• Forwarders need fewer, neutral and more automated ways to work with multiple carriers. They also need improved shipment visibility.

• Carriers need to simplify business processes and to raise service levels by pro-actively managing shipments in line with key performance indicators.

• Both need to create efficiencies to compete more effectively in a rapidly changing and highly competitive marketplace.

Today, business between carriers and forwarders is mostly based on multiple phone calls in order to review transportation options and book services based on price, service and availability and to track shipment status.

This involves many unnecessary phone calls, most of which can easily be replaced by providing visibility of capacity, allotments and shipment status to forwarders through the Internet. Bookings made electronically through a forwarder’s own system or a web page should be immediately confirmed to avoid disputes and then to drive pro-active shipment management processes with on-going status updates. All of these services should be integrated to reduce process duplication.

Carriers need to balance the need to differentiate themselves from their competitors with the need to work with competitors to offer critical mass and neutrality. They also need to collaborate to share the costs of common development, operation and promotion.

Technology changes have now opened the potential for the Internet to replace legacy Cargo Community Systems and for XML to replace or build on EDI. These are already shaping the way other organizations do business globally, reducing costs and providing greater flexibility – key requirements for today’s logistics service providers.

These design principles are behind the Unisys Cargo Portal Services. Based on applications in use today and with new developments, they deliver value to carriers and forwarders, while building on the investment each has made in their own core operational systems.
**Full functionality**

The services and carriers available to each user can be set and maintained through profiles.

Each forwarder has a profile through which they can control access to carrier services and to individual users within their enterprise.

Each carrier has their own profile through which their administrator can control the key aspects of their business available through the portal.

At the lowest level, individual users have a profile that records their preferences and settings and which is used to pre-fill regular information where appropriate.

Any user can:
- View schedules; and
- View flight and shipment status information.

Subject to authority being granted by the carrier administrator, users of the services can also:
- View private allocations or free space availability;
- View rates;
- Make new bookings;
- Manage existing bookings;
- Save a set of bookings as templates and
- Use these templates for making recurring bookings at a later date

Once a shipment has been booked, a set of key time-based milestones is automatically generated covering key milestone events processed by carriers and their ground handlers. These are used to continually track shipments booked electronically against plan and pro-actively alert any exceptions so that remedial action can be taken early. In this way, the services can promote more time-definite shipments and reliable deliveries.

Context sensitive on-line help is available at all times to help users operate the services fully. Information is tracked electronically to build up intelligence, though all information is treated as proprietary to each participant other than when aggregated across multiple organizations.

**Integration**

The services can be operated through a WWW browser with security enabled and via system-to-system links to keep the host systems of carriers, handlers and forwarders synchronized.

Provided that enterprise systems of forwarders are connected to the Internet, the services can replace a traditional Cargo Community System.

Integration for users of the Unisys carrier enterprise system (LMS) is straightforward as it includes the XML interfaces required. For carriers running other systems and for forwarders, an interface guide is available that describes the various interface options available.

**Community, control and charges**

For forwarders, a major benefit is that there are no charges for use of the services thereby encouraging take-up.

For carriers, a key aspect of the services is that they use the Internet to reduce costs to less than what many pay for Cargo Community Systems alone.

In order to maximize responsiveness, foster community and maintain control, developments are overseen by a community governance body representing all carrier participants and with forwarder representation. This community body also allocates a development fund for enhancements that is built up from service charges.

Finally, by hosting many carriers the CPS provides forwarders with a single access point for much of their business.

For more information on this or other Unisys logistics solutions, visit www.unisys.com/logistics or contact your Unisys representative directly.

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