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 Research Article

## ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS – J.B. HUNT TRANSPORTATION

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### ABSTRACT

J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc. (JBHT) is one of the leading logistics providers in North America, renowned for its comprehensive and innovative freight transportation solutions. The company offers a diverse range of logistics services, including road, rail, maritime, air, and intermodal transportation, seamlessly connecting the United States, Canada, and Mexico. In addition to its transportation capabilities, J.B. Hunt provides tailored freight movement solutions, warehouse manpower for product sorting, and efficient last-mile delivery services designed to meet the unique needs of its clients. A key feature of its operations is the cross-dock services offered across North America, streamlining home delivery processes and enhancing supply chain efficiency. Headquartered in Lowell, Arkansas, J.B. Hunt continues to set industry standards with its customer-focused approach and robust logistics network, cementing its position as a leader in the transportation and logistics sector.

### KEYWORDS

Logistics, Intermodal, Transportation, Supply Chain, Sustainability, Deregulation, Organizational Culture, Digital Transformation.

### INTRODUCTION

J.B Hunt Transport Services Inc (JBHT and JB Hunt) is one of the largest logistics providers that can supply and distribute any kind of freight by road transportation, rail transportation, maritime transportation, air transportation and intermodal transportation across the United States of America, Canada as well as Mexico. Being among giant logistics providers, J.B Hunt Transportation Services Inc provides freight movements that are customized, manpower to store and sort the products as well as delivering the final goods that will satisfy any specific customer. For its clients the company also offers cross-dock services across the US, Mexico and Canada which eases home delivery process. Currently Lowell, Arkansas is a place where J.B Hunt Transport Services Inc headquarters.

J.B Hunt Transport Services Inc was first founded in 1961 by Johnnie Bryan Hunt, a truckdriver out of Springdale, Arkansas. The business did not go well for Mr. Hunt at his first try as it costed \$19,000 loss and the company was left unused. In 1969 Johnnie Bryan Hunt gave another try with only five trucks and seven refrigerated trailers that hauled mainly rice hulls (JBHunt Transport, 2022). The idea was obtained while passing through eastern side of Springdale, Arkansas in

the late 1950s, Mr. Hunt saw farmers burning rice hulls for its unnecessary and that when he recalled his childhood memories that rice hulls could be used as a chicken coop litter. Johnnie Bryan Hunt developed a plan to grind and package the rice hulls, and he was successful in selling enough shares to generate the \$85,000 required to construct his packaging facility. By not paying attention to the doubters, by the late 1960s, Hunt was in charge of one of the biggest operations of its sort for rice hulls, despite the fact that the company didn't turn a profit in its first year. In 1969, one of Hunt's clients expressed dissatisfaction with the service he was receiving from the firm transporting his dressed chickens, and Hunt was persuaded to purchase five tractors and seven refrigerated trailers and continue the contract. Hunt started employing fellow truckers and growing his fleet. Trucking company's early years were not profitable, as had been the case with previous endeavors of Johnnie Bryan Hunt. Hunt attempted to break into the dry goods sector of the market in 1971, in an effort to nurture his growing trucking business. After seven years of rice hull transportation, Hunt was about to close his money wasting trucking business as the expenses of running trucks got higher due to maintenance costs to company owned vehicles

and high taxes imposed by Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), that is when Hunt decided to be counsel of Chicago attorney at the time and later JBHT's marketing director, Paul Bergent (Bentley, 2013). Hunt was persuaded by Bergent that deregulation was coming soon and by following Bergent's advice, Hunt increased his business's operations by acquiring a trucking firm that gave him access to 24 trucks with ICC licenses valid in 33 states. Hunt made a clever move and replaced his owner operators with truck drivers that would charge the company a money per mile driven and increasing load ratio which is loaded miles each truck runs. The company started offering competitive salaries and working conditions that would benefit its employees. When the Motor Carrier Act was passed in 1980, Bergent's predictions came true. Hunt was in a position to profit greatly from the commodity restrictions and numerous routes that were lifted. Johnnie Bryan Hunt had transformed his prior losses into a \$2 million profit on \$30 million in sales by the end of the following year, 1981. Encouraged by his achievements, he went public in 1983, selling 11% of his shares for an estimated \$18.5 million, and sold his rice hull company to Eli Lilly for \$2.4 million. While other trucking firms were in the

collapsing, J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc was growing its business and breaking sales records. Four years after going public, the business had expanded to become the largest publicly held trucking company and the second-largest truckload carrier in the USA.

