



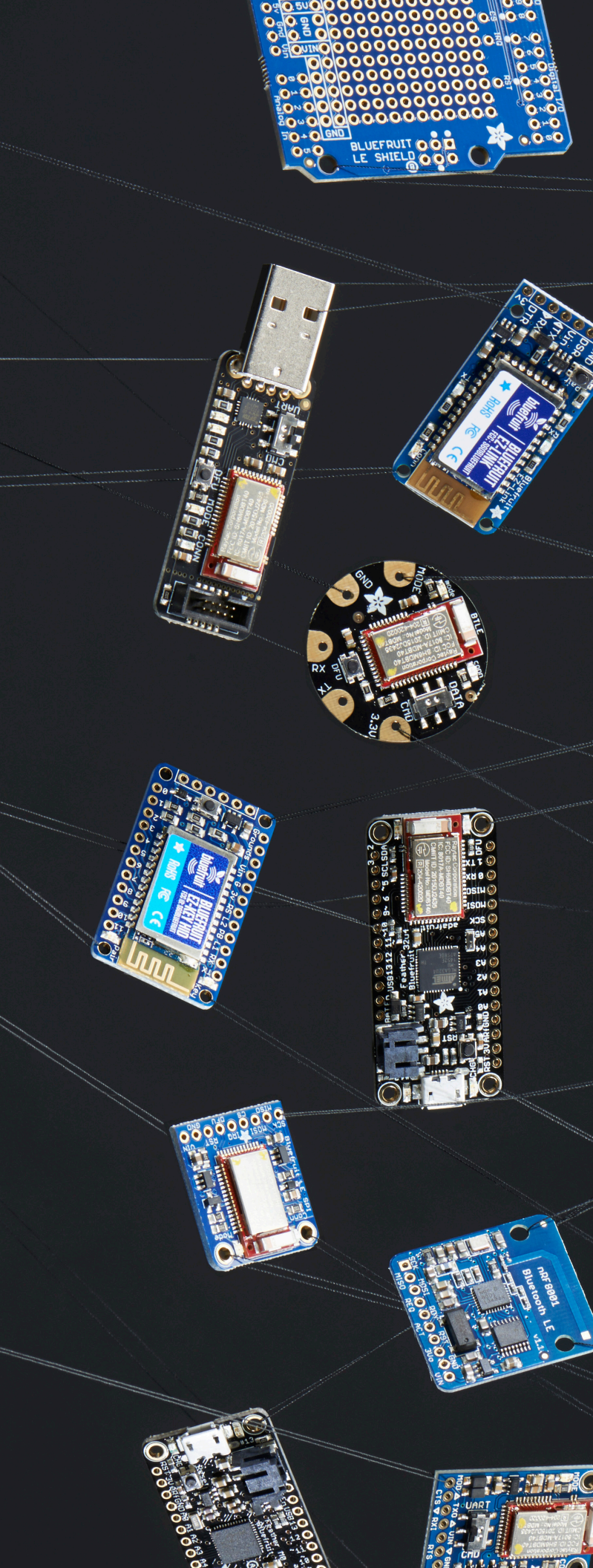
# ADAFRUIT INDUSTRIES

ENGINEERING A STRONG  
PARTNERSHIP

**“Working with DHL has made it possible to  
ship faster and more affordably to more  
countries worldwide.”**

— Limor “Ladyada” Fried, Founder and Lead  
Engineer, Adafruit Industries

**DHL Express – Excellence. Simply delivered.**



**“OUR DHL SALES  
REP WORKS WITH  
US ON FINDING  
CREATIVE  
SOLUTIONS  
WHEN WE FACE  
CHALLENGES.”**



Throughout the world, Adafruit customers – also known as “Makers” – depend on company founder Limor “Ladyada” Fried and her team of skilled engineers to create the tools, kits and component parts they need to build open-source electronics. Customers also expect their items to be delivered right away. “Working with DHL has made it possible to ship faster and more affordably to more countries worldwide,” says Fried. “Just what you’d expect from the world’s leading logistics company.”

## CHALLENGES

In 2005, Fried was an MIT engineering student when she “imagineered” an online store that would offer a wide selection of hardware products to DIY enthusiasts who enjoy building new electronics products as much as they like tinkering with existing ones. Today, her New York City-based company, Adafruit Industries has a staff of over 100 employees who design and manufacture hardware ranging from printed circuit boards to wireless remotes. All Adafruit products are created using open-source design information that could be copyrighted or licensed – but instead it is made available to the public at no charge. And because Fried believes that all business relationships should be mutually beneficial, it was very important to her to choose an international shipping company that shares her commitment to such a partnership.

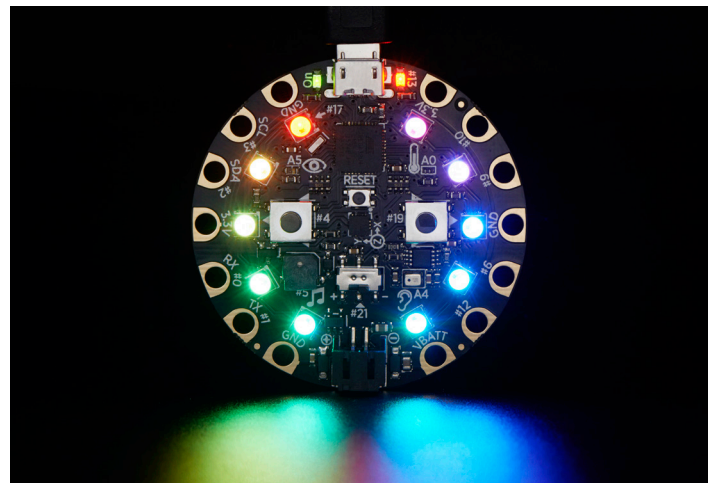
At the same time, Fried needed a proven logistics company with the specialized experience and expertise to meet the huge challenges of transporting sourced electronic parts and products quickly and safely around the world. “We ship a lot of packages containing lithium batteries, which can be quite tricky,” says Fried, who serves as a lead engineer on top of her duties as company owner. “There are quite a few safety regulations, and carriers can sometimes have problems keeping everything straight.”

