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Packing List

<i>Country View</i>	1
Travel Health and the Businessperson Abroad	
<i>Cargo View</i>	2
Understanding Material Handling Procedures	
Changes in Latitude	3
Negotiations Abroad	
<i>Client View</i>	6
Cecilia Vega: Balancing Act	
Letter from the Editor	8

CountryView

Travel Health and the Businessperson Abroad

by Tim Bartz

Editor's Note: *A "freak" illness experienced abroad by our own columnist Vanessa Saunders prompted us to look into the issue of travel health. Vanessa is doing fine and the article below offers some great information to international business travelers.*

Most global travelers will acknowledge that the further you are from home, the more likely Murphy's Law will rear its ugly head. Whatever can go wrong will, at the worst possible time, and under the worst possible circumstances. For American marketing executive Vanessa Saunders, timing and circumstance came together on a trip to Great Britain that turned into a nightmare. Two days after she arrived in the UK, Saunders began having excruciating abdominal pains. Far from a metropolitan area, she ended up in a small country hospital teeming with eager foreign staff but lacking the technology and conveniences Americans take for granted.

"It was horrible," Saunders recounted. "I had no bedside phone, no easy means of outside contact, and spent a week flat on my back, connected to an IV. Thank God we spoke the same language." After being poked and prodded by a stream of doctors, nurses and interns, her managing physician explained that he still was not sure what was wrong. Since the hospital lacked CT scan equipment, he announced plans for exploratory surgery. "That was it,"



"What should you do if you're in a foreign country and come down with a serious illness?"

said Saunders. "I managed to check myself out, and with the help of a business associate, made it back to the States."

International business travel is growing steadily, as more and more American companies pursue global

Continued on Page 4

Understanding Material Handling Procedures

Rogers Worldwide recently held their Second Annual Partner Conference giving Rogers' offices and a select group of agents, an opportunity to network and strategize for the coming year. The conference was held in London during the first week of June. During several informal discussions, the subject of material handling costs (referred to as drayage and/or rigging) in the U.S. surfaced.

R.E. Rogers' Lou Kerpan explains, "Our overseas counterparts find it difficult to understand how the cost to deliver freight from the dock to the stand can sometimes be higher than the ocean freight costs." The answer, he adds, lies in a discussion of general contractor exclusivity and a history of trade union intervention in this country. Both factors have resulted in higher labor costs and contributed to the higher cost of material handling services as compared to the same services rendered outside of the U.S.

In contrast to the material handling systems established decades ago in the U.S., procedures in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere universally favor a "right to work" attitude. In other words, exhibitors, freight forwarders and lifting contractors are allowed and encouraged to work simultaneously along side one another in a non-exclusive environment. The result is lower costs, the exhibitor's ability to pick and choose among individual services and service providers and more control over the process by the freight forwarder and ultimately the exhibitor.

When international shipments arrive at exhibition halls outside of the U.S., they are generally unloaded, delivered to the stand, lifted into place, unpacked and empties removed to storage by the freight forwarder who has handled the shipment from its point of origin. Exhibitors receive one invoice from one company for door to stand service. In

the U.S., shipments arrive to the convention center and are automatically given over to the officially appointed and exclusive general contractor. Exhibitors receive two invoices; one from the freight forwarder and one from the general contractor.

Exhibitors at international shows customarily choose among the different types of material handling services offered by the contractors. For example, the invoices are often itemized with individual charges for loading/unloading (from the vehicle), delivery to the stand, lifting (to position while in the stand), unpacking (removal of exhibit materials from crates), and storage of empties. The exhibitor can pay for only those services he uses. In the U.S. exhibitors

The absence of organized labor to drive labor costs upward and the relatively higher unemployment in many countries provides a steady source of workers for material handling services.

pay one all-inclusive price for unloading, delivery to the stand and storage of empties whether they require the services or not.

Outside the U.S. the low cost and high availability of labor for material handling is one factor Kerpan points to as being fundamental to the flexibility of the process. The absence of organized labor to drive labor costs upward and the relatively higher unemployment in many countries provides a steady



R.E. Rogers President, Ron Burchett maneuvers a pallet jack during move-in at an overseas show.

source of workers for material handling services. The opposite situation exists in the U.S. where labor markets are tight and trade unions drive wages effectively upwards.

