



Rapid Growth Leadership: Who They Are, How to Find Them, and How the Wrong Fit Can Hurt Growth

By GESG and Logisyn Advisors

Executive Summary

In transportation, logistics, and supply chain M&A, leadership quality isn't a support variable—it's a multiplier. In high-velocity, private equity–backed environments, executive alignment is one of the most consistent drivers of value creation and deal execution.

Some executives thrive in optimization; others, in ambiguity. The challenge in PE-backed logistics growth is distinguishing the difference between the two and making the right leadership decisions before momentum stalls. Drawing from decades of advisory experience, GESG and Logisyn explore what defines a rapid growth leader, why leadership missteps in M&A create drag, and how to integrate leadership strategy into every stage of the deal lifecycle.

The Profile of a *Rapid Growth Leader*

Rapid growth doesn't reward the most seasoned executive—it rewards the most adaptive. GESG defines a rapid growth leader as someone who possesses strategic clarity, commercial urgency, and the ability to unify teams during integration or transformation.

“These individuals take a holistic view based on prior experience and can quickly distill the critical information needed to execute key organic and M&A-based moves,” says Roz Kennon, Sr. Partner at GESG.

GESG and Logisyn both emphasize that the most successful leaders in fast-scaling logistics businesses consistently demonstrate:

- Operational precision matched with strategic foresight
- Experience in post-merger integration, roll-ups, or PE-backed scaling
- Emotional intelligence to navigate investor, employee, and customer expectations
- Financial, commercial, and industry fluency, including expertise with EBITDA metrics and capital efficiency

“Rapid Growth Leaders have a track record of scaling fragmented businesses and managing complexity across functions and regions,” adds Scott Chadbourne, President of GESG.





Why Leadership Misalignment Slows Growth

Private equity deals rarely fall short because of flawed strategy—they fail because of fractured execution. That breakdown often starts at the top.

“Even the best strategic rationale can falter if teams aren’t aligned in values, communication, and execution,” says Kristian Malinich, Analyst at Logisyn. “The most effective leaders prioritize cultural due diligence just as much as financial analysis.”

Leadership missteps post-acquisition often take the form of:

- Cultural disconnects that drive turnover or morale issues
- Inflexible leaders are unable to adjust to new ownership structures or growth mandates
- Lack of communication that undermines execution at the operational level
- Strategic hesitation during integration, delaying synergy realization

“Post-acquisition is often when transformation begins, not ends,” adds Gustavo Stille, Managing Director (Freight Forwarding, Aviation & Maritime) at GESG. “And that shift is only possible when leaders know how to move an organization from its current state toward its aspirational target—quickly.”

Logisyn frequently flags potential leadership risk during transaction preparation. “Leadership gaps are not abstract,” says Logisyn Engagement Director, Jake Cunnane. “They materially impact integration and future scalability. When the chemistry or capabilities are off, even a textbook deal can fall apart.”

Leadership as a *Strategic Priority*

Buyers today are increasingly elevating leadership from a post-close problem to a pre-close priority.

“ Fifty percent of all transactions fail to meet buyer expectations,” says Ron Lentz, Managing Partner at Logisyn. “And leadership alignment is almost always a factor. Evaluating cultural fit and shared goals before closing is essential to mitigating that risk.”

GESG recommends integrating leadership assessment at the term sheet stage when:

- Founders are transitioning out or reducing involvement
- New functional roles (e.g., CFO, COO) are being added
- Integration complexity or geographic expansion is high
- The hold period relies heavily on operational transformation

“When leadership diligence is done right,” says Kennon, “you’re not reacting post-close—you’re building continuity into the investment thesis itself.”

Meanwhile, in a private equity roll-up strategy, integration is the key to success. And without the right leadership, even the best platform collapses under its own weight.

“ The C-suite isn’t just there to manage growth. They’re there to make growth happen under pressure,” says Chadbourne. “The right CFO or COO can compress timelines, integrate faster, and signal confidence to the board.”

Private equity firms that win in logistics increasingly identify leadership gaps early, before any platform add-ons. They’re also the ones who bring in operational executives with integration experience and align compensation with long-term EBITDA goals. And, along the way, they support founders with expert management support to ensure everything goes smoothly.

“ Buyers often see M&A as an opportunity to add people, not just capabilities,” notes Cunnane. “A leader who proves their value can scale far beyond what the original role required.”



