

## INDUSTRY FOCUS

# Bringing it all together

*Choosing a reliable freight and logistics provider makes a considerable difference to the client in terms of costs, reliability, time frames, quality, etc. Leading operators identified some of the key factors when making a choice.*

## Thomas Smith Group

Joe Gerada  
Managing director

**How important is it for a company in the logistics industry to offer a holistic service that covers all type of cargo – be it sea, land or air?**

A logistics provider needs to be able to present a full solution to his customer, therefore it follows that it is very important to be able to provide all modes of transport in addition to warehousing and all that goes with it.

While this may not mean that the logistics supplier does this via services which he himself operates, he needs to be able to take responsibility, and ensure a high level of quality for all he provides. That clearly means that it is not simply a matter of “trading in shipping services”, i.e. purchasing and selling whatever is available – as many do. A serious supplier needs to be in full control of what he is providing, and have a proper system of governance of his own subcontractors and suppliers, so that he can deliver to a standard his client associates him with, and expects of him.

## Express Trailers

Franco Azzopardi  
Chairman and CEO

**What are the current trends in the local market i.e. as the economy continues to evolve have the demands and requirements of the thousands of businesses operating in Malta changed over time?**

That Malta is an island and that robust and reliable connections between Malta and mainland Europe will always be needed, is a reality that will never change. The shift that we as Express Trailers have been seeing is not solely related to the type of commodities that are being transported (from textiles in the 1970s to pharma in more recent years for example), but also in the quality expectations and risk mitigation mindset that more sophisticated importers and exporters expect. This means that today,

most businesses' concern is no longer just related to how their cargo is going to be transported from A to B but who will be doing it.

This is why we don't just talk about transport but we look at logistics: this includes all the set-up and work that takes place behind the scenes and which most customers are not always aware of. Is the logistics operator offering a safe environment for my cargo? Can he guarantee a reliable and timely pick-up and delivery? Is my transportation company equipped with the right quality certified trailers? Are human resources skilful and apt at effectively managing all the intricacies of customs in various jurisdictions? Is the right packaging being applied? More importantly, can my operator handle all the logistic risk implications in case something goes wrong?

The requirements of our customers may intrinsically have not changed much but the environment in which logistics operators like us operate has become sophisticated trying to match the demands of our customer, be it JIT supply chain or regulated cold chain.

What really changed is that standards need to be high in an increasingly competitive sector. Only companies that keep investing in resources can keep up with this evolution.

## Freight Zone

John Zerafa  
Director

**Key players operating in the local transshipment and logistics industry in Malta are today offering services not only for Malta inbound trades but also cross trades where Malta will not be the final destination. How important is it to offer such a one-stop and holistic approach for your clients?**

In a globalised world, a freight forwarder must be able to move cargo from any point of origin to any destination. It is crucial for a freight logistics company to be backed by global partnerships and agents so as to provide alternatives when asked for practical solutions. This is even more so when services have to be provided in complex and challenging regions in terms of routing, transshipment, warehousing, customs procedures, airfreight, sea and road transport.

An international freight forwarder should therefore specialise in particular regions and get in-depth working knowledge to be able to offer solutions that would support clients with their specific Supply Chain requirements.

In 2010, FreightZone's global dimension took it to the world's second largest economy, China. For the last 10 years the company has acquired an in-depth knowledge

related to the supply chain sector in the region. The contracts varied from monitoring manufacturing processes for renowned European manufacturers to handling of project cargoes, warehousing solutions and transshipment operations for both air and sea shipments.

Our presence in Asia has proved to be an asset and enables us to offer a comprehensive service to clients seeking both professional advice and market knowledge in the region.

## BAS Ltd

Mario Debono  
Deputy general manager

**Certain industries require a swift and efficient logistical service that goes beyond normal transshipment and freight services. How do courier services fit in?**

We recognise that certain companies need a bespoke solution for their mission critical shipments. A solution that cannot be addressed through the traditional express services being offered by the integrators. To address this, we launched DHL Global Forwarding's SameDay product.

With SameDay, shipments of virtually any size or weight will be picked up and delivered to destination within hours. The service utilises a 'next flight out' concept to more than 220 countries and territories with a door-to-door service, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Customers benefit from proactive tracking and monitoring from pickup through delivery, web tracking and reporting capabilities combined with proof of delivery confirmation via phone, fax, e-mail or cell phone.

## Carmelo Caruana Co. Ltd

Davide Biron  
CEO Hili Logistics

**You hear consumers complaining that delivery of orders through local retail agents is taking much longer than promised. This is a chronic problem for a small island like Malta that is not part of the European mainland and it is certainly a serious problem that can lead to serious loss of repeat business for local agents/retailers. How can a strong and reliable partner in the shipping and transshipment industry improve the turnaround of delivery of goods? In other words, can a reliable freight partner improve the client satisfaction of a local business concern?**

Increasing the volume of transshipment across product categories can help make goods more readily available for the local market.

The opportunity to use Malta as an international hub for logistics for goods transiting in and out of Europe and into Africa has been discussed for a while and it is time to pursue this opportunity in earnest. Malta could compete well with Middle Eastern ports and some example of this is already evident in some sectors. Of course, any plan to this end needs to include a more efficient, larger and modern port infrastructure and warehousing able to host various types of products.

Attracting more shipping line routes is key to ensure the appropriate connectivity and this must also be high on the national agenda.

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