

CBP Trade Symposium: CBP Trade Strategy Breakout Sessions Summary

Two breakout sessions on the CBP Trade Strategy were held for the 2011 CBP Trade Symposium. These sessions engaged the trade community in identifying initiatives and approaches to further the CBP Trade Strategy.

Stephen Hilsen, Director, Trade Policy and Agreements Division in CBP's Office of International Trade moderated the panel discussion and provided an overview of the CBP Trade Strategy's 4 goals and supporting objectives. Three panelists from the trade community provided presentations that discussed their feedback and suggestions for the updating the strategy. The three panelists comprised of: Stephanie Lester (Vice President, Retail Industry Leader's Association), Karen Lobdell (Director, Global Solutions, Integration Point), and Jere Suter (Indirect Tax Advisor, Shell Oil Company). Finally, the panel answered questions from the audience.

CBP Trade Strategy

To address the growth, risks, and complexities of international trade, CBP developed a trade strategy for FY 2009 through FY 2013, which presents a bold vision for trade as a swift flow of legitimate imports entering the U.S. marketplace, free from harm to the U.S. economy and consumers. The CBP Trade Strategy was first rolled out in the 2008 CBP Trade Symposium by Commissioner Basham. It was the first public statement of where CBP was focusing attention and why. The CBP Trade Strategy identifies CBP's priorities and approach, given limited resources and increases in the volume of trade, trade agreements, and trade participants, such as importers, brokers, and other government agencies.

This vision is achieved by four strategic goals and multiple underlying objectives. The four goals are listed below:

- Facilitate Legitimate Trade and Ensure Compliance – manage a consistent and risk-based trade process, reduce delays to compliant trade, and strengthen partnerships to ensure compliance.
- Enforce U.S. Trade Laws and Collect Accurate Revenue – apply expert knowledge of trade laws and swift enforcement actions to identify, address, and deter high-risk trade law violations and ensure proper revenue collection.
- Advance National and Economic Security – protect U.S. economy and consumers from unsafe imports and unfair trade practices, set and direct trade policy, and operate trade processes that complement national and economic security goals.
- Intensify Modernization of CBP's Trade Processes – position the agency to successfully achieve business results and realize the benefits of modernization.

CBP Trade Symposium Feedback

Feedback from the trade community at the CBP Trade Symposium breakout sessions fell primarily into 7 key areas, which are listed below.

- Outreach
 - Communicate realistic timelines for shared projects (ACE)
 - Reach out to small/medium businesses
 - Keep National Account Managers a priority to assist communication efforts
 - CBP and the Trade need to find efficiencies together
 - CBP website needs to be redesigned to be more user-friendly
- Priority Trade Issues (PTIs)
 - Revise and update as needed

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- Remove textiles as PTI
 - Textiles emphasis out of sync with industry today (e.g. no quotas)
 - This PTI can be placed in other areas, such as Revenue
- New Trade Agreements PTI established
- Other Government Agencies (OGAs)
 - Work on shared issues:
 - AD/CVD retroactive system (burdensome to trade and creates uncertainty for business community)
 - Companies do not know who to call when they have issues; hopes to expand CBP partnerships to OGAs
- Modernization
 - Work towards progress on ITDS/ACE
 - Critical if account-based management is a true priority
 - Single Window is needed
 - Streamline the process, provide consistency so small actors can comply
 - Beyond ACE, incorporate innovative automation methods that work to facilitate trade
 - Align 9-5 client rep support to 24/7 Trade practices
- Partnerships
 - Keep evolving risk management processes (to rule out certain importers)
 - Programs are worthy and should be expanded (e.g. Account Executive and Centers for Excellence and Expertise)
- Human Capital
 - Capture subject matter expertise (SME) knowledge in the right locations, ensuring the ports have the expertise they need for enforcement efforts
 - Outreach to SMEs has been challenging to non-existent
 - Adequate staff-levels at ports to address trade concerns
- Uniformity of Enforcement
 - Ensure PTIs matriculate to the field and are uniformly implemented
 - Port consistency should be a focus
 - Clarify material/immaterial errors

We would like to thank everyone that attended the sessions and provided their input to us, either at the Symposium or via email. Please remember that we are still taking comments and suggestions on the CBP Trade Strategy at cbptradestrategy@dhs.gov. We look forward to hearing from you.