

► WCA Family of Logistic Networks™

November 2005

# INTER *Active*

► WCA Family of Logistic Networks™



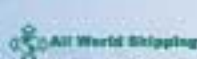
**YOUR PARTNER CONNECTION**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual APLN Conference 2005

September 21-24, 2005, Bangkok, Thailand

**Coming of Age**  
**APLN grows up**

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## The president says:

There's no doubt that the future is brighter for the members of WCA Family of Logistic Networks than for those forwarders who try to go it alone. Every day I personally meet or communicate with many members that really appreciate all that we try and do for our membership. The vast majority of our members have gained a lot from being part of the WCA Family and we are extremely proud of what we have been able to achieve on their behalf in such a short period of time.

Today the WCA Family has an infrastructure that is designed to provide even more value-added services for our members. In everything we do, our sole and simple motivation is to benefit as many members as possible. Because of the tremendous response to the first edition of InterActive we are confident this publication will grow to be yet another great benefit for our members. We will be placing more features about members all round the world and we'll talk with them about their needs for the future. We feel this will help employees of our member companies better acquaint themselves with fellow members, as well as helping them to put a face to the name of many of the people they deal with from day to day. We also plan to provide you all with ongoing tips and education about how to work even more effectively with fellow members. We feel this will help improve member to member relations and help the entire staff to realise how they can best work with members. Areas like legal liability insurance, cargo insurance, sales leads, rate requests – and others – can all be made even more efficient, providing we educate everyone as to what is expected and needed to create better relations between members.

It all starts here, with three members featured and some hopefully useful news on technology developments. I hope you enjoy this edition and I very much value your input about future editions.

*David*

David L Yokeum, president, WCA Family of Logistic Networks

**INTERActive**  
Update for everyone in the WCA Family of Logistic Networks

Published by: WCA  
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WCA Family of Logistic Networks®

### CONFERENCE & EVENT SCHEDULE WCA FAMILY OF LOGISTIC NETWORKS CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Event	Dates	Venue	Delegates	Website
11th ANNUAL WCA WORLDWIDE CONFERENCE	15-18 February, 2006	Bangkok, Thailand	500-600	<a href="http://www.wcafamilly.com/meeting/wca2006/info/">http://www.wcafamilly.com/meeting/wca2006/info/</a>
1st ANNUAL IGLN WORLDWIDE CONFERENCE	19-21 February, 2006	Bangkok, Thailand	200-300	<a href="http://www.wcafamilly.com/meeting/igln2006/info/">http://www.wcafamilly.com/meeting/igln2006/info/</a>
1st SINO-AMERICAS REGIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS CONFERENCE	26 - 28 March, 2006	Vancouver, Canada	500-600	TBA
3rd ANNUAL SINO-INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS CONFERENCE	14-17 June, 2006	Guangzhou, China	900-1000	TBA

# BOOM TIME

the latest annual meeting of APLN was the biggest and best yet

The Advanced Professional Logistics Network really lived up to its name in September, when the third annual worldwide conference was held in Bangkok, Thailand. Not only was there a record turnout of members keen to take advantage of the opportunity to meet and negotiate with their counterparts, but the amount of solid business conducted also grew dramatically.

Everyone went away happy. "We had so many thank-yous from the attendees," said APLN president David Yokeum. "Members have always been most complimentary, but compared to last year, the reaction surprised even me."

APLN showed it has come of age this year, with evidence of the tremendous relationships being built among the network's large and mainly regional logistics service providers. One of the most noticeable aspects of the conference was the way in which agents in the group are giving more of their shipments to fellow members, demonstrating how APLN has matured into a very strong and solid group. "This is a great group of agents – very aggressive, in the most positive way," commented executive vice president Mark Mairowitz.

A typical reaction was that of Mackenzie Fribance, general manager and chief operating officer of OCS Express Freight & Logistics, who made the trip from Canada to be in Bangkok for his second APLN meeting. "I was once again very impressed with the quality and organisation of the conference. It was first class – all the way," he said.





