



10 Mistakes to AVOID when you ship outside your country.

The best way to AVOID any mistake is to be well informed. Take a look to this list so you can be better informed about the DO's and DON'Ts when Shipping for Meetings and Events held outside your country.

1. Shipping all kind of goods without knowing the transport and import restrictions and special import permits.

Let's say you are planning to ship giveaways such as wooden picture frames, i-pads, wine, candies, T-shirts, pens, brochures and caps along with lithium cells for demonstration.

This shipment may not arrive on time if you don't consider transport and customs restrictions...

There's a variety of products to be sent to an international event. But in general we can classify them into:

1. Products for Demonstration
2. Promotional items and Giveaways
3. Food and Beverages
4. Scenarios, Light and Sound Equipment for live events.

You must consider:

Dangerous goods: If you are going to a tradeshow to show the products you trade, then the transport restrictions you are subject in your country will most likely be the same abroad. In our example, Lithium batteries are considered dangerous goods and must be packed with un-combustible and non-conductive material and protected from a short-circuiting.

If you want to ship **Food and Beverages** then you will most likely need a Health Import License for the import into the country where the event will take place. Governments all around the world want to guarantee that the imported food will not cause epidemics. Also, spirits, wines, and all kind of alcoholic beverages are very restricted, just like tobacco and food products that contain cannabis as ingredient. Some countries prohibit the import, others just restrict them by obtaining import permits.

Raw materials are subject to import permits too. Natural

finish wood, flowers, palm leaves, jute. Are subject to Agriculture Licenses to prevent pests. Usually these kind of products must be fumigated before the import procedures. Consider that varnished items will not have to be fumigated but just inspected.

Trade mark products: Trade mark companies are fighting piracy by restricting the import of their products. In order to perform the import of these products, the provider must handle a letter allowing the importer to work with the trademark in the destination country.

Tips:

Wood, palm leaves, jute and **raw materials:** Must be varnished in order to have a faster import.

Food and Beverages: Ask a Health certificate to your supplier and make sure to provide it to the importer so the import licenses can be obtained before you ship your products. This will save you time and prevents the articles to sit at customs without the proper handling and storage.

Dangerous Goods: Chemicals, combustible or electrical devices can be considered dangerous goods and a proper packing, handling and labeling must be followed.

Trade mark products: Before buying your giveaways make sure your provider can also give you a letter allowing the importer to work with the trade mark in the country the event will take place.

Also Consider:

For shipping outside your country you will first need a **Freight Forwarder** to work as a known shipper and to book the air or ocean transport for your goods.

Which company will you use to ship your items? Make sure your provider let you know about any special transportation or import permits before you even buy your gifts.



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2. Don't take for granted that you won't need an import license, it is better to be well informed.

“I won't need any special import license or permit...”

“What other import permits may be needed?”

Here is a simplified list of products that need import licenses or special permits:

- a. **Medicines, Medical material and Medical Equipment.** Including first aid kits, they are regulated by every country to avoid piracy and protect the industry.
- b. **Food and Beverages.** Regulated by the Health department of each country, you will find different restrictions in each country, specially for the ones produced in the region.
- c. **Toys.** As they are in contact with infants toys imports are regulated by the Health department of each country. Inflatable goods are considered toys.
- d. **Trade marks.** Brands like Nike, Speedo, Apple, Sony, Ray Ban, Maui Jim, Adidas, etc. are known brands that require a letter from the supplier allowing the importer to work with the brand at the destination. Certified providers in your country usually have a USPTO registration number.
- e. **Arms and Sport Equipment.** Regulated by the Defense Department of each country, these products are highly regulated for homeland security. Sport rifles and accessories are considered in this section.
- f. **Natural Raw Materials.** Regulated by the Wildlife Department of each country, their job is to keep out the pests that travel in raw finish materials like wood, plants and flowers.
- g. **Wildlife.** Regulated by the Wildlife Department of each country, their job is to prevent pests that can harm living animals and also the trade of protected species like sea shells, wild and domestic animals.
- h. **Art.** Paintings and sculptures, are regulated by the Art Department of each country to prevent the loss of art works.
- i. **Antropology and Archeological items.** These goods are highly regulated as they are part of the identity of a nation.

Tips:

Although you may not require any special import permit, it is better to be 100% sure you will not need them, because if you do, then the whole shipment may suffer delays or even seizure.

Pool Inflatables require Health department permits.

First Aid Kits require Health Department permits.

Trade marks goods require a written declaration from the supplier to allow the importer to work the brand in the destination country.

Remember that wooden or natural leaf made products should be varnished.

Art or Archeological expositions will require special export and import permits.

Also Consider:

For high end products it is very important to have the proper insurance and protective packing of the goods.



