



Forwarders: reaching out

For small and medium-sized freight forwarders active in the air cargo industry, competing with the big players can be very tough. One approach to the problem has been that of the growth of international associations of forwarders, offering their members some of the benefits of size without the usual drawbacks

The Gross + Fuchs (G+F) network of forwarders is expanding rapidly. Only last month (October), the new C5C (Connecting 5 Continents) and Project Partners associations came into being.

These two new groupings join what has been G+F's core consortium of freight forwarders, Air & Ocean Partners (AOP).

AOP was established as recently as 2005 but now incorporates 185 offices (from about 140-150 companies) across 76 countries. Viktor Fuchs, managing director at AOP, observed that "growth during that period (since its 2005 inception) has been quite amazing".

He does not think that growth should go completely unchecked, however. While wanting to see a total figure of about 250 offices across the world – the CIS/Eastern European region and Africa feature some gaps in coverage at the moment, Fuchs noted, and he expects that milestone to be

quickly reached – he is also keen to see that the association remains much more than just a "phone book" of freight forwarder members.



Helmut Gross
President



Viktor Fuchs
General Director

To that end, G+F personally considers each membership application and has a strict rule that there should be no more than two member offices in any given city (to cater for the air and ocean forwarding sectors). Fuchs commented that he only wants to see "quality" members, so that all will remain "convinced of the quality of the group".

Thus, with that target figure of 250 offices approaching fast, G+F decided to establish two new associations for international freight forwarders.

C5C is an open network which is not regulated by the 'two offices per city' constraint. Its membership will differ from that of AOP's, although the intention is that it will provide the same sort of benefits, which Fuchs describes as including: the opportunity for smaller forwarders to operate and compete against the giant, global forwarders such as Kuehne + Nagel or Schenker; the provision of financial assurance for business conducted between members; and the extra repeat business that can be driven by members working together on an ongoing basis.

In addition to C5C, Project Partners – an independent organisation but daughter of AOP, explained Fuchs – was set up with the mission to attract those forwarders active in charter business or flights involving heavy or outsize cargo.

Although membership of these two new associations is necessarily small at the moment, given the short time since their establishment, Fuchs is "very positive they will have a similar growth to AOP".

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