*At the cocktail reception: (left to right) Peter Halpaus (IFF), Ander Lerclerc and Moira Leslie (Advantex) and Ed Zarach (EZI Logistics)*

“Upon returning home, we have been receiving a great deal of communication with partners we met in Bangkok and have generated new business, leads and substantial opportunities in no less than fifteen countries since we returned. This is all new business opportunities as a result of the meetings and all in just one week. I am very excited about the coming year and confident that we will begin to develop more than just solid agents but actually form some true partnerships that are focused on regular and sustainable business growth.”

Based at the Plaza Athenee hotel in the Thai capital, the APLN meeting followed the usual pattern of a few short presentations on new



*(above and below) The one-on one meetings were a great success as usual*

developments for members and items of topical interest, with as much time as possible devoted to enabling attendees to get to know each other better.

There was a cocktail reception, a golf tournament, a day of sightseeing and a gala dinner which briefly transformed Bangkok into a Western-style saloon, but the feature most delegates most liked was – as before – the unique on-on-one meeting



planner which meant they could maximise the time spent at the conference.

Indeed, one or two members were left reeling at the sheer energy of the event. Mehernosh Currawalla, director of FAK Cargo Dynamics in India, summed up the conference in one word as “hectic”. I am wondering if [the organisers] could weave in some way of slowing the pace a bit. The net effect was that I was not able to sleep for more than four or five hours each night. One wanted to get the maximum from the conference, and thus a punishing schedule was imperative.”

But even Mehernosh was certain the effort was worthwhile. “Without doubt a fantastic platform [for generating new business] and just what I wanted,” he enthused.

The APLN organisation was enhanced this year with staff members being brought in from regional offices around the world both to look after their “local” member delegates and to learn more about just what goes on behind the scenes at these events. “That was quite an investment,”

said David Yokeum, “but we needed to make it so that our staff could experience for themselves what it takes to make a successful event. Also, they have to remain close to the members – although APLN is growing, it must never grow distant from the membership.”

The general mood of the meeting was perhaps best summed up by John Ford, president of CaribEx Worldwide, whose comment was short and to the point. “Again, and again, and again...excellent meeting. Your folks really have the whole thing down. Very productive trip for us.”

Given APLN’s commitment to finding more top-quality agents to enhance the network even further, basing selection on the criteria that to become a member you need to show you are willing to give your shipments to fellow members, next year’s annual worldwide conference will undoubtedly be an even greater success. It is scheduled for September 13-16, 2006, to take place as before in Bangkok.



# ACROSS THE BORDER

**The main focus of WCA and CGLN member Transsphere International is Russian traffic. Within the group, freight forwarding is carried out by ZAO Transsphere International and OY Transsphere Ltd. The latter has its base in Vantaa, Finland, strategically placed for the border, which is the busiest border in all of Russia, while ZAO has its headquarters in St Petersburg, with a representative office in Moscow which opened in 2003**

The group was founded in 1996 by Sergei Shidlovsky and Esa Heikkinen. Shidlovsky's knowledge of Russia's logistics market and Heikkinen's 20 years of experience made it possible to achieve the aim of providing transportation of consolidated

cargos from Finland for Russian small and middle business companies. In the first year, Mikhail Shidlovsky and Sergey Skorik joined the management to develop the company into a leader in the Russian market.

In 2004 Transsphere got

together with Moscow-based SPSR-Express, a major Russian courier service delivering express mail nationwide, with 52 branches and 40 representative offices covering some 2,500 cities.

Now the group is building the



▲ *Sergey Skorik*



▲ *WCAF executive vice president Mark Maiowitz (centre) in Helsinki recently with Petri Aalto (left) and Eugene Apassov, Transsphere's directors of marketing and international traffic in Finland and Russia respectively*



▼ *Mikhail Shidlovsky*

Transsphere Terminal customs and logistics complex in St Petersburg. The project is scheduled for completion in 3 phases, starting with a customs terminal which will be put in operation in the fourth quarter of 2005. This will include a warehouse, a three-story administrative building with a customs station and customs brokers, café, conference room, customs warehouse, parking for 200 heavy road-trains and full security, modern monitoring systems turning the territory of the complex into a customs control zone.