Kerpan also states that the length of time given for move-in and move-out of the events is another factor that influences the procedure. At large events overseas, the move-in periods can be several weeks. In the U.S., the period is often shortened to a few days. In the U.S., he says, "The move-in and move-out periods are much shorter, forcing the process to become more highly organized necessitating or at least setting the stage for, the use of one exclusive contractor."

International venues such as convention centers and exhibition halls are built in anticipation of a multi-contractor material handling system with plenty of room to maneuver according to Kerpan. He adds, "It seems as if the U.S. convention centers were built with the idea of freight moving in and out as an after thought." He explains, "Trucks (in the U.S.) move in and out the same doors, motors can't be left running

Continued on Page 7

Cecilia Vega—Cont. From Page 6

in certain industries providing a full solution (printing, Internet and physical exhibition) for a specific (market) sector in order to maximize the commercial possibilities between our clients and their customers.” In addition to producing excellent exhibitions, Vega’s other goals include raising the level of REMEX’s international visibility, growing their per show profitability and improving and defining employee incentive programs.

Away from work, Cecilia Vega enjoys socializing with friends, riding horses, exercising, traveling and reading. Her passion, however, is her son Jose Manuel. In fact, she says of her two goals in life (one being to have her own business that allows her to work for an important social cause), the most important one is to “help Jose Manuel to become a good person and build his own future, however he decides it to be.” Her other family members are never far from her thoughts either. She credits her older sister Marcela, her teenage companion, as someone she most admires and describes her sister

Claudia as a “smart professional and a very sensitive person. She and her family are thrilled at the prospect that her two “baby” brothers (35 and 36 years old) are finally getting married next year.

Summing up her outlook on her work life, Vega says, “I intensely pursue my objectives. I like to have fun in day-to-day activities and help people to move towards higher goals. I think creativity can apply to every aspect of life and I set rules, then let people go.” Speaking personally she says, “I try to have my priorities right to provide the best balance in life between my personal needs, family, spare time, professional development, and the social and religious aspects that need to be considered in order for me to be a better and more enjoyable person.”

Is it possible to have it all? Helen Reddy said it perfectly in her song about the empowerment of women called “I am Woman.” In it she sings, “I am woman, hear me roar!” Although in Vega’s case it is more of a purr, she is definitely being heard. ▼

Reduce International Shipping Costs and Avoid Delays

Think before you ship: Freight and material handling charges are based on weight or measure (dimension) of the shipment. The rates are then applied to the larger of these two amounts. When building crates or packing exhibit materials, pack efficiently and use lightweight materials whenever possible.

Pack well and label well: Make sure the shipment can be lifted by a forklift. This will reduce the amount of handling (and cost) at the international destination. When shipping multiple cartons, never list shrink wrapped cartons as 1 pallet on the packing list. Instead list them as, for example: 1 pallet S.T.C. (said to contain) 22 (or the correct number) cartons OR use a pallet box. Make sure the booth number is listed on the label.

Ship early: Don’t wait until the last minute to ship. Take advantage of discounts for air and ocean freight consolidated shipments and avoid penalties and customs overtimes by shipping well ahead of the deadlines.

Know before you go: Determine in advance who, if anyone, will be handling your shipment and delivery to stand overseas. Ask your U.S. freight forwarder for an all-inclusive price and service from your door to the stand including extras such as lifting, storage of empties, etc. Compare these costs to using different contractors overseas. An all-inclusive price is usually less expensive. ▼

Cargo View—Cont. From Page 2

because the dock areas are covered in underground, dark areas.”

Kerpan and others are quick to add that there are trade-offs associated with the flexible material handling systems installed at overseas events. While exhibitors can pick and choose among different material handling services, they may end up paying more for other services such as furniture rental or booth decoration. And, while they are able to contract with different service providers, they may not want to for convenience sake. Kerpan admits to frequently encountering exhibitors (usually Americans) frustrated at having to deal with multiple companies on site. In the U.S., the general contractor is most often a one-stop shop for everything from freight to furniture to displays.

Rogers’ Kerpan suggests that exhibitors use an experienced international freight forwarder that offers a comprehensive package of services including material handling on site. They provide on site representatives to act as a buffer between their clients and local contractors and organizers. They will provide one invoice for round-trip services and choose among local contractors and services on the exhibitor’s behalf in order to secure the best service at the best price. ▼

Saunders—Cont. From Page 3

The US Department of Commerce is a very useful source of help when negotiating overseas; their officers in the US can put you in touch with their contacts overseas. Pick their brains, tell them your game plan, and they will tell you if you are making the right or wrong moves.