Currently, J.B. Hunt is amongst the biggest trucking and logistics firms in the US, offering a variety of services and transportation options to clients in numerous industry sectors. More than 21,000 people work for it, and it oversees 104,973 company owned trailers, 23,489 tractors and 544 trucks owned by its customers as well as 582 power units that are owned by contractor carriers. On the Fortune 500 list, the Company is ranked 416. J.B. Hunt's stock is still traded on the NASDAQ under the ticker JBHT, and it now has a \$9.08 billion market value.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc. (JBHT) has been a significant subject of research and industry analysis due to its influential role in the logistics and transportation industry. Studies on the company often highlight its strategic use of technology, operational efficiency, and its adaptability to the changing demands of global

supply chains (Knight et al., 2023). J.B. Hunt is frequently recognized for its pioneering adoption of digital solutions to enhance operational efficiency. Research on transportation management systems (TMS) cites J.B. Hunt as a leader in integrating technology to optimize freight movement, improve real-time tracking, and streamline intermodal operations (Langer & Vaidyanathan, 2014). The company's 360° platform, a digital freight marketplace, has been the focus of case studies examining the role of digital transformation in increasing transparency and efficiency in logistics. Scholars have also analyzed how J.B. Hunt's technology investments position the company as a key player in the fourth industrial revolution, where automation and data-driven decision-making are critical. Academic and industry research has extensively reviewed J.B. Hunt's role as a trailblazer in intermodal transportation. Guiliano (2016) highlight its ability to leverage intermodal solutions to reduce costs, enhance sustainability, and manage complex supply chains. J.B. Hunt's collaboration with major rail carriers is often cited as a benchmark for achieving seamless integration between road and rail transport, optimizing long-haul freight logistics across North America. This strategy not only improves

efficiency but also aligns with environmental sustainability goals by reducing carbon emissions associated with traditional trucking. J.B. Hunt's operations across the United States, Canada, and Mexico have been examined in the context of cross-border trade and logistics challenges. Woudsma (1999) have praised the company's ability to navigate regulatory complexities and streamline cross-border supply chain processes through its robust infrastructure and expertise. The company's cross-dock services, which facilitate efficient sorting and last-mile delivery, are often noted for improving customer satisfaction and reducing delivery times. The company's emphasis on tailored logistics solutions has been explored in studies on customer-focused supply chain strategies. Literature on logistics customization highlights J.B. Hunt's ability to adapt its services, such as providing manpower for sorting and storage, to meet specific client needs. This flexibility has contributed to its reputation as a reliable logistics partner for a diverse range of industries, from retail to manufacturing. Despite its successes, J.B. Hunt faces challenges common to the logistics industry, including driver shortages, rising operational costs, and increasing competition (Thompson & Waller, 2019). Research suggests

that the company's continued focus on innovation, sustainability, and strategic partnerships will be critical in addressing these challenges and maintaining its competitive edge. Analysts also point to emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles and artificial intelligence as potential game-changers for companies like J.B. Hunt.

## METHODS

Nowadays J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc divides its business operations into four sectors:

- Intermodal - which, through agreements with major maritime transportation and North American rail operator company partners, offers intermodal freight solutions to its customers throughout the continent of the United States, Mexico, and Canada.
- Integrated capacity solutions - which, through connections with outside carriers and integration with equipment owned by J.B Hunt, offers transportation logistics services and conventional freight brokerage.
- Dedicated contract services – which offers specialized equipment, final-mile delivery services, planning, development and

implementation of supply chain solutions to support the transportation network of its clients.

- Truck – which offers dry-van freight services and full-truck load operations with company and partner carrier owned tractors.

J.B. Hunt offers logistics and supply chain management services to a variety of business clients, primarily bid and medium-sized companies who incorporate supply chain management into their business plans. J.B. Hunt provides its logistics and supply chain management services across variety of business sectors, such as:

- Automotive - where auto products and parts are transported for auto producers in the countries J.B. Hunt operates such as Toyota, Honda, Chevrolet, and Chrysler.
- Food service - where beverages and food products are moved across destinations, for instance, J.B. Hunt was recognized by Walmart as 2020 Intermodal carrier of the year (AJOT, 2021).
- Industrial and manufacturing - where industrial materials and resources are hauled for the customers.

- Retail and customer goods - where products such as electronics and clothes are transported.

- Chemicals and plastics - where hazmat resources and ingredients are transported.

Through internal service and sales teams that are segmented and geographically organized and work across a network of offices in the USA, Canada, and Mexico, J.B. Hunt directly interacts with its customers. The company uses its own multi-channel fleet, which is made up of tractors, contractor trucks, cube containers, chassis, and trailing equipment, to perform its services.