The second phase will include



► Sergey Shidlovsky

a hotel for drivers, distributors' warehouses, a container terminal with a parking for 50 refrigerator containers and a utility zone, while the third phase will include a branch railway line from Ruchy station to the warehouses.

The company says the main advantage of the terminal is its location in the vicinity of KAD (the ring road) close to the railway near Ruchy station. The station to handle freight from Finland will be located at the entrance to St



▲ Esa Heikkinen

Petersburg and access ways to the railway will allow handling inter-modal freight, transferring it from road to railway transport and vice versa.

"Altogether in Transsphere Group we have about 1,700 people working, which is not bad in 9 years! Our company is very active all the time and we are developing our business areas constantly," says Petri Aalto,

director of marketing and international traffic.

"In Transsphere we have at the moment about 200 people working in freight forwarding. Additionally in the Transsphere group we have a separate airfreight company specialising in Russian domestic air freight which is also GSSA for Finnair in Russia and General Agent for Pulkovo."

#### FACTBOX

1996 - foundation of Transsphere International and OY Transsphere Ltd.

2002 - Transsphere International was appointed an official consultant of the St. Petersburg Administration for transportation logistics

2003 - foundation of Transsphere Air

2004 - Transsphere Group of Companies was joined by the largest Russian express-mail operator SPSR-Express

2005 - opening of Transsphere Terminal logistics complex



**The China International Freight Forwarders Association (CIFA), under the sponsorship of the Chinese ministry of commerce, is the largest freight forwarder association in China and represents more than 5,000 forwarders. CIFA is also the exclusive agent in the People's Republic for CGLN, the WCA Family network designed to bring Chinese and foreign logistics providers together.**

To a large extent the close cooperation between CGLN and CIFA has been the result of the good relationship between the presidents of the two organisations – David Yokeum of CGLN and Luo Kaifu of CIFA. The partnership is a world first in the industry; CGLN and the WCA Family are the first and only networks ever to receive such a significant endorsement.

Luo has immense experience of the industry. He

has lived and worked in the US and was chairman of the huge Sinotrans group, controlling some 70,000 staff. David Yokeum regards Luo as his mentor. Luo told InterActive recently in Beijing that forwarding in the world's most dynamic economy is fast catching up with the rest of the world.

"Freight forwarding in China has a long history – since the founding of our country – but from the point of view of modern logistics it is young, having started around 10-15 years ago," says Luo, who is also a vice president of FIATA.

"Because of the great potential of the market – both exports and imports are growing at maybe 20-30 percent each year – the industry is growing very fast, not only in terms of modernisation but also revenue and profitability. Twenty five years ago there was only one – state owned – freight forwarder, which was Sinotrans.

"Officially we say there are about 6,000 registered freight forwarders today." But Luo explains that since the registration process was relaxed in July 2005, now there could be "more than 20,000 in total – nobody knows how many, it's very difficult to get exact numbers."

Today, if the industry in mature markets, especially the US, Europe and Japan, is on a level of 10, "China probably stands at a level of maybe 6 to 7. That means [in terms of] knowledge, experience, operational skills and ways of transportation, service and IT systems. So far, in my judgement, we are modernising very quickly.

"Because most Chinese forwarders realise it is very important for them to reform from the traditional [mode of] transportation to modern logistics. You can see almost every forwarder in China training their people. They spend a lot of money on training – either knowledge or IT – and are also spending a lot of money to reform mechanics – for example they use GPS on trucking [and] on ocean-going vessels." For more than seven years Luo was chairman of the board of Sinotrans

and he points out that this huge operator was using GPS 10 years ago, while all Cosco ocean-going vessels have had GPS for “at least” a decade.

The dominating driver behind the Chinese freight forwarding industry’s desire for reform and improvement has been the country’s entry into the World Trade Organisation, says Luo. Since then, “most of the big world operators – we call them the ‘jumbo’ forwarders – have come into China. That’s a big burden, [it represents] greater competition than ever before.

But Chinese are noted for their ability to respond fast to pressure and Luo agrees that things can move faster than in more established markets in the west. In terms of ‘catching up’ with the industries in US, Europe or Japan – achieving the level of 10 – he believes it “could be half a year, could be one year – but not 5 or 10. That would be too long. [CIFA members] are very quick because they pay good money to train their employees.”

