleet is one of the largest technology-driven fleet management companies in the U.S., with a strong emphasis on creating flexible and customer-specific solutions.

Discussing the core competencies of the PLM TrustLink™ product, Durm further elaborates, "TrustLink's unique cloud-based and IoT powered architecture enables it to use real-



time data-driven insights and deliver a temperature tracking solution that digitizes the supply chain for real-time case-level inventory management, quality and safety assurance, and more." In fact, as food safety visibility increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, the temperature monitoring capability of PLM TrustLink™ has become a critical need for producers. Also, the new FSMA regulations require documentation of freshness quality throughout the product's travels, a feature at the heart of TrustLink. Simultaneously, with its ability to attach all the necessary documentation such as bills of lading, COA, and more, with the digital identity of each case, PLM TrustLink™ eliminates instances of sending out uncertified produce to distributors that might lead to further delays, recalls and other challenges downstream. Another prime differentiator offered by the solution is its IoT-powered touchless experience which eliminates the need for personnel to physically engage with the product and allows for accurate inventory information just by standing next to the trailer.

Looking ahead, Durm predicts that consumers are going to be the chief drivers of innovation in the food safety arena as their buying preferences demand deeper understanding of the food they consume. With such an imminent opportunity on the horizon, PLM TrustLink™ is perfectly positioned to help producers, distributors, retailers, and consumers remain updated on critical information of their products. Finally, Durm mentions his role as a member of FDA's Smarter Food Safety Initiative, driving the use of technology to connect a disconnected supply chain to share required data between all stakeholders as confirmation of the new 204 food safety rules for specific foods. "Having a next-gen connector like blockchain/cloud will enable security of all data surrounding a product to travel with it, and TrustLink's secure, multi-tenant access will enable producers and other parties keep track of the product as it goes from farm to fork," concludes Durm. 

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