How GESG and Logisyn Identify the *Right Leaders*

The right executive isn't just competent—they're contextually aligned. Identifying that alignment is where GESG and Logisyn's approaches converge.

GESG focuses on precision executive search for growth-stage fit. Their approach combines deep sector experience with role-specific evaluation to source leadership candidates uniquely suited for scale. "We've completed over 150 executive searches for PE-backed logistics companies," notes Stille. "We know which leaders thrive in integration-heavy, high-expectation environments—and which look good on paper but stall in execution."



GESG's methodology focuses on:

- Specialized talent mapping across logistics and supply chain
- Assessment of adaptability, financial fluency, and cultural agility
- Alignment of executive history with investor expectations and growth stage

“ Executives must be fluent in KPIs, margin expansion, and scaling teams,” says Scott. “We look for leaders who’ve delivered—not just survived—during transformation.”

Logisyn, meanwhile, brings strategic leadership evaluation in M&A by integrating cultural and management fit into both buy- and sell-side mandates. “We incorporate executive strength into buyer targeting and seller readiness,” says Mikael Olesen, Managing Director at Logisyn. “Strong leadership can elevate valuation; weak or misaligned management can jeopardize a deal altogether.”

Logisyn's leadership-focused M&A services include:

- Management team assessments during early due diligence
- Evaluation of company cultural alignment during initial buyer-seller meetings
- Strategic advisory on succession planning and executive integration post-close

“ Whether it's a platform build or an add-on, understanding if the leadership team can evolve under new ownership is critical,” says Logisyn's Director: T&L, Marijan Ljubic. “Leadership is not just a risk factor—it's a value driver.”



The New Logistics Executive Profile

Today's logistics executive needs to bridge operations, finance, and digital fluency in ways that didn't exist five years ago.

“The industry is increasingly data-driven and customer-centric,” says Logisyn Associate Juan Monroy. “Leaders must understand how to integrate AI, automation, and TMS platforms—not just approve the budgets.”

Regional strategy also plays a role. “With nearshoring reshaping global supply chains, executives need geopolitical agility and awareness of new trade corridors,” adds Olesen.

Identifying great leaders requires going beyond hard numbers and looking at culture, too.

“Being a leader also means doing those small things behind the scenes that keep the gears turning,” notes Mark Para, Managing Director at Logisyn. “Loyalty and trust with employees are often overlooked, yet valuable traits that speak volumes about their leader.”

GESG's candidate evaluation now includes:

- Technological literacy as a leadership requirement
- Experience with cross-border teams and compliance
- Sensitivity to ESG expectations from investors and partners

“Rapid growth requires generalists who can lead across silos,” says Stille. “Those who stay in their lane will get left behind.”



Talent Sets the Timeline

M&A strategy sets the vision. Capital enables the move. But only leadership determines the velocity.

In private equity-backed logistics and supply chain, the right executive team is essential. From integration planning to board reporting to cultural cohesion, leaders shape every aspect that investors care about.

GESG brings unparalleled search expertise in logistics leadership for high-growth environments. Logisyn embeds leadership evaluation directly into the M&A process, reducing risk and optimizing outcomes.

If you're preparing to scale, integrate, or exit, ask yourself not just if your strategy is sound, but if your leadership team is ready for what comes next.

Spreadsheets measure growth. Leadership creates it.

To discuss your leadership strategy or assess your transaction readiness, contact the teams at GESG or Logisyn. Together, we help companies scale with clarity and confidence.

GESG Contributors

Scott Chadbourne

President, GESG

Scott is one of the founders of GESG in 2001 and is responsible for all internal operations as well as relationships with all Partners and Suppliers. His first-hand recruiting experience gives him a customer-focused perspective that enables him to maintain a razor-sharp focus on our technology and system priorities. Scott works closely with other firms in our network as well as suppliers to ensure that everyone in our firm has the current technology and market research resources necessary to meet the needs and requirements of our clients, top talent, and associates.

Roz Kennon

Sr. Partner, Private Equity, Transportation & Logistics, Warehouse & Distribution,
Supply Chain Management, GESG

As a Sr. Partner at Global Executive Solutions Group, Roz leads our consumer-packaged goods (CPG), transportation, logistics, and supply chain practice as well as the diversity and inclusion practice. He has successfully led and executed searches for hundreds of Fortune 1000 companies, private, and equity-owned organizations domestically and internationally. He has received numerous awards and is consistently recognized among the top 10% of all recruiters in the industry.

