



NITL Emerging Leader Profile: Michael Christiansen

Some careers follow a straight line. Michael Christiansen's career has taken the scenic route, and that may be exactly what has made him the leader that he is today.

From LTL and truckload to brokerage, international logistics, flatbed, bulk tank, warehousing, inventory planning, and transportation procurement, Michael has built his career by being willing to learn a new part of the business, take on a new challenge, and see the supply chain from a different perspective.

Today, as Senior Manager, Transportation Procurement at Armada Supply Chain Solutions, he brings nearly two decades of transportation and supply chain experience to a role that combines strategy, relationships, economics, and most importantly, people.

A Career Built on Experience

A graduate of Saint Vincent College with degrees in Marketing and Business Management, Michael originally thought he would pursue a career in accounting. Instead, an internship during his junior year at Keystone Dedicated Logistics introduced him to the transportation industry.

After graduation, Michael joined Keystone full-time. Working for a small company gave him the opportunity to gain broad exposure to the business and learn about LTL freight, trucking rates, truckload, brokerage, and international logistics.

Four years later, he moved to Resco Products, a refractory company with 11 plants throughout the U.S. and Canada. The move expanded his transportation experience even further, introducing him to flatbed, bulk tank, and bulk dump operations.

For nearly nine years, Michael has continued to grow at Armada Supply Chain Solutions, working in both transportation procurement and supply planning.

He began as a Transportation Procurement Manager, where he was responsible for approximately 30 carriers supporting a \$250 million freight spend. His responsibilities included building carrier relationships, ensuring service and commitments were met, sourcing new lanes, managing new business, and executing freight contracts.

But Michael wanted to understand more than transportation. He had always been interested in warehousing and inventory planning, and when an opportunity arose to lead a supply planning team, he took it.

That experience allowed him to see the business through a different lens and understand how transportation decisions connect with inventory, warehousing, and the broader supply chain. After several years, he returned to transportation procurement, where he now serves as Senior Manager.

Learning Never Stops

Continuing to learn has been an important part of Michael's career.

Approximately 10 years after graduating from college, he returned to school and earned his MBA from Point Park University. It was an especially meaningful experience because he was able to bring his real-world experiences into the classroom and immediately apply what he was learning to his professional life.

That commitment to learning extends beyond the classroom. Michael continues to look for opportunities to understand different areas of the business, challenge his own thinking, and learn from the people around him.

Learning to Lead Early

One of Michael's most significant professional accomplishments came when he was still in his twenties and was given responsibility for all inbound logistics.

The role required more than understanding freight and transportation. Michael had to work with traffic managers and others who did not report directly to him, build relationships, earn their respect, and gain their buy-in to accomplish a common goal. At the same time, he was responsible for making sure that facilities remained stocked and that the operation continued to run effectively.

The experience helped shape his approach to leadership, one based on relationships, collaboration, and influence, rather than simply relying on organizational authority.

A Leader Who Empowers

Today, Michael manages a procurement team and is responsible for sourcing capacity while navigating the constantly changing economics of the trucking industry. Market rates, contracts, and service agreements all create challenges, but the dynamic nature of transportation is also what keeps him energized.

No Two Days are the Same

Michael enjoys being able to bridge the gap between strategic direction and day-to-day execution. He likes identifying new opportunities, sharing those opportunities with his team, and then working alongside them to turn ideas into results.

His leadership style is built around empowerment rather than micromanagement. Michael considers himself an empathetic leader who wants his team members to be confident in their decisions and comfortable bringing forward ideas and concerns.

Wanting the Challenge

For Michael, being a good leader means creating an environment where people feel heard, trusted, and accountable. He considers himself demanding but fair, with high expectations balanced by a willingness to listen and support his team.

Seeing the Bigger Picture

Michael's current role has also given him a front-row seat to Armada's growth. He has been involved in the company's recent acquisitions of brokerage and international logistics companies and has worked with teams responsible for integrating those businesses into the overall organization. That experience has provided another perspective on leadership, one that goes beyond transportation procurement and into organizational growth and change management, bringing different teams together around a common vision.

It is another example of how Michael's career has continued to expand by taking him outside of his immediate area of expertise.

Family, Baseball, and the Smoker

Away from work, Michael has been married to his wife, Jessica, for fourteen years and is the father of Lucas (12) and Lily (9).

Family activities keep him busy. Michael coaches baseball, while his wife coaches softball. The family recently added another member, Luna, a Labradoodle puppy.

Michael also enjoys golfing and has the opportunity to share the game with his son. At home, he enjoys cooking and barbecuing, with ribs and chicken wings prepared on the smoker ranking among the family favorites.

Looking Ahead

Michael joined NITL's Emerging Leader Program because he wanted to become more involved with the organization after seeing the impact NITL has on the industry.

He is particularly interested in the regulatory arena and understanding how regulatory decisions affect transportation, carriers, and the broader supply chain.

His career has already given him experience across a remarkably broad spectrum of the industry. More importantly, each stop along the way has added another perspective - on transportation, on business, and on leadership.

For Michael, the journey is far from over. His focus remains on continuing to learn, building strong relationships, empowering the people around him, and finding new ways to make a difference in an industry that never stops moving.

Michael Christiansen is a current member of the National Industrial Transportation League's 2026 Emerging Leaders Program.