Until China opened up a few years ago, there was little understanding of western-style customer service but that has rapidly changed throughout the economy and Luo is sure freight forwarders have embraced service just as other industries have. The older concept was that, say, 15 years ago, if you talk about service in China, it was really rubbish” – he likens it to the former Soviet Union – but today service has improved very much though in some areas there is still a need to



*Luo Kaifu: “the industry is growing very fast, not only in terms of modernisation but also revenue and profitability”*



improve.” But he is convinced there is the will to make that improvement.

The links between CIFA and WCA Family are “very good for our members because of our mutual cooperation,” says Luo. In particular, the Sino-International conferences have been “so successful. The information we got from our members was that 90 percent say they were ‘very good’, very useful to them. We make a good platform for Chinese forwarders and freight forwarders from all over the world to meet and talk with each other, to learn from each other and make a good partnership.”

As for networking, he believes most Chinese forwarders understand the need for it but they are not all aware of how to achieve it. “They know they need it but don’t know how to get it. I think they need WCA [Family] as a platform [and] to get most of the members of CIFA to understand it’s good for them, it will help them to make their business more efficient, more safe and also lower their cost, which is very important. You must tell them how to save money and get a good network.”

Luo says the upcoming Sino-Americas conference

in Vancouver (early April 2006) “is a good concept by David Yokeum. It will be the first time to have such a meeting outside China. At CIFA we will do our best to get more Chinese forwarders to participate – same as at Dalian [at the second Sino International conference organised by CGLN which attracted more than 830 delegates] where we did our best to persuade more members of CGLN in China to participate.”

Luo says he is convinced that the future is bright not only for freight forwarders in China but also for those outside wishing to do more business with China. The role of CIFA will be greater and one important factor is that the government in Beijing pays great attention to trade bodies “because it needs them to play a great role – to help the government to improve the industries.” It relies on them to make industries “more healthy, grow faster and support the national economy.” Of freight forwarding in China, Luo says: “Long term, from the whole direction, maybe in 10-20 years time it will be better, bigger and more healthy. And truly world class.”

# AT THE CROSSROADS

Long-time WCA member Genel Transport likes to call itself the 'world's favourite Turkish forwarder'. InterActive caught up with its managing director Turgut Erkeskin recently and asked a few questions.

## How did you get into the business?

Born in Istanbul, I am celebrating my 20th year in the cargo industry. Fresh from university I joined the giant Turkish shipping group Zihni and after two years of involvement in freight forwarding I was assigned as regional manager for East Europe, stationed in Romania.

Late 1988 I joined Genel Transport, at that time a small company dealing with transit transportation via Black Sea ports in Turkey to Iran.

Within two years we got almost 70 percent share in that market segment.

In 1990 I took over full management and the shares of the company and in the coming years Genel was transformed from a niche player to a worldwide logistics service provider with four offices throughout Turkey. Our corporate office is in Istanbul and we have branch offices at Istanbul Airport, Izmir and Mersin employing 45 people. Genel has received the WCA Superior Service Award in two consecutive years.



**You are a member of CGLN and AWS as well as WCA – how does that work and is it of benefit to Genel?**

It is obvious that our membership of WCA Family of Logistic Networks has great impact on our business development.

Our main business focus is on product design and development and our strength comes from creative performance in business and service. Both are only achievable when you have reliable and diligent partners with whom you can establish service channels which lead to continuous traffic which then can be considered as a product to sell. Having a handling agent somewhere at an international port is just not enough to increase your market impact by developing and managing logistics products, you should be in the condition of sharing a common ‘faith’. This is what makes a flourishing business network, as it is the case of the WCA Family of Networks.

**We also understand you were the first Europe member of the original WCA: can you recall what made you decide to join up?**

When we first joined World Cargo Alliance, it was just a small network base with only eight members. What made us join the system and invest in its strategies was the great vision and the impeccable enthusiasm of David Yokeum. Since we started in 1998 as the first European member we

walk together, with every day bringing more motivation and possibilities, not to forget the success and the opportunities for everyone who wishes to benefit from.