J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc currently employs 33,045 workers out of which 11,039 are drivers delivering freight for the company. According to JBHT's company profile (2022), key managers of the company are as follows:

- Darren Field - Executive vice president, president of intermodal operations.
- Jennifer Boattini - General counsel, secretary of the senior vice president-legal and litigation.
- Eric McGee - Executive vice president-highway services.

- John Kuhlow - Chief financial officer (CFO), executive vice president.

- Craig Harper - Chief sustainability officer (CSO), executive vice president.

- Stuart Scott - Chief information officer (CIO), executive vice president.

- Shelley Simpson - Executive vice president-people and human resources, chief commercial officer (CCO).

- Nicholas Hobbs - Chief operating officer (COO), executive vice president, president-contract services.

- John N. Roberts, III - Chief executive officer (CEO), director, president.

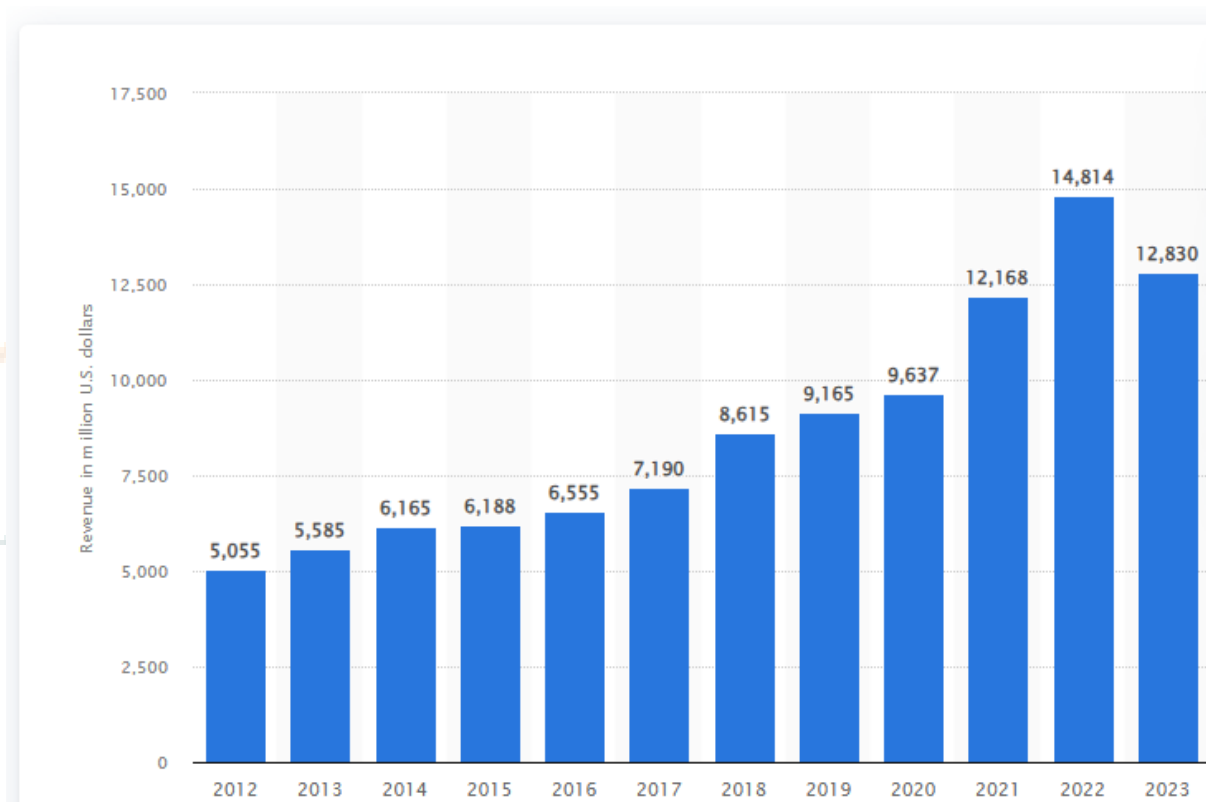
- Kevin Bracy - Senior vice president-finance, treasurer.

Among aforementioned key management employees, CEO – John N. Roberts, III makes high-level decisions that will direct the company into the right way, and he reports to the board of directors representing company owners and stockholders. Board of directors usually sets eternal goals and oversees J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc.

## RESULTS

When assessing the effectiveness of organizational design of any company, objectives of the company and how they are achieved should be analyzed. According to Joffe (2014), organizations may achieve growth and scalability, enhance the customer experience, increase

operational efficiency, and create a sustainable business with the help of an efficient operating model. The successful operation of J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc. and its employees can be witnessed in yearly growth of revenues for the company (Martin, 2024), in forged long-term relationship with its clients, in employee satisfaction and in customer satisfaction reviews.



