

Leveraging International Multi-Modal Transportation to Optimize Supply Chains

13th October 2023: With **Mr. Vanish Ahluwalia**, expert on Global Supply-Chain, International Shipping & Integrated Logistics Solutions, as the guest faculty, this session was on global competitiveness of cargo through multimodal logistics solutions; correct use of right incoterms; ocean freight management; analyzing the cost factors in multi-modal transportation; and understanding supply chain efficiency.



Mr. Vanish Ahluwalia, expert on Global Supply-Chain, International Shipping & Integrated Logistics Solutions, making a detailed presentation on the topic

With general awareness of EXIM trade as an introduction, the speaker spoke of logistics facilities and high traffic giving example of Nhava Sheva that handles maximum export traffic with more than 34% shipments valued more than INR 365000 Crore. He touched upon how **logistics costs influence overall export costs** as hikes in fees contribute to accumulative costs. Trends in import countries also determine cost changes. As of now, India jumps 6 places to rank 38 out of 139 countries on the 7th edition of logistics performance index. Competition with China has to be addressed aggressively for India to get ahead. Thereafter, **the speaker detailed on stakeholders** like custom house agent/broker, freight forwarder/NVOCC (Non-Vessel Operating Common Carriers), shipping lines, transporter, surveyor, consolidator, ICD/CFC/MMLP Operator, container train operators, custom authorities and consignee as well as how their inclusion adds to the costs. He informed of cost reduction by one tenth if sea freight is chosen over air. This mode has become 90% lesser than it was in covered and since then India has made tremendous success.

The audience was also updated in detail with **functions of the stakeholders and their importance in the logistics process** through documentations, negotiations, taking responsibility of consignments' movement from warehouse-to-

warehouse, etc. While describing the process and its time sensitivity, Mr. Ahluwalia urged EPCH to raise a voice against people who paralyze exporters' money by keeping cheques and formulating new policies to protect them.

A question was asked from among the audience that, where should they go when they want to file a complaint against a transporter? The speaker suggested that they could go for better transporters and one should take charge of one's own shipment to save major money. For this, companies like Blackbuck were suggested. They organise, digitize and simplify trucking for every shipper and trucker. The speaker also suggested that the concerned ICD could be asked for the list of consolidators who could help in such cases. In course of the session, it was suggested that the weight of the freight should be calibrated well before giving it out for shipping because it is checked on various checkpoints and if some discrepancy is noticed it would be deported on exporter's own cost.

The speaker spoke about **ULIP (Unified Logistics Interface Platform)** that would have direct and indirect benefits to the shippers/consignees like, Real Time Inventory Management; Support for informed decision making and "Just-in-time" inventory management; Real Time Monitoring; Real-time

process and cargo movement monitoring on a single platform, and Identification of cheaper logistics modes. The **NLP (National Logistics Policy)** was explained. Launched in September 2022 it seeks to cut the current cost of transporting India-made goods internally and to the world by half, by 2030. This is **supported by PM's Gati-Shakti National Master Plan. Part of the policy will be DAP (Delivered at Place)** that means the seller delivers when the goods are placed at the disposal of the buyer on the

arriving means of transport ready for unloading at the named place of destination. The seller bears all risks involved in bringing the goods to the named place; DFC will mean India's most ambitious **Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)** project that is a high-capacity railway corridor exclusively meant for transportation of goods & commodities. The DFCs are expected to be **game changers in the freight scenario and will substantially lower the logistics cost.** ■

Embracing tomorrow's Aesthetics: Upcoming Decor & Furniture Trends

13th October 2023: Ms. Srishti Srivastava, Business Development Associate, Fashion Snoops and her colleague, Mr. Piyush, through an illustrated presentation updated on upcoming trends in the furniture industry and generally demystified trends for the 2024 and 2025 seasons.

Introducing their company, **Mr. Piyush** shared that Fashion Snoop is a 22-year-old US-based trend and design platform serving retailers and manufacturers in 50+ countries. They cover markets such as fashion, media, home, packaging, beauty, hospitality, and many others. In terms of home furniture, they cover interior designing, outdoor furnishing, floor decor, kitchen, houseware, etc. Their forecast research methodology includes research 18 to 24 months in advance, focusing on macro trends that lead to cultural sentiments, moving on to anchor colours, and eventually, design aesthetics that become the core of the forward movement. Then, they have seasonal narratives that lead to trend stories. Their trend platform is divided into three basic criteria: Explore, Track, and Create.