**Turkey has an enormously strategic position. Is it Europe or Asia – and would membership of the European Union be useful to Genel?**

As a country naturally and historically placed at the crossroads between Asia and Europe and with its dynamic and highly motivated population, Turkey has tremendous strategic potential and the EU perspective just underlines the global position of its overall logistics importance. In the last ten years of the Customs Union with the EU, goods traffic to and from Turkey increased four times which shows the direction in which things will be developed in the coming period from which not only Genel Transport, but all members of the WCA Family will surely benefit.

**FACTBOX:**

- Member of UTIKAD, Turkish Freight Forwarding Association
- Member of Istanbul Chamber of Commerce
- Member of Istanbul Shipping Chamber of Commerce
- Member of FIATA
- IATA Licensed Air Freight Agent
- ESC Partner from Turkey


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# ROAD SHOW

Coming soon: a unique opportunity for forwarders in the Americas to do business with top agents in China

An aerial photograph of the Vancouver skyline, showing a dense cluster of skyscrapers and modern buildings along the waterfront. In the foreground, a large cruise ship is docked at a pier, with its white hull and multiple decks visible. The water is calm, reflecting the city and the sky. The background shows a hazy view of the surrounding hills and the city extending into the distance.

WCA Family is proud to announce the inaugural SINO-AMERICAS REGIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS CONFERENCE, which is scheduled for the first week of April 2006 in the beautiful Canadian city of Vancouver.

Not only will this event be the first ever planned meeting between agents in the two regions, but it will mark the start of a series of such regional events, requested initially by freight forwarders in China, at which their counterparts around the world will have the opportunity to get to know and build relationships with agents in the world's most dynamic economic powerhouse.

The choice of Vancouver – almost the nearest point on the American continent to China unless you count Alaska, which would be less of a draw for delegates – means that not only Chinese forwarders but agents from both North and Central/South America will be able to attend. WCAF expects a turnout approaching 600 delegates.

The idea of a Sino-Americas conference, to be run along the same lines as the immensely

successful Sino-International meeting in Dalian, China in June 2005, became a reality following WCAF president David Yokeum's extended "shuttle diplomacy" between China and the Americas. During lengthy negotiations he managed to secure a deal with the two "see-fahs" – the powerful China International Freight Forwarders Association (CIFA, represented by its president Lu Kai Fu) and the Canada International Freight Forwarders Association (talking with CIFFA and FIATA past president Chris Gillespie, chairman of FIATA's Multimodal Transport Institute and president of Gillespie-Munro in Montreal). The Americas is the market most sought after by Chinese logistics providers.

Further details of this exciting event will be made public soon. WCA Family members in the Americas interested in doing business with Chinese agents should start making plans to visit Vancouver, a dynamic, multicultural city set in a spectacular natural environment which was voted "Best City in the Americas" for 2004 by Condé Nast Traveler magazine and will be host of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

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# ON A MISSION

## FIATA's annual event visited Russia - and so did WCA Family

Recently WCA Family sent four top staff from three regional offices all the way to the Russian capital Moscow to attend the annual world congress and exhibition

the organisations involved were in Moscow for the show.

Another was the chance to meet up with a delegation of 60 people from CIFA in China and



▲ CIFA president Luo Kaifu with WCA Family marketing director Khun Or



▲ (left to right) Mark Maiowitz and David Yokeum (executive vice president and president of WCA Family), Farid Saffarazadeh of WCA member Bar Baran of Iran and Dominic Wang (CGLN general manager)

organised by international freight forwarding trade body FIATA.

It's an event where WCAF, as a member of FIATA, represents all its member companies and one which is well worth attending, as president David Yokeum explains. "Every time we attend the FIATA conference it's very beneficial to the membership – you never know in advance quite what will happen there but always we find some new opportunities."

One of those opportunities was the chance for David and WCAF to cement the deal to bring a regional Sino-Americas conference to Vancouver next April (see page 13) as the top representatives of all



discuss with them prospects for the next Sino-International conference in Guangzhou in June 2006. WCAF's China general manager Dominic Wang made the journey from Shanghai and was glad he did. "Now I understand more about the significance of WCAF's own conferences and how their structure can benefit our members. I also saw for myself that the FIATA conference is another stage to make more forwarders know us."

