

Q&A | TIBA

Javier Romeu, TIBA Corporate Sales Manager, challenges the industry to adopt e-commerce to achieve ‘easier, faster and cheaper’ shipping for everyone.



Can you tell me about the origins of TIBA?

A: TIBA was founded in 1975 mainly as a customs broker in Valencia. Our parent company, the Romeu Group, was by then already very involved in shipping agency business so moving into customs brokerage and later freight forwarding just made sense. In fact, vertical integration is an essential aspect of our Group. Since then, we first grew in Spain (Barcelona, Alicante, Madrid, etc.), then in the 80s we kept the expansion to other Spanish ports and opened in Portugal. With the 90s came a second expansion to Mexico and Algeria. In the last 10 years we have opened new markets like Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde. And this year, we have recently opened in Panama and we are actively looking for new opportunities in South America.

In terms of services, we offer the typical broad range of freight forwarding services like seafreight,

airfreight and trucking. We are particularly strong in customs brokerage too, holding AEO status both in Spain and Portugal. But our strategy in terms of service portfolio is to target certain niche markets like foodstuffs, wines and spirits, bulk liquids (flexitanks) and sanitary products among others.

When did your company start using INTRA's services and why?

A: We started our cooperation with INTRA back in 2006 thanks to the excellent interface provided by Valenciaport, the IT arm of the Port of Valencia. Our company is very IT-minded. We see IT as a competitive advantage and thus our partnership with INTRA was a no brainer. Thanks to the link to INTRA, we have been able to streamline our processes, reduce costs and offer our customers a much better service.

Through INTRA we now do bookings, get tracking status and exchange information with our partner shipping lines.

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How has the INTRA e-commerce network benefited your business?

A: I'd group the advantages in four categories:

Flexibility

We can get answers or booking confirmations outside of normal (shipping line) working hours.

Direct Cost Savings

Some partner shipping lines share with us their cost savings in the documentation process by the way of a reduced B/L fee.

Indirect Cost Savings

Our operational teams do save time. We've measured it to around 5% overall productivity gain in seafreight export operations. We achieve this by typing every bit of information only once, by having some information returned to us by INTRA (directly updating our system), etc.

Visibility

Our tracking service is better and more often updated.


"In 2012, we sent INTRA over 300,000 messages for Spain and Portugal alone. We are looking into integrating Mexico too, which is a big operation for us."

Finally, what trends are you seeing in containerized shipping e-commerce? What else can INTRA provide to make shipping easier for you?

A: I firmly believe the shipping industry in general is years behind in terms of use of technology to streamline communication, reduce costs, improve timings, add visibility, etc. While paper airline tickets have virtually disappeared in most of the world, we still see paper bills of lading in most of the shipments. It's not only the shipping industry though, customs procedures are particularly prone to paper and slow processes.

Therefore, the trends that we would like to see in

containerized e-commerce all relate to making the whole process easier, faster and cheaper:

- Standardized quotes from carriers in computer-readable formats.
- Standardized, computer-readable, comprehensive, reliable schedules.
- Better integration of INTRA's solutions by carriers.
- A certain move inland, i.e. INTRA's solutions adapted for customs, links with shippers, container haulage, etc.
- Electronic invoicing.
- Better tracking, as some areas or carriers don't provide accurate information. 

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