

GROUND HANDLING IS THE KEY TO IMPROVING AIR CARGO PERFORMANCE

Birmingham, UK, Thursday, 6th April 2017 - For airlines, the only real place they can improve performance is on the ground, according to Mark Olney, General Manager – Cargo, Europe, Middle East, India and Africa, Air Canada Cargo.

“In the air we are pretty much the same as everyone else, so the key is what we do on the ground,” he told delegates at an air freight workshop at Multimodal 2017.

“That is why we have invested heavily in our own handling facilities in the UK and Frankfurt. We have also signed up our ground handlers to achieve the same standards and I believe we are at industry leading levels.”

Nick Platts, Head of Cargo, Heathrow Airport, explained that Heathrow is neither a landlord or a handler like some European airports but agreed that the industry needs to improve performance to compete with other modes.

“The ground component is where we let ourselves down. We need to engage more fully with the airline sheds and look at how quickly and efficiently cargo moves through them.

The growth of e-commerce gives us a great opportunity and we need to take advantage of that.”

Jonas van Stekelenburg, Head of Cargo, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, said one of the difficulties was not being able to measure, and therefore really prove, improvements in performance.

“So it is something we are trying to fix.”

He said he saw carriers, forwarders, and handlers all as his customers and “it is in our DNA to have a collaborative approach.

The difficulty we have is with those you don’t have direct contact with such as shippers and Customs.”

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He added that collaboration had really paid off in pharma where quality is highly valued.

“Shippers can be all about cost, so the handlers only hear about cost. But we need to ensure that customers value quality properly.”

Conan Busby, Head for Cargo for MAG, said going together with a handler to visit customers had helped build up the perishables trade for the company, which owns Manchester, East Midlands, and Stansted airports.

He suggested it would be better to use regional airports to help reduce both cross- Channel and intra-UK trucking, especially as there was such of lot of warehousing space in the East Midlands.

Olney pointed out that flights to the regions were sometimes seasonal so it was would be hard to establish quality processes for just three or four months of the year.

Platts said the large hub airports usually had several services a day to any destination so there was much more flexibility and opportunity to fly cargo if it was delayed or unable to be loaded because of excess passenger baggage.

All the panellists agreed that closer communications with shippers and forwarders would help the air cargo industry plan better for the peak periods, as the higher than expected volumes at the end of 2016 had taken everyone by surprise.

Multimodal is a free to attend, three-day event currently taking place at the Birmingham NEC, UK.

Over 8,000 visitors have already spent time with 375 exhibitors at what promises to be the most successful Multimodal show to date.

Multimodal 2018 takes place from 1st - 3rd May 2018.

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Picture caption, for a high-resolution image, contact Emma at emma@meantime.global

Pictured left to right Alex Veitch, Head of Global Policy, FTA, Mark Olney, General Manager - Cargo, Europe, Middle East, India and Africa, Air Canada Cargo, Conan Busby, Head of Cargo, MAG Jonas van Stekelenburg, Head of Cargo, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Nick Platts, Head of Cargo, Heathrow Airport



ABOUT MULTIMODAL

Multimodal is the UK and Ireland's leading freight transport and logistics exhibition, which also features a series of topical seminars and master classes, and hosts a Shippers' Village, giving freight buyers a private space to meet logistics suppliers.

Multimodal 2016 was the biggest in the show's history, with over 325 exhibitors and a record-breaking attendance of over 9000 supply chain executives.

At the 2016 event, 72 expert speakers led over 21 workshop and panel debates covering industry trends and latest legislation.

Multimodal 2017 is taking place from 4th to 6th April 2017 at the Birmingham NEC.

Visit multimodal.org.uk

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