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3. Packing with unsafe or used boxes, not filling the box correctly and without using wrapping materials.

“Let's save a couple of bucks, lets use the boxes from the last trip”.

This shipment may arrive in pretty bad conditions and can be exposed to damage and even robbery.

Packing is a very important part of the shipping process, don't waste your money by causing your goods to get damaged by improper packing.

Remember your boxes will be transported up and down until the arrival at the final destination. We would love to have our boxes handled like our wedding cakes, but the reality is that during the transport, they get handled by operators that need to be fast to meet the transportation time frames. It is better to prevent damage.

Remember:

- Use **new or rigid**, top quality boxes for packing with flaps intact.
- Remove** old address labels and delivery markings to prevent possible confusion about their origin and destination.
- Use **strong tape** designed for shipping; avoid using masking tape. Use the appropriate size package for the items being shipped.
- Wrap** fragile items, individually, in bubble wrap or foam material.
- If the box isn't full then **add foam** peanuts to prevent the box from being crushed.
- When possible, use the original packaging or use the **double-boxing method**: Pack the item in its original box, place the package in a larger box and fill the

space around the smaller box with cushioning material.

- FRAGILE** labels are very useful, but marking the outside of the box "FRAGILE" is not a substitute for proper packaging.
- For jewelry and high end products use **combination locks** to keep the boxes safe. Do not use key locks because the boxes are opened at Customs to verify the contents. Let your importer know the lock combination.

Tips:

Proper packing will also allow you to make an inventory of the contents of each box. This will help you to have a better control of the contents when you receive the shipment at the final destination.

Make sure your provider counts each piece of jewelry or high end product when the delivery is done.

When the event has finished replace the boxes for new ones to return your shipment or the left-overs.

Also Consider:

A proper insurance is needed.



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4. Shipping through an international Courier Company like DHL, FedEx or UPS without the import license at the destination country.

“I usually work with a well known courier and they confirm they can ship my boxes”

Remember that in order to perform the delivery, different procedures must take place. We can divide this procedures into:

1. Pick-up, reception and consolidation of the boxes to create a single shipment.
2. Submit export customs declarations. This will help to avoid paying import taxes when Temporary items are returned.
3. International Transportation.
4. Perform import procedures at the destination country and provide import licenses.
5. Provide local storage and delivery even in holidays or weekends.

Although courier companies can handle the Pick-up, reception, consolidation and International Transportation, they:

- a. Are limited to perform the import procedures.
- b. Can't provide import licenses.
- c. Can't provide final destination storage. As soon as the shipment is cleared from customs it must be delivered. Venues usually have limited storage room.
- d. Can't deliver on weekend and/or holidays.

“What are the limitations of the couriers to provide import clearance?”

Import Restrictions for Couriers:

Each country restrains the Couriers to clear customs depending on the shipment total value. If the value of the

shipment is above a certain amount, the consignee will automatically be considered a regular importer and will be required to have an Import License.

Customs considers the commercial value to determine duties and/or taxes, so in the case the value is declared null or very low, Customs authorities may give a minimum commercial value considering the kind of item, country of origin and manufacture.

High restricted Products:

Regardless the shipment values, if some of your merchandise requires to comply with import restrictions like import permits, licenses or the Customer's right to import and/or distribute from other government agencies such as the Food and Sanitary Service, The Department of Agriculture, the Wildlife Service, etc., customs clearance will be delayed and in most of the cases Couriers do not arrange any permit or license. In such cases an Import License will be mandatory to clear customs, also it may take between 3 days and 3 months to obtain the appropriate permits. Your cargo would be sent back.

Tips:

Consider that Venues usually Do Not have the appropriate Import License to assume responsibility of the permanent or temporary imports of their guests.

Also, most venues are not allowed to pay import taxes for the imports of their guests, as they are not tax-deductible.

Also Consider:

Choose an specialized courier service with import licenses at the destination country.

Consider that If you shipment gets stopped at customs because it needs import licenses, then the customs retrieval may take more time than expected. Contact a Customs Broker.



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5. Taking your convention materials and promotional as part of you luggage.

“I will pay the import taxes at the airport.”

Each country has a list of allowed personal luggage for tourists. At the airport you will go through Customs personnel that will verify:

1. Your identity, travel time, reason to visit the country, accommodation address.
2. How much money you're traveling with, and also the contents of your luggage.

The first part of information is intended for homeland security and immigration purposes.

The second part of information is to make sure you are not trafficking goods, either in money or products.

“What is the criteria for the contents?”

Basically a tourist will have to travel with a quantity of personal belongings that will make sense with the length of the visit. Also, their personal belongings will be used articles and these articles must not put in risk the safety of the local population, natural resources and wildlife.