Fried also realized that when it comes to international shipping, unpaid duties and taxes can often delay shipments and derail future orders – but before DHL came into the picture, Adafruit

had been able to offer DTP (Duty & Taxes Paid) in only 10 to 12 countries. Also, because Adafruit transports electronics and component parts across borders, it is crucial that Fried’s staff uses the correct Harmonized System (HS) codes for every shipment. This too had been challenging.

“We’ve used many carriers, including UPS and freight forwarders,” says Fried. “We wanted to find another option for our international customers – one that cost less than our current offerings, provided a DTP option and also included assistance with HS codes.”

For Adafruit, these and many other of the company’s needs would be quickly met with intelligent solutions once the International Specialists got involved.





## SOLUTIONS

Within three months of partnering, DHL had enabled the electronics distributor to offer a DTP option to customers in over 50 countries by taking advantage of the latest classification and maintenance software – including a searchable database of HS codes to help Adafruit ensure the accuracy of commercial invoices and thereby avoid shipment delays.

Less than a year later, Adafruit was providing DTP in more than 100 countries, while also having added customers in 100+ countries, due in part to the launch of its quarterly subscription product, AdaBox. To reach so many more global customers with orders concentrated in specific areas, Adafruit's continued expansion relies on its ability to secure affordable, reliable delivery service to even more worldwide locations.

Commenting on her experience with DHL Express, Fried says: "The shipping options DHL has provided us cost less than our other options, and they are incredibly fast, which helps us maintain our international customer base. Instead of a customer buying from us once, or only sparingly, they are instead encouraged to buy more often because they know they aren't going to sink too much money into shipping costs."

Adafruit also wants to give its customers the flexibility and convenience of receiving shipments at home and on their schedule. Addressing this need, DHL On Demand Delivery (ODD) enables shippers such as Adafruit to avoid missed deliveries by offering their customers a range of flexible delivery options, plus proactive shipment status notifications via email or SMS. Using a dedicated ODD website, the receiver can select a new delivery date and/or time window or even select an alternate delivery address. The receiver can also authorize DHL to leave a shipment in a specified location without a signature, or hold a delivery while he or she is on vacation. Alternatively, the receiver can request that a shipment be held at the nearest DHL ServicePoint to be picked up later.

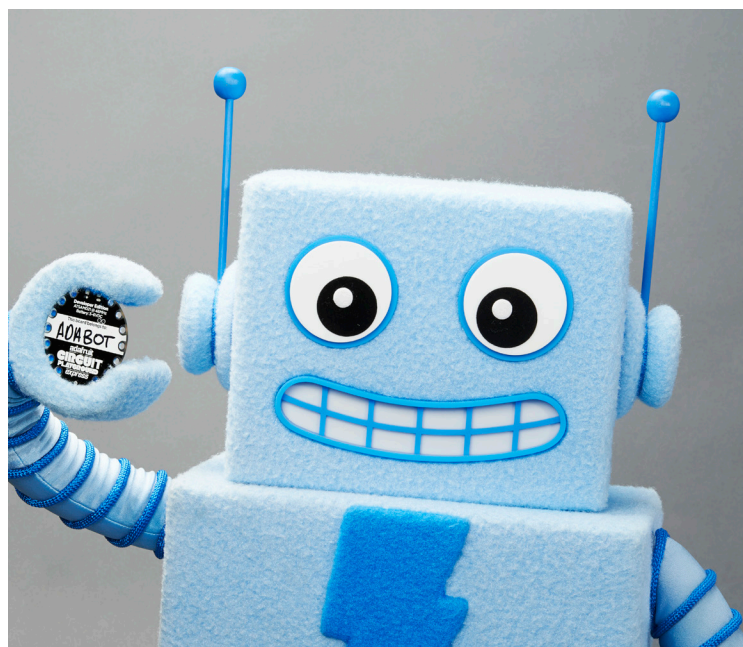
## RESULTS

As Adafruit Industries fulfills its mission of helping Makers easily build electronics at home, company founder Limor Fried appreciates everything DHL has to offer, from world-class delivery options and industry-leading transit times, to convenience features such as paperless invoices and online billing. But it's the human touch that this visionary millennial entrepreneur seems to value most.

"DHL provides dedicated customer service for our account, and we can get answers quickly via our communication method of choice," says Fried. "Our [DHL] sales rep works with us on finding creative solutions when we face challenges. We appreciate that DHL prompts us for feedback and arranges check-ins periodically. Through the meetings, we've been able to improve the workflow we have between our customer support team and DHL, and thus improve the experience for Adafruit customers."

Recognizing that Adafruit has multiple options in terms of shipping providers, DHL is committed to serving this customer with reliable, on-time deliveries to any location in the world. Fried appreciates that DHL has enabled her company to more effectively manage customer expectations by providing very precise responses to every request. When shipping internationally in the past, Fried's electronics engineering company would be forced to disappoint customers with vague responses and broad delivery date estimates. Now, with two DHL pickups each day, orders get out to customers much more quickly.

Summing up the DHL experience, Fried added: "We don't have to rely on our international distributors as much as we had in the past. Now shipping abroad is both reliable and cost-effective. Our teams have been really happy in all their interactions with DHL – from the sales rep, to the customer support staff, to the drivers."



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