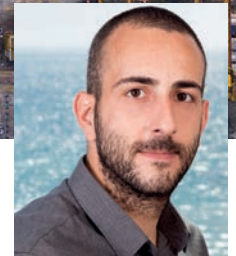# DIGITAL FREIGHT FORWARDING
## BECOMING A FREIGHT FORWARDER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Adam Yaron, CEO, FAST Applications, New York, USA

Freight Forwarders play a vital role in the supply chain by obtaining space on airplanes or ocean vessels at the best rate possible for shippers.

As a relationship business, freight forwarding traditionally took place by phone, fax or in person, and because of this, it was not known for its efficiency.

Identified as one of the markets that still suffers from analogue processes and missing transparency, the 150 billion-dollar freight forwarding industry and its 100 million containers is subject to disruption by digital technologies.

### DISRUPTIVE DIGITAL FREIGHT TECHNOLOGIES
The freight forwarding industry is witnessing a continuous rise in its valuation with the appearance of advanced technologies, which influence buyer behaviour.

The current perception of the internet and the surge in mobile web usage will increase the global demand for goods.

Digital technologies are currently threatening to disrupt the freight forwarding business, which consists of two main types – the online freight marketplace, the 'Expedia of shipping', and digital freight forwarders, which are also known as 'virtual forwarders'.

### ONLINE FREIGHT MARKETPLACES – THE EXPEDIA OF SHIPPING
A freight marketplace can be described as an online site where a freight service is being provided by multiple third parties, with the transactions being processed by the marketplace owner.

Can online freight marketplaces replace forwarders? Despite the pleasing website design, the back-end is not always pleasing to work with.

### DIGITAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS
Virtual forwarders have taken advantage of automated quoting processes by providing automated quotations and shipment bookings on demand, adding accuracy through the process of tracking and tracing shipments online, and making operation processes transparent.

This also guarantees integrated technology, which reduces process costs and provides professional forwarding teams with local connections to assist in exceptional cases.

A result of producing shipping documents and invoices on demand is that customers save more time, a crucial factor for all companies in the supply chain business. Digital freight forwarders, including many start-up companies such as FreightHub, FlexPort, Zencargo, Shipwaves, Fleet, now threaten to disrupt the traditional freight forwarding industry with major freight forwarders and industry giants. The likes of DHL, K&N, DB Schenker and CH Robinson now offer digital freight forwarding services with digital platforms such as Saloodo, Twil Logistics, FreightQuote and UShip.

Alibaba and Amazon can bundle huge volumes for both their business and the businesses they manage for third-party customers, but it is not clear yet how they will use their power.

# Digital Freight Forwarding Made Easy

FAST Digital Freight Forwarding
White-Label Services

Fast offers a complete solution for managing your digital
quotations, bookings, shipments and invoices on demand.
Build your digital freight-forwarding brand in minutes and
start operating like the industry giants.

*For more info:* **www.fast-apps.com**

**FAST**
FREIGHT ADVANCED SERVICE TECHNOLOGY

## DIGITAL TIME INVESTMENT

Any freight business in the digital age must analyse each of its business processes from the standpoint of customer's time investment, without which the business would fail when facing digital age customers.

Freight Forwarding companies need to make customers' time investment pleasurable, removing any unnecessary steps that could slow the process down, whilst informing them of the time actually involved in achieving their objective.

The companies that are prone to succeed in the future are those that make active decisions to save customers' time.

Every minute you make customers wait for a service is another minute that customers spend questioning their decision to choose your service.

With that in mind, it is necessary to transform ourselves so we will fit in the digital age, or we risk becoming extinct in the next few years.

## BUSINESS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

We can find digital transformation all around us, with the transformation affecting everyone.

It is very easy for individuals and small groups but hard for organizations and enterprises to adapt, because digital transformation is all about speed and every organization moves as fast as its slowest member does.

In other words, all members of the group run together at a common pace.

How then can we get organizations into a transformative state and become a digital freight business?

By identifying fast movers within the organization, and building teams around the fast movers with the right tools to succeed, we can achieve this.

## DIGITAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS

The next generation of people entering the profession have the expertise to use the latest online platforms and tools, which focus on process and managing costs and look to automate and streamline processes, build intermodal relationships, improve customer satisfaction, and maximize opportunities for cost savings.

A digital freight forwarder must offer a range of digital services to the 21st century customers. This includes on-demand, automated quotation services alongside shipment bookings, a comprehensive and transparent view of all the operation process through the entire supply chain of the customer using a track and trace system, automated alerts for any milestone exception, and an offering that has all its accounting invoicing and payments online.

Speed and accuracy will also support the digital process.

External technologies can be integrated (EDI) to boost overall productivity, this includes integration to accounting systems, customs systems, carriers for online bookings and rates updates, shipment instructions, container freight stations, terminals, warehouses and supply chain ERP solutions.

The next step is to create a social supply chain management where strong alliances can be created by networking and sharing data with freight partners online (agents, customers, suppliers, carriers, etc.), which in turn creates a stronger bond and connection to compete as a group.

## FAST FORWARD

FAST is helping the existing freight forwarding businesses to compete in the age of disruption by digital rivals, such as cloud-based asset free forwarding services, sales platforms and tech companies that are now offering full supply chain management suites (like Amazon).

Six years ago, I managed a traditional freight forwarding company that has many clients importing goods from all over the world.

During this time, I witnessed an increase in customer demands for timesaving on-line tools.

As a white label, branded Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that can turn any freight forwarder to a digital one in minutes, FAST tackles the amount of time, effort and money required to develop the transformational tools that turn a traditional freight forwarding company to a digital one without upfront investments or an in-house programming team.

FAST's mission is to turn any traditional freight forwarding company into a digital freight forwarder, helping them create their digital brand.

## CONCLUSION

The pressure on traditional freight forwarders will continue to increase as digitization continues its long soar through the world economy.

They must embrace the digital technologies in the front-end and back-end processes, but must keep in mind their excellence in people and expertise, which are hard to turn into commodities.

It is therefore necessary to transform the traditional freight forwarding business to fit the digital age, or they risk becoming extinct in the coming years.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CEO and Co-Founder of FAST Applications, Adam Yaron has over 13 years of proven experience in logistics and supply chain management, sales, entrepreneurship, IT and cutting-edge technologies.

He is also the CTO of MBO-Consulting, an IT Service company which aims to achieve excellence and become a leader in the world of SAP services by exploiting its extensive, worldwide contacts and exposure, service capacity, and vertical competencies.

Yaron spent three years as the Head of Commercial Development at Delta Novel, one of Italy's leading forwarding companies based in Ravenna.

Yaron established his first start-up at the end of 2012 and made his first exit in 2014, before reaching the age of 30.

## ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

FAST, which stands for 'Freight Advanced Service Technologies', is the world's first professional network for Freight Forwarders and NVOCCs, with thousands of companies in more than 100 countries and territories worldwide.

FAST is an international shipping software (SaaS) which provides a comprehensive solution for IT and digital shipments for the supply chain.

It is the only system providing a 'Social Supply Chain' Management solution.

## ENQUIRIES

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