**Graph 1. Revenue of J.B. Hunt Transport Services from 2012 to 2023(in million U.S. dollars)**

One example can be seen from May of 2020, when JBHT united as partner of Northwest Arkansas Council and gave almost 300,00 pieces of

personal protective equipment including masks, dresses and eyewear to medical establishments with intention of helping to fight with COVID-19,

costing the company almost 600,000 USD (JBHunt Transport, 2021). All these features being positive towards JBHT (Comparably Inc., 2022), it can be concluded that the organization design is effective and mechanism that was established by Johnnie Bryan Hunt 40 years ago is working well.

Culture within the organization is evaluated by the set of beliefs and customs that govern enterprise's behavior and serve as basis for all team members' decisions. According to Wong (2020), when attracting talent and excelling the competition, culture is a crucial competitive advantage. Nearly half of employees would quit their current position for a position with a lesser salary at a firm with a better culture, according to a study that found that 77% of workers think about a company's culture before applying. A company's culture is also one of the best predictors of employee satisfaction and a key factor in why nearly two-thirds (65%) of employees stay on the job. J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc has been successful in this matter and keeps excelling the company standards to help its employees and their families. In code of ethical and professional standards report by JBHT (2022) it clearly states that J.B. Hunt is dedicated

to fostering diversity in the workplace and is pleased to be an equal opportunity employer, thus company employs excellent individuals from a variety of backgrounds not only because it is the right thing to do but also because it strengthens the business. To be the best employer the company values respect, trust amongst its workers and provides equal opportunity between races and genders, therefore JBHT has implemented numerous Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) such as African Americans (AAmERG), veteran (VERG), Latinos (LEAD) and women (GROW) (JBHunt Transport, 2021). In order to create a workplace where everyone is treated with honesty, integrity, and courtesy, having a caring attitude is essential. The organization endeavors to provide a welcoming, honest, and trustworthy environment to its employees. Moreover, when all members are given a voice and encouraged to participate, essential values of the company are strengthened. For this reason, J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc has established ELEVATION, a mechanism where anyone within the company can submit a proposal for consideration on any subject that can help the company as a result.



The company offers many advantages to new joining workers such as health insurance plans, medical plans, basic accidental death insurance, vision, dental and prescription coverage, driver disability insurance, critical illness insurance, competitive salary and 401(k) retirement savings plans. That is why JBHunt was recognized by Forbes (2022) as a 2022 best employer for supporting the value of and comprehensive workplace for its works, their families and society where assessments were founded on diversity amongst senior executives and employees for the code of ethical conduct and the effectiveness of organizational culture (JBHunt Transport, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

Since the launch of J.B. Hunt Transport Services Inc in 1961 by Johnnie Bryan Hunt, respect, integrity, and honesty has been the foundation for the company. The enterprise has always placed a greatest focus on people – their customers, employees, suppliers, investors, society and beyond. For a range of clients across North America, Canada and Mexico, J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc., an S&P 500 firm, offers cutting-edge supply chain solutions. The company uses a multimodal and integrated strategy to develop

the best possible solution for each client, increasing productivity, adaptability, and value in their business operations. In addition to other services, J.B. Hunt offers intermodal, dedicated, truckload, refrigerated, less-than-truckload, final mile, flatbed, single source, and more. The stock of J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc. trades on the NASDAQ under the ticker JBHT and is included in the Dow Jones Transportation Average.

The company can be improved in many ways that will bring an effectiveness to its operations and profit to the stockholders. J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc. can utilize embedded technology while their operations that will ease the connection between its customers and the company representative. To be more precise, by implementing embedded technology the company can recognize that to send data seamlessly and reliably back and forth between the clients, they require a data movement platform. SaaS providers in the logistics industry can provide value-added services including logistics and supply chain data due to embedded integration capabilities as more established logistics organizations change into data-centric services businesses which is a classic example of digital transformation. Moreover, the company

can help the environment and profit from bringing self-driving vehicles to the organization as driverless or self-driving vehicles will soon be able to handle the rise in freight demand as well as the lack of qualified drivers. Self-driving trucks that may go longer distances or between other states unattended are already being tested by companies like Embark and Tesla. Companies using artificial intelligence (AI) assert that the transportation sector may soon be completely automated as this technology progressively gains pace. If such a future is likely, fleet industries and other businesses alike must get their operations ready for such changes and J.B. Hunt Transport Services, Inc. can help to make the process go faster by investing to implementation of driverless trucks.

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