And finally, remember no matter how fluently the natives speak your language, remember that it is never spoken—or understood—quite the same way it is at home. Steer clear of all “slanguage,” from colloquialisms to regional dialects that are meaningless in either Paris or Beijing. ▼

Cecilia Vega: Balancing Act



“Under Vega’s direction, REMEX is working toward developing total solutions for their clients.”

Mexico City native, Cecilia Vega’s priorities are clear. Even as the General Director of REMEX, a leading Mexican trade show organizer, a demanding and high profile position, her focus lies squarely on her husband, six-year old son and extended family. Like many female executives with professional and familial obligations posing daily challenges, she strives to balance her work, home, religious and personal “lives” with equal measure. In doing so she is a role model for Mexican women and indeed all women.

Being the female head of a trade show organizer is not unusual in Mexico with the likes of Patricia Farias, Elena Maribona and Wendy Hesketh having pioneered, and in many ways dominated, the Mexican exhibition industry for the past decade.

According to Jeanette Mucha, National Sales Director for R.E. Rogers, who has worked with all of these women over the years, “the entrepreneurial spirit and dimension that these women have brought to the industry has been unparalleled anywhere else in the world.” She adds, “Even in what was and in some cases still is, a male dominated society, the women in the trade show business (in Mexico) have set the course for the industry.”



Vega is a relative newcomer to the industry having come from the financial sector.



Vega has her work cut out for her. The industry is competitive in Mexico. At present she says, “REMEX is a

leader in the Mexican market as it organizes the top shows in several industries including hospitality, medical and industrial and operates 8% of the business to business expos.” Able to deliver the coveted internationally based exhibitors, foreign organizers are consistently attempting to penetrate the market or partner with other Mexican

organizers posing formidable competition for Mexican companies such as REMEX.

Vega is a relative newcomer to the industry having come from the financial sector. She takes a pragmatic approach to show business describing it as “very detailed, sensitive and challenging work with interesting growth potential.” She admits that her background in finance will influence her perceptions about running exhibitions. She has brought many of the principles of the financial world with her she says, including “cost consciousness, a focus on objectives and working plans, an awareness of national and international macroeconomic factors and the use of projections and operating ratios.”

Under Vega’s direction, REMEX is working toward developing total solutions for their clients. She explains, “Our vision is to make REMEX the leading company

Continued on Page 7

Changes in Latitude

Negotiations Abroad



by Vanessa Saunders

Vanessa Saunders, MBA, MIM, is Vice President International Marketing for MC² Corporate Marketing, a total presence marketing company providing exhibits, environments, entertainment, events and meetings worldwide.

Sometimes negotiations break down because of cultural differences. Be sure you know what to say and do when “doing the deal” overseas.

A colleague of mine once complained about how long a joint venture was taking with a client in China. “I’ve been working on this deal for six months and still can’t see an end in sight,” he complained. He was shocked when I informed him that in China, such partnerships take an average of two years to complete.

International deals typically take longer to negotiate than domestic ones. McDonalds negotiated for almost ten years before it could sell its first Big Mac in Red Square. In the world of international negotiations, there are innumerable cultural differences. Americans negotiating deals abroad need to know the culture and the habits of their business partners before they go.

Americans, especially sales executives, are by nature an outgoing, informal bunch. British executives however, are often taken aback by American informality when someone they’ve never met addresses them by their first name. Germans are addressed very formally, using Mr., Mrs., Miss and their title, for example: Herr Doctor Shultz. It is always best to be formal until told otherwise.

Another behavior Americans do almost unconsciously is to soften up business partners with praise before criticizing. For Western Europeans, this is seen as manipulative. French and German executives much prefer straightforward, to-the-point comments, rather than disguised, patronizing attempts to soften the blow.

Speaking customs—how and when to talk, when not to talk and when to interrupt—are also different in some cultures. In India, executives are accustomed to interrupting each other. Americans who listen without interrupting for clarification or asking questions appear not to be paying attention. In Malaysia and Japan, it is good to periodically pause for five or six seconds of silence. But if you are negotiating with an Israeli, don’t stop or it may appear to him that your presentation is over.