Gustavo Stille

Managing Director, Freight Forwarding, Aviation & Maritime, GESG

Gustavo is a Managing Director at GESG, leading a team of executive recruiters who share his passion for connecting the best professionals and organizations in Freight Forwarding. Since joining GESG, Gustavo has multiple times achieved pacesetter and earned a spot on the SRA Network's Top 25 Achievers list. His work consists of executive search with public, private-equity, and privately owned freight forwarders for assignments ranging from first-line management to the C-Suite.

Logisyn Contributors

Ron Lentz

Managing Partner, Logisyn

Ron has 40+ years of experience transforming Fortune 500 Companies, start-ups, turnarounds, and asset-light companies into highly performing businesses. Ron's expertise includes international executive leadership at Ryder Logistics, as well as 10+ years of C-Level assignments and M&A engagements. Over the past decade, Ron established and built one of the leading M&A services firms for logistics.

Mikael Olesen

Managing Director, Logisyn

Mikael began his career in freight forwarding in the early 90s in Denmark. He later transferred to the US, where he has lived and worked, including his time as the CEO of LEMAN USA. Since 2017, Mikael has been working in the M&A space, servicing large, top-50 global 3PLs as well as many small and medium-sized enterprises, utilizing his vast network built up over 30+ years in the industry.

Mark Para

Managing Director, Logisyn

Mark's focus is to help originate and manage various clients and relationships established over the years. Before joining Logisyn, Mark co-founded a boutique M&A firm, where Logisyn has been a strategic partner since inception. He's worked with numerous logistics companies, adding valuable insights in preparation, managing the arduous process once engaged, and ultimately getting their business across the "finish line."

Jake Cunnane

Engagement Director, Logisyn

Jake works closely with clients through each stage in a transaction. He has worked extensively with both asset-light and asset-heavy transportation companies to execute buy-side, sell-side, and capital-raising activities. Over seven years as both a financial service provider and an operator, Jake has developed robust technical skills and a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing companies in the middle market.

Marijan Ljubic

Director, T&L, Logisyn

Before joining Logisyn, Marijan started his career at two middle-market investment banks and a regional investment bank in Europe, advising clients in sell-side and buy-side M&A, debt and equity capital raising, and restructuring both domestically and internationally. Additionally, he honed his expertise at a Chicago-based middle-market Private Equity fund and a CLO fund, giving him years of investment banking and finance industry experience.

Juan Monroy

Associate, Logisyn

As a full-time associate at Logisyn, Juan capitalizes on his previous experiences by collaborating closely with engagement managers and directors throughout the valuation and due diligence process, building out comprehensive financial models and vital marketing material.

Kristian Malinich

Analyst, Logisyn

As an Analyst at Logisyn, Kristian leverages his experience to drive results for Logisyn's clients. He focuses on target research and client engagement, working closely with engagement managers and directors to navigate the complexities of the acquisition process and support clients in achieving their strategic goals.

About GESG



GESG is the leading executive search firm specializing in transportation, logistics, and supply chain management. Headquartered in Ohio, GESG operates globally, leveraging a team of over 50 permanent placement recruiters with a combined 400 years of search expertise. With 25 years of success, we

have partnered with over 3,000 organizations and 150 private equity firms to deliver exceptional talent solutions.

Our leadership team has led executive, board-level searches and scaling initiatives for Fortune 100 companies, private equity, and privately held organizations. As the largest search firm in our space, GESG offers unparalleled candidate reach and an expertly honed search process that identifies and secures top-tier talent.

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About Logisyn



Logisyn Advisors takes pride in its unique approach to mergers and acquisitions (M&A) within the global logistics sector. Our company was founded to assist industry business owners in either growing through

acquisition or maximizing their value in a financial exit. We work with both domestic and international logistics companies searching for a strategic partner, and we also advise international corporations looking to expand their global footprint. Our executives bring decades of deep domain expertise to the table to help you make the ideal next step for your business.

Logisyn's goal is to bring companies together by bringing people together. It's about discovering the best strategic fit for your company, not just the best financial offer on the table. With our global team, we understand the dynamics between the different economic markets. We work hard to find a mutual partnership that enables both companies to thrive in an optimal environment with a symbiotic relationship.

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