The Explore track consists of foresight, market intelligence, and an acid gallery. The Track part includes retail, live social, live runway, and trade show live. Create involves making mood boards, rapidly building storyboards, creating dynamic colour maps, design directions, etc. They use market tracking tools,



reader and social life, with the help of AI technology. Hence, serving as the bridge between exploration and creativity.

Detailing the trends, **Ms. Srishti Srivastava** focused on macro trends, as it serves as a foundation and inspiration for product launches. She explained the core trends based on their research - firstly, there's

'Unbound Existence' which involves breaking away from conventional life settings due to feeling overwhelmed. Secondly, 'Earth Kind' emphasizes staying connected to the earth and sustainability. Then, there's 'Soul-Centered' focusing on calmness and finding one's inner self. 'Soft Focus' covers subtle light, feminine mellow aspects, and mental health. Lastly, 'Collective Resilience' explores how we feel as a community, and more.

On design aesthetics, the speaker cited four categories and elaborated on two. 'Sentimental' emphasizes the emotional connection to furniture, conveying emotions and approaches. There are three major categories within this: Craft, covering wellness, creation, and longevity; Mythology, focusing on storytelling, revival of ancient aesthetics, etc.; and Cinematic, which aims to break monotony, a preference often seen in the younger generation. The next category is 'Immersive'. It is about the functionality of designs that adapt to specific situations and engage with consumers. The designs are versatile, breaking boundaries to become more functional pieces. This is what the 'Immersive' design aesthetics aim to achieve. ■

Design Talk for Opportunities in India

13th October 2023: **Mr. Gunnar Hoffrichter**, Independent Consultant, Hamburg/Germany spoke on latest trends & forecast; overarching materials/finishes as per décor and furniture market; important materials, finishes, textures; macro trends to understand the cultural shifts across the globe; and future landscape of home decor.



Mr. Hoffrichter started his presentation with his admiration for India's hospitality and culture. Speaking from the buyers' point of view, he suggested ways to help Indian businesses grow. "We all acknowledge the challenges India faces, but I believe India can keep growing. I have some suggestions, such as addressing delays in delivery, improving communication, and navigating reliable sources, which can be tough for buyers," he said and added that India can also enhance its marketing efforts, and early sampling testing is crucial.

Using the expression Carpe Diem (used to urge someone to make the most of the present time and give little thought to

the future), he urged Indian enterprises to seize opportunities with passion and determination. Despite crises like war and economic problems one needs to play on strengths and succeed, he emphasised. Sharing some pointers, the speaker spoke of analyzing the past, present, and future vision that is vital to map product growth and added, "focus on your strengths and work hard in advance for results. Invest in time and understand seasonal events. Market research is essential to identify trends and necessary developments. Invest in tech and machinery." He further asked exporters to address the issue of monotony in product variety and emphasised, "consider traveling and discovering; visit if possible and invest in machinery, showrooms and booths. Think creatively to attract new customers with unique displays and marketing on platforms like Instagram and LinkedIn. Establish a strong online presence to let people know what you sell, who you are, and what makes you unique." Finally, he closed with an encouragement - "India is a progressive nation, and I appreciate the hard work. Let's grow together."

With specialization in strategy, product development and visual merchandising, Mr. Hoffrichter has handled design/product development processes with 20+ years of knowledge in analysis, positioning, purchase and strategic as well as operative product

management and marketing plus brand building. He has over 30 years in the trade with experience in creativity & design orientation, having worked for brands, such as JOOP! Living and Lambert. He has successfully implemented new product groups & lines and built agency networks; communicated with internal and external interfaces and coordinated meetings, presenting the results both internally as well as to external audiences. ■



Successful Online Marketing Strategies for Global Growth

14th October 2023: With **Mr. Manuj Bajaj**, CEO, GreyBox Technologies, as the guest faculty, this session was on the rapidly evolving digital landscape; innovative ways to connect with online customers; global growth strategies; and gaining insights into market entry, localization and global market trends.

