

7 Reasons to Avoid using Courier Firms...



A guide to help you know when to use them and when not to

Carol Krugman, CMP, CMM, director of meeting and business event management for the Department of Hospitality, Tourism, and Events Management at Metropolitan State College of Denver, puts *"a reliable shipping company, customs broker, and/or freight forwarder"* at No. 2 on her list of must-have partners for international meetings.

When you are organizing an event outside your country...

Besides all the travel and on-site preparations, there will be a moment when you may need to ship some of the following items to and from the meeting destination: Office materials, promotional items, giveaways, awards or display materials.

One of the first ideas that might come to your mind when trying to organize the shipping is to contact a courier/parcel service firm.



Shipping through a courier looks like an easy option but you should know that in most countries, these Parcel service companies are regulated on what they can and cannot clear from customs. Couriers' mode of clearance is highly restrictive, meaning that it is **limited to certain items/commodities and value/weight limits**. Furthermore, each country is unique with regard to the treatment of importing commodities for meetings and events.



“Couriers' mode of clearance is highly restrictive, meaning that it is limited to certain items/ commodities and value/weight

This means that any Freight Forwarding company or Courier can easily ship internationally, but it is not always guaranteed that they will be able to clear customs in the country where the event is going to take place. You need to make sure that you will be able to clear customs, complying with any import restriction at the destination.

Your shipment can get stuck at customs for hours or days and this can mean the difference between having the needed materials when the event starts —or having nothing.



Here we are showing **7 true facts** you should know when using Freight Forwarding companies or Couriers/Parcel Service firms to ship your items to an event or exhibition:

1

Parcel Service firms are limited by customs authorities to clear customs depending on the customs value of the commodities or if the volume or quantity of the product is considered as an item to be marketed or distributed to the general public. The greater the value and quantity of goods, the greater the possibility that you require an import license for the destination country.

If the value of the shipment exceeds the limits, which may go from \$300 usd up to \$2,000 depending on the country, then the consignee will automatically be considered a regular importer and will be required to have an Import License or Import ID Number.

“Everything has a value for customs purposes.”

2

Everything has a value for customs purposes, even if a transaction (sale) did not occur. Customs estimates the commercial value in order to determine duties and/or taxes. In the case that the value is declared to be null or very low, your shipment can get stuck until you provide a shipping invoice form with real commercial values.





3 Giveaways/Gifts: When you use a Courier to clear your items in Customs, there is no possibility of avoiding to pay duties and taxes on any gift sent from abroad. Hence the importer/consignee is forced to pay import taxes for materials like awards, promotional items with company logo, giveaways, samples and displays.



"Couriers are enforced to pay taxes on any gift sent from abroad."

4 Couriers do not process any import permit, notification or import license on behalf of the client...your shipment will arrive at the country where your event is going to take place but chances are that **it will get stuck at Customs** until you obtain the required pre-requisite.

Import permits, Notifications or Import Licenses are trade barriers generally created in order to protect human, animal or plant life or health, the environment and consumers. These Import barriers are all pre-requisites in the import process and are not taxes.

"Couriers do not process any import permit, notification or license on behalf of the client."





Many countries regulate importations in a number of areas like health and safety regulations, product standards, testing and certification procedures, packaging and labeling requirements, country-of-origin markings, sanitary and phytosanitary regulations. These authorizations must be granted by local government departments such as the Food and Sanitary Service, Agriculture, the Fish and Wildlife Department and the National Security Agency. The process to obtain these import permits and notifications can take days and even weeks.



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Duplicating costs

Consider that Couriers will quote you for a door-to-door service, but If the shipment gets stuck at Customs the importer will be required to appoint a Customs Broker and a local importer with a proper TAX Identification number for clearance.



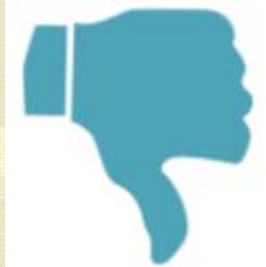
Additional brokerage charges will be added to the original charge in order to clear your items. In the case that customs clearance failed and you cannot have your goods and display materials on time for the event and you decide to ship back your goods, this will add new costs.

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When a shipment gets stuck at customs

and the designation of Customs Broker and Import License is certain to happen, the event planner usually seeks help with the venue staff, but...

◇ Venues usually do not have the appropriate Import License or Import/Export Code Number to assume responsibility to assume responsibility at Customs for the guests' temporary and permanent imports.



◇ Venues are usually not allowed to pay Import taxes for their guests' imports because these kind of expenses are generally not tax-deductible.



◇ Venue staff can help you track your shipment but they are usually not up-to-date with the latest Customs regulations.





7

If any last minute problem arises, please take into consideration that Couriers are limited to follow the customs clearance and delivery process only during office hours, weekdays and not in holidays.

The most common restricted products

If you are planning to ship some of the following products, please let us know as soon as possible to let you know the possible solutions.

- First aid kits, including medicines, vitamins, alcohol, aspirins and any pharmaceutical commodities usually require an Import permit.
- Medical Equipment and medical instruments, monitors, devices, needles or syringes.
- Repellents and insecticides
- Wines, beverages and any liquid
- Suntan lotions, creams, gels
- Candies, Vitamins, Food and Perishable foodstuffs and foods and beverages requiring refrigeration or other environmental control.
- Clothing, table linens and anything that could be considered a "textile"—you can run into high import taxes. Textiles must present the original labels or it will be considered as used items and banned for importing.
- Toys, beach balls, balloons
- Lighters, matches, fireworks
- Plants and plant material, including cut flowers
- Natural fiber products
- Tobacco, cigars and cigarettes, electronic cigars
- Wood products and wood packaging
- Jewelry, Precious stones,
- Money (coins, cash, currency, paper money and negotiable instruments equivalent to cash such as endorsed stocks, bonds and cash letters).
- Credit and debit cards – some countries request an import notification to prevent money laundering.
- Lottery tickets and gambling devices
- Packages that are wet, leaking or emit an odor of any kind.
- Compact discs, recorded and unrecorded, sound recording equipment (CD writers).



So..when is it convenient to use a Courier/Parcel service company?

Our advice is to use a courier only if your goods are paper made products like few brochures, **printed materials** and few office supplies. Always remember that Couriers' way of clearing items is highly restrictive all over the world with regard to certain items/ commodities and value/ weight limits. Also, it is important to ship your boxes using your courier account number and specify that the import taxes will be paid with your account.

"When you are taking a meeting outside your country, one of your most important partners is a shipping broker who can navigate customs to get your materials through and delivered on time," ... Karl M. Kirsch, CAE, vice president at Meeting Expectations in Atlanta.

What is the service that you need?

What you need is a logistics company specializing in shipments for Meetings, Incentive Travels and International Trade Shows so you can forget about shipping problems and concentrate on organizing your event. We provide an Import License with proper BIN (Business Identification Number) for the country where the event is going to take place. We provide advice before you ship any box preventing any awkward situation when not having your meeting materials on time. We are experts in international transportation & Customs and we also know how hotels and Convention centers work.



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