"There was tremendous traffic at the WCAF booth in the exhibition," confirms executive vice president Mark Maiowitz, who flew from the Miami office for the event. "Given the calibre of WCAF and its membership we have an obligation to be at such an event and it was highly successful for us. It was very gratifying to note just how many people came to see us not only from Russia but everywhere in the world. It shows how well the WCA Family name is known among industry people, who want to speak to us and learn more about us."

An opportunity for Bangkok-based WCAF marketing director Teerada



Boonpojanasontorn (known by her Thai name, Khun Or) was to experience her first FIATA event. "I learned a lot from it, because it was also a chance to meet a lot of people in the industry. It was good to meet so many members – from a wide variety of countries – and get the latest news and views from them. It's remarkable how even in such a large gathering of forwarders, WCAF members were so prominently represented. Also, it was a chance to learn more about their wants and needs, so we can provide them with the benefits they require."

Or was also able to take a brief first look at the fascinating and historic city of Moscow during her hectic eight-day stay in the Red Square area. She found the weather in September very pleasant and not as cold as she had expected for her first trip to Russia. She was able to take a little time to go see some of the sights. "There is so much beautiful



▲ (left to right) Three presidents: Luo Kaifu (CIFA), David Yokeum (WCAF) and Chris Gillespie (CIFFA)

architecture to see, and the Metro [underground railway] is an extraordinary place too.”

For members of WCAF networks, one of the best reasons for David to attend the FIATA conference and exhibition was that many Russia- and CIS-



based freight forwarders visited. “I am extremely confident we will be able to welcome capable new members who will strengthen our networks’ representation in this fast-growing region.”

FIATA (the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations) is a non-governmental organisation representing an industry covering approximately 40,000 forwarding and logistics firms that employ around 8-10 million people in 150 countries. It is the largest non-governmental organisation in the field of transportation. It aims to familiarise trade and industry and the public at large with the services rendered by freight forwarders and to improve the quality of services rendered by freight forwarders by developing and promoting uniform forwarding documents, standard trading conditions, etc.

# Sky Blue

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# Forwarding on the Equator

On the 22nd birthday of EES Freight Services Pte Ltd, managing director Gilbert Tjong looked out across the expanse of the bustling Port of Singapore Authority. “To most people those are just boxes,” he said, indicating the stacked rows of containers awaiting shipment from one of the world’s busiest ports. “But to us, it’s business.”

Gilbert (above) and fellow director Jean Chuang set up EES in 1983 and gradually increased the paid-up capital up to one million Singapore dollars a couple of years ago. “Here, anyone can issue a bill of lading,” he explains, “not like neighbouring countries. It’s vital to look at whether the paid-up

capital of a forwarder is really what it is claimed to be.”

In 1983, he admits, “the business was a little easier than it is now.” There were only a handful of other companies in the tiny but prosperous city-state on the equator. But now there are some 2,000 freight forwarders in Singapore.” starting up is relatively easy, but “you need a lot of drive and motivation to keep ahead of the others.”

At first EES was simply an NVOCC but 12 years ago it acquired a medium-sized airfreight business and has since expanded. Gilbert employs 28 staff on the seafreight side and 22 people in airfreight. The company operates from a main

office in the shadow of the skyscrapers of Raffles Place, in Singapore’s business hub, and from an airfreight office and warehouse inside the air centre at Changi airport which is bonded and under lease from the government which is constantly promoting Singapore as a regional logistics hub.

EES has ISO9001:2000 certification, one of relatively few in Singapore, and has internal rules which insist on all import cargoes upon receiving documents from airlines and a commitment to deliver to customer’s door-steps within six hours. For all export airfreight cargos, it will be zero missed guaranteed pick up within office

hours. EES is also an accredited Multimodal Transport Operator (MTO), the top of three grades of forwarder under the guidelines of the Singapore Logistics Association, and a member of FIATA. Regular cargos include garments, plane engines, sportswear, footwear, optical and liquid gases, electronics, books, used cars and DGR shipments, while EES is also doing gradually more project cargo work. "Projects dropped off but it's now an area of growth," says Gilbert.