Even the term “negotiating” has different meanings in different cultures.

Westerners see negotiations as discussions leading to understanding, compromise and possibly concession. In Japanese, “negotiate” or “koshō” carries with it nuances of fighting and debate. True negotiations Japanese style, however, are actually more like a father (the buyer) hearing a son’s (buyer’s) request.

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Recognizing the relationship and status is very important. In carefully making his case, the “son” asks for as much as possible because he will have no chance to “barter” after his “father’s” decision. In Mexico and Latin America, compromise is considered a loss of dignity. Deals must be arranged in which both sides appear to win.

For Russians, any kind of compromise by another is considered a sign of weakness. Giving up a demand indicates a lack of will, and many Russian businessmen will “move in for the kill,” trying to dominate and exploit the perceived weakness. Arabs also perceive compromise negatively, using a word similar to a “compromise of virtue” in translation. Middle Eastern cultures consider bartering a form of exchange practiced by commoners and street vendors, so any appearance of bartering by Americans is demeaning.

Continued on Page 7

Cover Story—Cont. From Page 1

expansion. Considering the host of new venues opening up in previously undeveloped nations, travelers can succumb to anything from jet lag to plague. What should you do if you're in a foreign country and come down with a serious illness? The answer starts before you even book the flight.

Preparing for the worst: know before you go

Many Americans are unaware of the profound differences in medical practices abroad. In the United States, travelers can easily find modern medical services and emergency facilities,



staffed by qualified doctors, nurses and health care providers. In countries like China and Latin America, two areas that are attracting more and more American business visitors, such facilities can be rare or non-existent. Even in "civilized" parts of the world, as our marketing executive discovered, facilities and services are far from "state-of-the-art." Consequently, business travelers need to take extra precautions when visiting foreign lands.

Vaccinations are required to enter many foreign countries (see sidebar on page 5), and are a traveler's first line of defense against diseases. Immunization takes 3 to 12 weeks to take effect depending on which shots you need, so see your doctor early and get started accordingly. Every American should have had a diphtheria tetanus booster in the last ten years, and two doses of measles vaccine. If you're traveling

outside the Western Hemisphere, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand or Japan, a polio vaccination is recommended. Hepatitis B and in some cases, rabies vaccines may be recommended in locales considered a high-risk for animal bites. (Rat bites can be particularly nasty, and may also carry plague.) Flu and pneumovax (pneumococcal pneumonia) are not required for international travel, but are usually a good idea.

Avoiding the bugs

Mosquitoes and other insects can carry many diseases including malaria, dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis. Avoiding them is often possible with

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insect repellent. The active ingredient is DEET, and effective brands are available in most drug stores. Mosquito netting is also handy in tropical areas where infestation is severe. Discuss the use of malaria pills with your doctor before you go. Some strains of malaria have become resistant to chloroquine and Fansidar, the standard treatments for years. Other medicines are now available including mefloquine (Lariam), or daily doses of doxycycline.

Parasites are also a common nuisance. Schistosomiasis, a disease that can affect the lungs, liver, bladder and intestines, is carried by a parasite that lives in tiny snails in fresh water streams throughout Africa, South America, Asia, the Caribbean and the Middle East. The parasite enters through the skin, so it's best to avoid swimming or wading in fresh water

streams or lakes. If you must have contact with the water, wear protective clothing, especially waterproof shoes. Boil or chemically purify any untreated water if you are forced to use it for bathing or cooking.

And speaking of avoiding trouble, the most common cause of travelers' hospitalization isn't disease at all. Accidents are far more likely to put you in traction than any other cause. Motor vehicles are first on the list, followed by water sports, climbing and assault. Wear your seatbelt and look both ways before crossing.

Health insurance abroad: Who's got you covered?

