

Logistically speaking

[Martin Fullard](#) • [November 28, 2016](#)



Charged with the physical movement of material to and from an event site, as well as for contractors providing customs clearance, lifting, handling, trucking and storage services on-site, the logistics industry is a competitive space with a focus on customer service.

The exhibition logistics industry has seen many changes in the last decade, including a huge increase in smaller industry focused logistics companies, especially in key event locations such as Germany and the UAE, says Agility Fairs & Events Logistics business development director Garcia Newell.

“Logistics contractors have also raised the bar in customer service. With the exit of the UK from the EU looming, there potentially could be Customs border formalities; watch this space,” he adds.

Event logistics association the IELA says logistics is the key for success, whether a customer wants to hold an event in their home town or the other side of the earth. “One of the new and interesting challenges is the differences in national regulations. IELA is working on the compilation of firm OH&S guidelines in compliance with its standards of performance for all members to follow. These guidelines are aimed at being the minimum standards if local OH&S guidelines are not strict enough,” says IELA’s executive director Elizabeth Niehaus.

These standards are vital to ensuring a credible industry, according to Ravinder Sethi, founder and chief executive officer, RE Rogers, who says quality and regulations are vital in a changing world. “I’m playing a lead role in the various associations (UFI, IEIA, IAEE, and IELA) where I’m involved at the highest level.

People ask what organisers should demand from the logistics sector, and the answer is obvious – giving a high level of service at competitive prices . And, of course, make sustainability and H&S a must in its operations,” he adds.

“But, I’d also ask what logistics companies should demand from organisers. I ask for service providers to be treated as partners, and not contractors. More and more organisers very sadly appoint us with royalties and commissions to be more relevant than the quality of services we offer.”

“The geographics are changing rapidly in India today. The market is expanding from the traditional Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore locations to cities as Chennai, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Goa, etcetera. So, our challenge is to remain market leaders with these changing geographics as well.

He adds that having developed a presence in Goa, Chennai and Ahmedabad is proof that RE Rogers is meeting this challenge head-on. “The logistics sector will pretty much remain the same from an operations point of view. One significant change would be giving Sustainability and health and safety a top priority in these operations,” he adds.

Newell reaffirms the importance of association support. “I am a great believer in strength in numbers. Being part of associations such as IELA, ESSA and others allows logistics and other contractors to come together to discuss and set industry standards that enhances the overall show logistics experience. Being a member of an association is very important, and is much more than joining and using the logo for promotion; to really make the association work for your company, members must get involved with issues that are pertinent to our industry,” he adds.

There are also technical innovations occurring, with a number of logistics companies creating IT solutions such as show/event dedicated on line web portals and traffic/on site management systems, but Newell says having a strict USP helps you stand out.

“I believe its our ability to listen more than we talk. By listening to our customers we have been able to understand more about their actual needs, and then having taken everything on board, tailor logistics solutions that are a match for what is required,” he adds.

Regional challenges are also afoot, according to CTA. “Asia is an exciting market and we are pleased in the growth that we’ve seen within our first two years of doing business there. China is a key producer and consumer in a global technology ecosystem characterized by interdependence and fast-paced innovation. Companies need to be aware of Chinese rules as they change are often unclear. Groups like the U.S. Commercial Services office and American Chamber of Commerce (Shanghai) can give companies some guidance,” he adds.

“One key thing for companies planning to exhibit in a show in China is to understand that the freight forwarder is the person who is going to get their product to and from country (customs) and to and from the show floor. While companies can select their own freight forwarder for shipping to and from country, the show organiser will assign the freight forward who will be responsible for picking your product up at China customs and delivering it to the show floor. Also, many local service companies do not accept U.S. credit cards like American Express so it is good to discuss payment options with your local vendors.”

Source: <http://www.c-mw.net/logistically-speaking/>