



“The immediate focus has been on creating one Unilode business”

Ross Marino,  
Unilode Aviation Solutions

# FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Speaking to Air Logistics International at the TIACA Air Cargo Forum in Miami on Tuesday 8 November, CEO Ross Marino said that when joining a new business, it is key to understand in detail the business dynamics, how it is performing and the opportunities for continuous improvement and growth. Marino has spent time travelling, visiting key Unilode locations, meeting customers and getting to know the business.

It quickly dawned on Marino that the leadership structure needed to be strengthened so key roles such as a Chief People Officer and a Chief QHS & ESG Officer have since joined Unilode. He explained, “I have spent a fair bit of time in my first few months looking at the business and evaluating what we need to take it to the next level.”

When he came in, Marino listened to the staff and customers about their views on the business and how Unilode could improve and maximise opportunities. He said, “The immediate focus has been on creating one Unilode business, where our ULD leasing, MRO and Digital businesses work harmoniously and strengthening in key areas such as commercial, operations, people and IT. We have put a structure in place that has world-class leaders in each area of our business.” Marino said this has been well received by colleagues who

Eight months since joining Unilode Aviation Solutions, CEO **Ross Marino** has been reviewing the business to ensure it has the right setup.

have welcomed the changes they are making as it strengthens the business.

This year, Unilode has retained all of its ULD management and repair customers, entered the African market by signing up Uganda Airlines and the sales pipeline has never been busier.

“One of the things with the ULD world is that when you start negotiating with an airline, it takes time because you are taking control of their stock of ULDs. It is a complex negotiation so it takes time, but what I am happy with is that our pipeline is healthy so I am confident that we can continue winning new business,” said Marino.

## Leader in technology

Technology is what makes ULD companies stand out, and Unilode has an exclusive partnership with US-based tech firm OnAsset Intelligence for its digital service offering. Using BLE technology, ULDs are tagged, and of Unilode’s fleet of 150,000 ULDs, about 120,000 are tagged, with near total coverage planned within the next 12 months.

Not only can the technology provide track and trace information, it can take on sensory data for things like shock, temperature, humidity and light, which Marino believes gives



Unilode a significant advantage in the ULD leasing market.

“What we are trying to do with our digital products is to use it as a USP, not only for ourselves but for our customers and their customers in how that data can be used and how they can give their customers the assurance that their cargo is being cared for and monitored,” said Marino.

Unilode has invested a lot of money in its digital product and will continue to do so as it seeks to constantly enhance its capability in this area.

Tracking shipments from start to finish used to be the domain of integrators but airlines want this visibility for themselves and their customers.

Marino said, “To tag 150,000 ULDs and put a reader network out there globally, and then support it with our MRO operations is no small investment in hardware, people and the energy to keep it going. It takes serious investment and commitment but we firmly believe that this work will keep us at the top of the tree for ULD solutions.”

As another year approaches, Unilode has been asking airlines about their expectations, with some quite nervous about falling volumes and yields, whilst others report a more robust outlook. Marino is very happy with the outlook for Unilode, saying, “Growth will come from maintaining and growing with our existing customers as well as winning new business, and there is still plenty of business to be won.” 🌐