Before you go, check with your company's health insurance program. Not all programs cover treatment outside the United States. Many have contacts and networks in foreign countries and can provide you with the necessary contact numbers to call for assistance. It is also advisable if traveling to relatively undeveloped areas such as China,

Plans are available from many insurance companies specializing in travel health care, including:

Health Care Abroad

107 W. Federal Street, Box 480
Middleburg, VA 22117-4080
(800) 237-6615 or
(708) 281-9500

International SOS Assistance

8 Neshaminy Interplex, Suite 207
Trevose, PA 19053
(800) 523-8930

Travel Med

P.O. Box 10623
Baltimore, MD 21285
(800) 732-5309

Travel Assistance International

1133 15th St., N.W., Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20009
(800) 821-2828 or
(202) 347-2025

Continued on Page 5



Latin America or Africa to secure medical evacuation insurance. In many parts of the world, modern clinics or hospitals may be miles away, or even in other countries. Emergency evacuation to a modern hospital or back to the United States may be your last resort for lifesaving treatment. It can be very expensive—up to \$10,000 to \$30,000 in some cases.

Travelers assistance insurance is a good idea for anyone traveling internationally on a regular basis. This supplemental insurance doesn't cover medical costs, but assists you in locating the nearest, most appropriate medical care. It can find translators to help overcome language barriers, and monitors your progress during the course of your treatment and recovery. Travelers assistance plans also can arrange for emergency evacuation, and even provide knowledgeable legal referrals if necessary. These plans have international toll-free phone numbers in all parts of the world where a traveler can call when disaster strikes. Check your company's health insurance plan to see if it offers a Travelers Assistance program.

Another resource for business travelers is the International

Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers. They can provide lists of English speaking doctors all over the world and directions on where to go in emergencies. Also helpful is Access America. It offers a 24-hour hotline for subscribers with information and contacts for emergency service abroad. And of course Americans can always find help at their nearest American Embassy. Before you go, check with the State Department for contact information of the embassies and consulates in the area you wish to visit.

International travel can be difficult under the best of circumstances, so if you go, be prepared for the worst. Knowledge about your destination and having current vaccinations for the diseases you may contract there are the best ways to avoid medical problems overseas. ▼

Vaccinations

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offer guidelines and tips for international travel, including a complete list of necessary shots for every region of the world. Other sources for information are the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Society of Travel Medicine, and the U.S. Department of State. All have websites with valuable information and contacts. ▼

Disease Alert

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Area(s) of susceptibility</u>
Yellow Fever	Africa and South America
Meningococcal meningitis	Africa, Nepal, India
Japanese encephalitis	Asia
Cholera	Most third world nations
Typhoid	Most third world nations, former Soviet Union
Hepatitis A	Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union states, Greece

Emergency Service Abroad

International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers

417 Center Street
Lewiston, NY 10492
(716) 754-7883

Access America

6000 Broad Street
Box 11188
Richmond, VA 23230
(806) 955-4002



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Global View™ is published by
R.E. Rogers, Inc., 23900
Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 200
Torrance, CA 90505

Questions and comments can be
forwarded via e-mail to Toni
Cobbs, Manager of Marketing,
R.E. Rogers, Inc. at
tcobbs@rerogers.com or by
telephone at (310) 378-4888
and by fax at (310) 378-4885.

This publication can also be
viewed on our web site at:
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Editor's e-mail:
michelle@brunogroup.com

Dear Readers:

There are two sides to every story. Tales of economic recession are only half truths. When one part of the economy is down, more than likely, another part of the economy is moving up. For example, when reports about shrinking shows reach the air waves, the video conferencing and virtual meeting providers celebrate. Even though some companies cut back their budgets for exhibiting in or attending exhibitions when the economy slows down, companies still communicate, their appetite for new clients and new information remains intense and the only real change is where and how they do business not if they do business.

On an international scale, economic changes, exchange rate fluctuations and other factors move the business around but they do not eliminate the business. When the dollar is strong, some overseas trade shows do very well as everything from booth space to hotel rooms seem a better value for exhibitors. And, even though the products American companies sell seem higher in price to the potential buyers, smart companies use these opportunities to lay the groundwork for a

future time when the international business climate will improve.

The real losers in these times are companies without vision; those that cannot or are unable to look for new applications, new markets or an upside to a seemingly dismal situation. Suppliers and event organizers can use this opportunity to re-evaluate their service offerings, streamline their operations and think of ways to treat their existing customers like royalty. After all, we should have been doing this all along. What goes up doesn't stay up! We should be lean and mean, working harder and smarter no matter what the business climate. Embrace the new "new economy." Haven't you buffed that Mercedes enough?

Enjoy!

Michelle Bruno, Editor



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23900 Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 200
Torrance, CA 90505