



The Global Express Association represents the three leading express delivery carriers: DHL, FedEx and UPS

NEXT TIME IT HAPPENS...

Next time a pandemic or other major international crisis hits, there are things we can do better thanks to the lessons we learned from COVID-19.

The express delivery sector played a vital role during the pandemic, but also faced tremendous difficulties to keep providing its services. Here is what we would recommend, based on our own experience.



KEEP TRADE LANES OPEN

Global trade made it possible to fight a global pandemic. Without international trade, hospitals would not have had access to the medical equipment they needed, nor would vaccines have been developed so quickly, let alone distributed world-wide.



HAVE EFFICIENT BORDER PROCESSES IN PLACE

Countries that relied on traditional, paper-based procedures for imports and exports suffered more disruptions than those with risk-based procedures based on advance electronic data. The WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement provides the template to improve border processes. It should be put fully into practice as a matter of priority, with additional financial and technical assistance from donors.



SUSTAIN ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO KEEP SUPPLY CHAINS GOING

Supply chains depend on the availability of logistics. Modern logistics in turn depend on the availability of a bundle of services. They include all transport modes, courier, ground handling, customs brokerage, and behind-the-border delivery services. They are supported by critical vendors of other services, such as security and data-processing.

Together, these services are choreographed every day to provide the end-to-end movement of goods around the world. All are essential. If one link of the chain breaks, the whole chain is affected.

The more freedom there is to provide these services, the more resilient supply chains will be. When a crisis hits, what is needed, where it is needed and from where, it all changes overnight. Only open markets for such services provide the necessary flexibility to respond efficiently to rapidly changing circumstances.



ADAPT PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES TO ESSENTIAL STAFF

Logistics do not run without staff. Crew, loadmasters, technicians, Customs and security officers, ground handlers, warehouse operators, and delivery drivers – they all kept trade going during the pandemic. Public health measures should make sure essential staff can do their job without excessive restrictions that affect their comfort.



HARMONIZE BORDER ENTRY REQUIREMENTS...

Express delivery services connect two hundred and twenty countries and territories. Unco-ordinated, widely differing border entry requirements for crew created untold complexities for network operations.

Governments should harmonize entry and layover requirements for air crew and other essential workers following common criteria established by the relevant international organizations such as ICAO and the WHO. For instance, ICAO's 'public health corridor' helped air crew operate in a closed loop environment. Such measures should be ready to be activated at short notice, and internationally harmonized. Unilateral entry restrictions only disrupt supply chains.



... AND INTERNAL MEASURES, TOO.

The same should apply to domestic restrictions. The following are best avoided: curfews and travel bans that apply differently in different parts of a country or territory; internal boundary closures; lists of items that may not be delivered, or may not be delivered at a particular time, or in certain districts, etc. Such measures create upstream backlogs, which send ripple effects across supply chains. If something cannot be delivered here and now, it must be stored somewhere else until it can, and that may take away capacity that is needed to keep the chain in motion.



FACILITATE E-COMMERCE

E-commerce proved to be a lifeline for millions of people stuck at home during lockdowns. E-Commerce also opened vital new opportunities for small businesses. Governments should encourage and facilitate e-commerce, including cross-border e-commerce, with the right policies to support it.

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