

As one of the leading supply chain companies, CEVA Logistics is pleased to bring you interesting stories and valuable information from the world of logistics. With this article CEVA logistics offers you an unique insight into the world of Oceanfreight. Ivan Latanision, Senior Vice President Product Management of INTTRA, gives his vision on what future role IT can play in booking, tracking and tracing cargo.



# Booking cargo as easy as a plane ticket

Logistics professionals are continuously looking for every competitive edge they can get. Next to reliable freight services, speed is critical for shippers and freight forwarders. Delays caused by ill-prepared, incorrect or incomplete shipping documents all add up to the logistical nightmares of any logistics service provider – let alone documents that do not comply with the strictest customs and security regulations.

To address these issues and help speed up the entire process of booking cargo, the oceanfreight industry has turned to IT over the past few decades. This shows by the development and investment in a host of IT offerings. Yet, for all the bold promises IT holds – ease of use, cost savings and increased efficiency, to name but a few – the question is whether booking cargo today is really as transparent and intuitive a process as booking a passenger ticket or making a hotel reservation online? We talked with INTTRA to find out more and discuss the pertinent issues. Along with CargoSmart and GT Nexus, INTTRA is one of three carrier-sponsored shipping portals that shippers and freight forwarders can log on to for booking, tracking and tracing cargo.

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The oceanfreight industry has massively turned to IT

## A lack of innovation?

Explaining why INTTRA was founded, Ivan Latanision, Senior Vice President of Product Management, says: “An original group of ocean carriers, including Maersk Line and CMA CGM, started INTTRA some 12 years ago to help the industry achieve certain efficiencies and cost savings with respect to e-commerce. The way we defined e-commerce was based on certain services INTTRA could provide to a large group of carriers, shippers and freight forwarders through a single connection. Think of ocean schedules, bookings,

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Initiatives like INTTRA's should be seen as a call to action



*Ivan Latanision is Senior Vice President Product Management and leads INTTRA's global product management, software development, engineering and platform services organizations. Previously Ivan led product development, corporate technology and operations functions for online data, information and commercial software businesses at SourceMedia. Before Ivan provided solutions for the secure distribution of digital content, integrating e-commerce and content management at Reciprocal.*

### Real-time information

The development of mobile apps is another recent innovation, which looks quite promising, according to Latanision. “We are seeing the first wave of mobile apps focusing on ocean schedules and in some cases we have seen carriers providing more visibility into shipment processing through their own systems”, comments Latanision. “From our perspective we are interested in mobile apps in relation to how they fit our customers’ business processes and workflows”, he adds. “Where I think shipping portals can add value is in offering customers more transaction visibility, for instance into things like bookings, shipping instructions or even status messages. One of the frequent comments we get from our user base is that they want to get real-time information on exceptions and alerts, so they know when something that was supposed to happen, didn’t happen.”

### Email, phone and fax

Talking about what is holding back the industry in terms of taking up IT, Latanision says that moving from a burdensome manual to a completely automated process is probably the greatest challenge. “I would say today the global e-commerce shipping business represents about one third of all potential transactions to be automated, with the remaining two thirds comprising email with structured attachments, or phone and fax,” he explains. “From the research we have done into why users don’t execute more automated bookings it appears that one of the main reasons is that the response times from the carriers are found to be too slow. You would expect a response time of a few seconds, but the reality today is that it is more likely in the range of two hours or even more.” So while the overall industry response time is not as rapid as shippers and freight forwarders would like to see, according to Latanision, he thinks shipping portals like INTTRA can solve that problem through technology to help carriers produce instant or two-second confirmations.

### Improving data quality

Asked to comment on what the future holds in terms of advanced technology, Latanision says: “What I think we are going to see within the industry is more real-time information exchange between trading partners. EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) today is the standard format for electronic communication. I expect to see, as in most other industries, real-time communication via web services. Perhaps not in a short while, but certainly in the long haul. Improving data quality is also a really important component of making e-commerce the norm rather than the exception. Just imagine a shipper is in the middle of a booking process and they receive confirmation back from the carrier saying that only certain equipment types are accepted for certain ports; this would be helpful to know.”

So, will booking cargo ever become as easy as booking a plane ticket online? Latanision: “In principle yes, but IT has the potential to go one step further; not just booking the space but delivering real-time information on customs requirements at port of origin and destination, and providing shippers and freight forwarders with all the data they need at their per rs(ormatiothecompoentsae of aet)1ppematg reto know.-. 2 Td ip the ito knision:

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