More importantly from our point of view, EES has been a member of World Cargo Alliance for more than five years. Gilbert explains that the returns from membership were not startling in the first two to three years, but "we first started by giving business to other members and now we find we are getting it returned. It takes time to build up serious relationships." Now, he says, membership of the network is extremely useful. Operations



director Paul Chuang agrees, adding that "reliability is the key to selecting overseas agents. We would rather deal with experienced members." In addition, "WCA has been extremely useful in those 'unusual markets'" where it can be difficult to find suitable agents.

By definition, given its small size, Singapore is essentially a one-branch country, so would EES

like to expand beyond its borders? Gilbert would rather not, though. "It's much more effective to use the WCA network than set up your own operations."

*Gilbert Tjong of EES with the staff at his office in central Singapore (above) and the airfreight centre at Changi airport (below). Airfreight operations director Paul Chuang is on the right*



# New WCAF member service

**K**now about RFID? Maybe not. You may not even know what RFID stands for – or you may already be using it. If your company is already on board the RFID bandwagon, we ask you to bear with us for a moment as we bring the rest of the members up to date, because the WCA Family of Logistic Networks is entering into a new strategic partnership in order to ensure that all members will be able to benefit from expertise in a field which is fast becoming one of the major technology issues facing the logistics industry.

In the United States one of the multinational integrators is already advertising RFID to the general public via TV. It's unlikely most other markets are ready for such a campaign, but Radio Frequency Identification is already known to many. It's the system of fitting products with a small tag which can be read or interrogated by an appropriate reader. Think barcodes of the future, but highly "intelligent" barcodes able to provide a vast range and amount of information about the status, location and possibly even the condition of a product or shipment in a supply chain. Slow progress towards a global standard for RFID technology, coupled in some countries with concerns about privacy issues (which are largely irrelevant since most RFID readers operate only over a very short range) have hindered the spread of such tagging systems but as the industry resolves these, many millions are already in operation. Certainly if you want to supply to Walmart – or ship goods to its stores – you already need to know all about RFID.

**WCA Family is pleased to announce that LXComm Ltd has joined as a network partner. LXComm has been active, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, since 1998, providing telecommunications, RFID and IT services to clients that include state-owned telecoms. It is also negotiating with top Chinese authorities.**

LXComm will provide all WCA Family members with an introduction to RFID and an opportunity to learn more about it from a business and technology aspect and will act as a platform for members to discuss

their specific RFID requirements. LXComm will give initial advice and guidance for any specific RFID projects that members may be contemplating, design high-level scenarios for such projects and provide a means for members to gather information in relation to RFID project costs.

Such services and advice will be free of charge to WCA Family members. If the member wishes to proceed on a project it will be up to them whether to hire LXComm for any aspect of the project.

LXComm's executive vice chairman Bob Turner is sure that "this pro-active RFID awareness programme will place WCA Family members' business in a strong and strategic position when it comes to making decisions related to RFID technology. This programme will also help members stay competitive and well prepared for the changes that RFID will bring to our industry."

David Yokeum, WCA Family president, agrees. "It's a vital part of WCAF's job to ensure our members are right up to date with any significant moves in technology which affect our industry. RFID is going to be a huge issue very soon – and if our members are well prepared, they can make the most of what will be a massive marketing opportunity. This partnership will enable them to be prepared better than any other freight forwarders in the world."

As an introduction to the world of RFID and to LXComm's service, a new section is being set up on WCAF websites which contains an FAQ section, industry news and details of conferences or seminars that may interest forwarders. There will also be a regular e-newsletter devoted to developments in this field and InterActive will be bringing you regular items featuring all members need to know about the exciting – and challenging – prospects for a future forwarding industry which will within a few years have to be fully RFID-capable.

*But WCA Family will definitely not be setting up any form of RFID-enabled network. WCA Family wants to provide members with the resources they will need to deal with RFID and make it into a powerful sales and marketing tool now or in the near future.*

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