TradeLens: A Torchbearer's tale

TradeLens is riding the wave of change made possible by cross-industry collaboration. This open shipping platform underpinned by blockchain technology was launched to help modernize the world's supply chain ecosystems. It now consists of more than 100 different organizations, collectively handling more than half of the world's ocean container cargo.[25]

The platform was jointly developed by Maersk and IBM and lays the foundation for digital supply chains. It empowers multiple trading partners to collaborate—publishing and subscribing to events data—by establishing a single shared view of a transaction without compromising details, privacy, or confidentiality.

Many of the processes for transporting and trading goods are expensive, partly as a result of manual and paper-based systems. Replacing these peer-to-peer—and often unreliable—information exchanges, TradeLens enables digital collaboration among the multiple parties involved in international trade.[26]

Shippers, ocean carriers, freight forwarders, port and terminal operators, inland transportation, customs authorities, and others can interact more efficiently through real-time access to shipping data and shipping documents, including IoT and sensor data. The members of the platform gain a comprehensive view of their data and can collaborate as cargo moves around the world, helping create a transparent, secured, immutable record of transactions.[27]

Organizations with expectations to lead the next wave of change understand what is needed. "We are the driving force in next-generation logistics," says a healthcare CIO in Mexico. "This requires much more open ecosystems, with the strategic focus on enabling a broad set of stakeholders. The key is transparent data sharing."

To date, most data sharing takes place within existing value chains. Many governments are eager to encourage wider data sharing so they can grow their GDP, jumpstart innovation, and contribute to the public good. That's why some regions have already mandated data sharing and others are considering it.

In the European Union, for example, banks are required to share transactional data with others—when their customers consent. That has spurred the "open banking" movement.[28] Many incumbents aren't grumbling; instead, they're finding that it's a positive forcing mechanism. Their eyes are now on a new future. Some are creating the open API platforms to monetize their data. Startups once seen as competitors are now their partners. (See sidebar, "TradeLens: A Torchbearer's tale.")

"One of our top priorities is to drive revenue growth by bringing new products and services into our ecosystem," says a banking CIO in Hong Kong. "To do this, we will accelerate our integration with API providers in different industries."

"In the 'platformication' of industry," one CIO says, "the dark horse is legislation." Uncertainty regarding regulations has a dampening effect. "There are no open API regulations, no appetite to come up with ways to allow the sharing of derived data and ways to monetize it. We need to be able to create marketplaces. Regulations need to be updated," says a banking CIO in the United Arab Emirates.

Many banks already have the trust required to orchestrate the activities on platforms and serve as trusted custodians of user data. In a recent survey, seven in ten customers indicated they are willing to share personal information and data with their banks or other financial services institutions, the highest percentage response for any industry measured.[29]

Likewise, seven in ten bank executives surveyed tell us that platform business models are disruptive for the banking industry as a whole. In addition, survey respondents from the most visionary banks expect