

# SUNDAY SPOTLIGHT

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## SEAINTEL MARITIME ANALYSIS

### SMALL FORWARDERS = GOOD RESPONSE

New shippers get served very well by smaller forwarders

Inspired by the results of our recent studies performed to gauge the customer experience of a small shipper approaching carriers and large forwarders to obtain a rate quote, we decided it would be worthwhile to contact smaller forwarders to see which experience we would get.

As with our previous studies none of these companies knew we would be calling them for this test.

Most of the forwarders we sampled for this third study, are among those listed as moving less than 15,000 TEUs from Asia to the U.S. and are taken from the middle-range of American Shipper's top-100 NVOCC listing. These are all markedly smaller than the forwarders included in our previous tests.

We did not include very small forwarders. The reason for this

likely they are to cater for the trade lane we were investigating.

In our two previous studies, the results, which were analyzed in SeaIntel Sunday Spotlight issues 12 and 19, we had provided details of small customers' experiences when attempting to get rate quotes by either email or phone from large carriers and large NVOCCs.

Our first study resulted in only 20 out of 60 carriers and large NVOCCs providing a rate quote when requested by email, with the majority of those that were approached simply choosing to ignore the request altogether. The second study, in which rates were requested by phone, had produced similarly disappointing results, with 12 quotes received from 61 inquiries.

This time, the offices contacted were located in the U.S. only

### ARE CUSTOMERS A BURDEN?

During the development of our series of testing various carriers' and forwarders' willingness to provide a new shipper with a rate quote, we have a few times been criticized for this approach. The main bulk of the critique is that we are wasting the sales forces' valuable time and that sales people are trained to spot the people "just shopping for rates" and then ignore them. In today's 3<sup>rd</sup> test we find that the small to medium sized forwarders are almost all characterized by a high degree of willingness to not only help us with the query, but also to attempt to upsell additional services. If this small test is anything to go by, then the future seems to belong to the smaller forwarders while relegating the carriers to

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