In a very interactive and engaging session, the speaker started with a direct question to the audience - "what are the biggest challenges faced by them as an exporter in finding new buyers?" The explanations and information on the topic followed as Mr. Bajaj touched upon regional demographics of India's target import nations, connecting with sellers, working with them and thereafter, retaining them by keeping one's export company competitive as well as well-informed of what the buyers want, how to market one's products and always strive to bridge communication gaps if any. This was intercepted with questions from the audience and Mr. Manuj Bajaj answering them.

Mr. Manuj Bajaj detailed about challenges faced in reaching the right buyers with cost of overseas exhibitions being expensive but not giving positive return on investment for some; where is the demand if there is any, who should one connect



Manuj Bajaj, CEO, GreyBox Technologies, interacting with the audience during his presentation, in the seminar on 'Successful Online Marketing Strategies for Global Growth'

with to sell one's manufactured products and how much time will it take to establish a connection with the target buyers. Explaining solutions/voice to find the right countries with the right buyers and connect with people with the right designation, the speaker demonstrated a procedure to use the right Google tools to have a positive impact on exports.

He introduced Google ads keyword panel which is the free tool that tells us about the products being searched and in what country was it searched more. This provides exporters with more precision/ better results and lesser expense. He added on how an exporter can see demand of the product through a geographical stand point throughout the world and all along the year. In specific nations one could go to specific provinces and specific County where one's product was search the most. Further one could also check which companies are already selling there and in what percentage.

Among other pointers, the speaker shared that LinkedIn is the best and the smartest platform to grow a business and how exporters could



exploit it to their advantage by going to the 'people' tab and then choosing filters like 'purchasing and sourcing' in the job type and in that too, searching people from India and connecting with them.

Mr. Bajaj also shared about an interesting system that reveals their number through LinkedIn. A third party app 'Lusha' that helps to extract numbers. The only problem with LinkedIn is, people are not much online there, where an average of screen time for Facebook is 45 mins a day while for LinkedIn is 17 minutes a week. He also shared the perfect hack to get positive responses on one's email. Excerpts from the speaker's suggestions on effective communication: One must not copy templates from other companies to reach out through email else it would result

in flat 0% response, because it's repetitive; Do not have a 'me me me' theme but add a mutual benefit theme to it; What is done is done, but now its about how one's course in a particular subject makes them competent to their company goals; and video messages or mails are way better. In closing Mr. Bajaj exclaimed, "One needs to perfect targeting or communication, then you've hacked Marketing!"

A solution strategist, online marketing consultant, best-selling author, speaker and digital marketing and profit coach, Mr. Bajaj has been a trusted advisor and business growth strategist to over 4700+ businesses, across 11 countries, from start-ups, SMBs all the way up to large enterprises including Fortune 50 companies. ■

Delegation from RoDTEP Committee led by Chairman, Shri G K Pillai visits IHGF Delhi Fair-Autumn/Furniture 2023, interacts with EPCH member exporters

13th October 2023: On Day 2 of the IHGF Delhi Fair Autumn 2023 and Delhi Fair Furniture, a RoDTEP delegation led by Shri. G.K.Pillai, Chairman, RoDTEP Committee (RoDTEP stands for the Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Products Scheme); and Mr. Gautam Ray, Member-RoDTEP Committee, along with Sr. Officers from Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India. They visited the stalls across product categories from various craft clusters.

Thereafter, the Chairman-RoDTEP interacted with the exporters and discussed of reasonably considering remission of duties, based on inputs to be submitted through the relevant data formats circulated amongst member exporters. EPCH has been making representations at the concerned

Govt. departments towards remission of these duties on export products, to make them cost-competitive and create a level playing field for them in the global market. The meeting held on this matter was attended by Mr. Dileep Baid, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Naresh Bothra, President, IHGF Delhi Fair Autumn '23 / Furniture Fair '23, Members of Committee of Administration - EPCH, Mr. O.P Prahladka, Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra, Mr. K.L. Ramesh, Mr. Avdesh Agarwal, Mr. Hansarj Baheti, Mr. Girish Agarwal and Mr. Hemant Juneja; and other prominent member exporters - Mr. Rajat Asthana and Rajendra Gupta. ■



Crafting Success through Innovative Packaging Strategies

15th October 2023: **Dr. Madhab Chakraborty**, Joint Director and Regional Head, Indian Institute of Packaging (Delhi) (Retd.) and global packaging consultant, through an illustrated presentation, explained about understanding consumer psychology; innovations in packaging & design interventions; effective packaging design strategies; and essential elements for sustainable packaging.

