

IMPORTING AND EXPORTING

Getting the best service From your customs provider

Five tips to help you get the most
out of your relationship with
your customs broker.



Léveillé et Fils

Division de la Société internationale Livingston
Division of Livingston International Inc.

Importing and Exporting

Five ways to get the best service from your customs provider

Having a strong relationship with your customs broker will ensure your goods are cleared safely and efficiently and help your business become more profitable.

The customs and trade experts at Léveillé et Fils have developed five tips to help you get the most out of your customs broker, and to ensure a successful working relationship.

1 Have a clearly defined service level agreement

Once you've made the decision to partner with a customs broker, make sure that all expectations are clearly outlined, upfront. (Ideally, this will be in the form of a mutually agreed upon service level agreement.)

Some criteria you might want to consider include:

- Access to key people who understand your business and your needs. These contacts should be consistent, with established resolution processes and accountabilities, so you always know who to reach when a specific issue arises.
- Service that's fast, flexible and responsive, with minimal waiting time.
- Integration with imaging technology, for instant visibility of client documentation.
- 24/7 support.
- A customer relationship management (CRM) solution that captures, tracks and monitors all inquiries and issues to ensure response and resolution, within appropriate service levels.

Find out how to make your customs provider a value-adding extension of your business.



2 Don't hesitate to speak up

Breakdowns in communication are one of the main reasons broker/client relationships fail. To ensure this doesn't happen, always keep the lines of communication open. Let your provider know when something isn't working, so the issue can be resolved right away. Likewise, make sure you tell them when something is working, so they'll know they're on the right path. Also, find out what channels of communication are available to you, and which ones offer the best results (e.g., can an issue be resolved faster with a phone call, rather than an e-mail?).

3 Do periodic performance reviews

While you'll want to be sure you're communicating with your provider on an ongoing basis, it can also be beneficial to conduct periodic performance reviews. By conducting a review, you can evaluate every touch point and interaction throughout the entire process, and offer feedback about what is working well and what needs to be improved. You can resolve recurring issues and discuss the quality of service you're receiving from your key contacts (e.g., are issues being resolved in a timely manner? Is the service team responsive?). Sharing this feedback on a regular basis should help your broker gain a better understanding of how best to work with you.



4 See your customs provider as a partner

Think of your customs broker as a partner who shares the same goal of helping you succeed. Share your corporate vision and goals, so they can understand their role in helping you reach them. And, definitely take advantage of their expertise: your customs broker can often provide valuable insight and advice on ways you can reduce risk, cut costs, and improve your business performance.

5 Understand your importance as a client

As you probably know from your own business, it's a lot harder to win new clients than it is to retain existing ones. Customs providers are no different, preferring to view the lifetime value of their clients. However, if you feel that your broker isn't making you feel important, tell them. Alternatively, you can find a provider who's going to make a point of understanding your business and providing you with a dedicated service manager or team.

By laying the groundwork, you establish a relationship with your customs broker that not only meets your expectations, but exceeds them. And ultimately, you'll find that the right customs provider can become more than just a supplier; they can be a valued extension of your business.

Contact Léveillé et Fils

Have questions or need help with your shipments? Contact your account executive, write to us at: info@leveille.qc.ca or give us a call at **1-888-408-8474**



