

# SUNDAY SPOTLIGHT 31 JULY 2011

## SEAINTEL MARITIME ANALYSIS

### CALLING TO GET A QUOTE

A small shipper obtains only 12 quotes from calling 61 companies

Seven weeks ago, in SeaIntel Sunday Spotlight dated 12 June 2011, we reported on "The Challenges of Getting a Price" where we found only 20, out of the 60 carriers and NVOCCs that were approached, provided a rate quote for a small cargo owner. In that study, all the carriers and NVOCCs were approached by email or by an online web form. Our analysis clearly showed that in the majority of cases the small customer was ignored. This was a curious finding as carriers are clearly in a price war over market share currently.

Since the first study was made, we have received a number of comments that have pointed out, that the normal way to approach the carriers and NVOCCs to get a rate quote is by phone. Therefore, we have chosen to repeat the study,

whether an approach by phone would change the results of the analysis. We would also be reachable by phone to provide any further requested details that the carriers and NVOCCs would need.

Similar to the rate quote test we performed seven weeks ago, where we contacted Carriers and NVOCCs by email, our latest test of obtaining rate quotes by phone uncovers industry-wide challenges. The examples we give in the analysis today are therefore not intended to single out any specific companies, their departments, or their employees. We have this time chosen mainly to mention the identity of the few companies which stand out in a positive way – again because the negative examples are too plentiful and merely illustrate an industry-

### FIGHTING AUTOMATION?

We live in an age of ever increasing automation. Robots sort packages at distribution centers, any online shop worth its salt has the ordering process automated – we even have prototype self-driving cars out there. It is therefore deeply puzzling to hear the new president of the ILA union announce, that one of his key priorities will be to fight automation. His rationale is that he will save jobs. If history is anything to go by, he will not succeed in the long run. At most he will succeed in the short run – with added costs to the US consumer and reduced competitiveness for US exports as a consequence. This was tried 50 years ago and resulted in all port jobs in New York being lost – and operations

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