The session also saw the participation of Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra, immediate Past Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Ravi K Passi, Past Chairman and COA Member, EPCH; Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, Regional Convenor, EPCH NWR Region; and Mr. Naresh Bothra, President, IHGF Delhi Fair Autumn 2023 and Delhi Fair Furniture, who also shared their insights.

Dr. Chakraborty began his presentation by quoting the future sales goals of India "3 guna 30 tak" and stated that this goal would be impossible to achieve without the right type of packaging. He said, packaging of a product does not merely serve the purpose of packing a product anymore; rather



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it is a dynamic, multifaceted tool of marketing that should be dealt with, strategically. He highlighted that the packaging of a product would fulfil its potential only if it has a unique design concept, is sustainable, is aesthetically pleasing and is acceptable by the buyers.

The speaker stressed on the fact that a product must be protected and delivered in its freshness to the buyers, and a proper packaging is an essential tool for this purpose. He demonstrated the various types of packaging currently used and that can be used taking 2 categories of products into consideration, i.e. Marble Stone products and Glass Products. He explained how each product has a different fragility factor, depending upon its shape, size and weight, and each product might require a different type of packaging. He suggested that each packaging must be customised according to the product and then tested before dispatch.

Thereafter, Dr. Chakraborty described packaging as an art, science and technology, and defined it as a silent salesman, in terms of being a tool for marketing the product. Each product packaging must undergo impact tests and drop tests from different heights, facing different sides and edges to ensure the product's safety in the final usage and application.



Dr. Madhab Chakraborty, expert on packaging enumerates how one can use innovative packaging to add value to export products



“The packaging must be able to withstand great impacts, different weather conditions and temperatures. It must be pilfer - proof and must add a value addition to the product,” he added and used multiple methods to demonstrate the right type of packaging for each product, that is both sustainable and cost - effective, including a live demonstration of the honeycomb paper packaging, paper - based lock packaging and hard cardboard packaging and through video clips demonstrating the process of the designing of each type of packaging. He explained how the honeycomb packaging has no polymers, no synthetics and provides cushioning to the products.

Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra, immediate Past Chairman, EPCH, spoke about the practical aspect of packaging, focusing on the 4 challenges faced by the exporters, that are : 1. To design Sustainable packaging, 2. Packaging should be economical, 3. The Face of the package must be attractive and 4. Waste management or Carbon footprint management. He stated that the packaging a seller uses primarily depends on the needs and wants of the customer and must vary accordingly. Mr. Ravi K Passi, Past Chairman and COA Member, EPCH, added about how the ratio of the pricing of a product and pricing of the packaging must be maintained. Mr. Naresh Bothra, President, IHGF Delhi Fair Autumn 2023 and Delhi Fair Furniture, discussed how over the

years, the need for packaging has changed from simply being transit-worthy for wholesale of products to being aesthetically pleasing and attractive to cater to online needs of customers. He then spoke about the need of sustainability in packaging of products and thanked the speakers for shedding light on the importance of the issue.

Following these insights, Dr. Chakraborty discussed the need of EPR or ‘Extended Producers Responsibility’ that concerns the contribution of the producer of a product to recycle the materials they use in their products and packaging. “The final aspect of packaging encompasses marking and labelling of a product on its package. The marking must be readable and understandable by the recipient, it doesn't necessarily have to be in English, the language can change according to the convenience of the buyer. The label must be tamper proof as it serves the purpose of brand identification,” Dr. Chakraborty emphasised. He concluded the session with the demonstration of a paper - based, suitcase like packaging that is easy to open and close and protects the product well from any type of damage and allows the product to “get a good sleep at night. ”

The session ended with Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, Regional Convenor, EPCH NWR Region, felicitating the speaker and thanking him for the insights. ■