So for example, if you are traveling with 30 brand new Ipods for a 5 day trip, then Customs authorities will seize them and enforce the traveler to use a Customs Broker to pay the import taxes.

“Why can't I pay the import taxes at the airport?”

For security reasons Customs verifiers are not allowed to receive import taxes. Import Taxes must be paid electronically by a Customs Broker and using an Import License.

This happens because the Treasury Department of each country wants to make sure they receive taxes payments

and also who is paying them and for which articles and reasons.

“What happens if my shipment is seized?”

The customs verifier must give a retention slip of your merchandise with a full description of the contents. Make sure to receive it.

You will have to contact a Customs Broker and send him a copy of the retention slip. With it the Customs Broker will retrieve your goods by paying the import taxes and other costs involved, including his fees.

Tips:

An allowed list of articles will include:

- New or used goods for personal use, such as clothing, footwear, and hygiene products, so long as they are in accordance with the travel time, and their quantity does not suggest that they can be the object of trade.
- One photographic camera and one video recorder.
- One mobile phone, one new or used portable computer.
- Two sets of used personal sports equipment, as long as they can be transported by one person.
- Five toys, as long as they can be transported by one person.
- Medicine for personal use. The prescription must be shown if they are psychotropic substances.
- One musical instrument, as long as it can be transported by one person.

For a complete list please write us at:
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6. Using Logistics Providers without the proper know how and representation at the final destination.

“What should I consider to choose the right logistics provider?”

Consider:

1. Communication.

You must be able to call, e-mail, or chat with your logistics provider when you need it. Also, your e-mails must be answered fast.

Also make sure your provider has a tracking service so you can be well aware of the shipment status.

2. Consultant.

Your logistics provider must act giving you information about the do's and don'ts even before you buy your gifts or prepare your shipment. Being well informed is the best way to avoid any future problems.

3. Know - how.

Logistics companies usually state “We ship all around the World”, but usually this is not true. Make sure to hire companies that have made deliveries at the destination country. You don't want them to guess or experiment with your shipment.

Also, your logistics company must have the basic import licenses and must be able to acquire special import license if necessary.

4. Security.

Make sure your logistics company offers you insurance and it is a reliable firm with reliable suppliers to haul your shipment.

Tips:

You may need a tailor designed plan to ship your convention materials, including: multiple transportation means, handling, storage and/or import permits; depending on the venue access roads.

Different tariff codes may apply for the same product at the export and import jurisdictions. Although most of the countries work with an Harmonized Tariff Code, the customs verifiers may consider different tariff codes. The tariff code determines the import taxes and the non-tariff import licenses.

Having a single contact person within your logistics provider helps you to have better communication.

Make sure to get a full quote before Shipping your goods, in this way you avoid any cost surprises.

Also Consider:

We may be used to the habits and customs of our homeland, but other habits and rules may apply abroad. Your logistics provider must consider these to make sure the communication and delivery are effectively done.

Time zones and work times may vary from region to region. Your logistics provider must be well aware of these in order to be prepared with enough time for any contingency.



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7. Shipping your boxes without enough time to perform the transport logistics and customs clearance.

“I’m thinking on shipping my boxes 3 days before the event, in that way I will save on storage cost at the venue.”

“An overnight service will do”

Consider that the transportation cost will be higher if you need a rush freight service.

Customs clearance may take around 72 hours to be completed, depending on the destination country and customs office.

Overnight services are great when you send shipments within US, but most couriers don't offer these for international destinations.

TIPS

Pack your shipment at least 3 weeks before the delivery date at the resort and ship it at least 2 weeks before the delivery date.

Consider to use a local storage room before the delivery at the venue.

Remember you may need import licenses at the final destination and you must have them ready to avoid delays at customs.

Planning with enough anticipation will save you in logistics and import taxes costs.

8. In some countries you may save on Import Taxes for convention, meetings and incentives promotional items.

“Where and How can I save on Import Taxes?”

Some countries that have import taxes discounts for promotional items are:

Mexico
Bahamas
Sint Martin
Thailand

Other countries allow “Temporary Imports” for commodities that must be returned after the event. The temporary imported items must be taken back to Customs and shipped from there to prove they are being returned. Consider computers, printers, banners as temporary items. In such imports the import taxes can be refunded or avoided.



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9. Not considering local storage and local transportation before the delivery at the venue.

Couriers doesn't provide storage once your shipment has cleared customs. Also they don't deliver on weekends or holidays.

Although the venue may be really big, the storage space is often very small and/or they will charge you high rates for the storage time.

For high-end products you will need a safe warehouse and locked space to keep them in. Also this kind of products need to be counted when delivered to make sure everything is complete.

Hire local transportation that can make deliveries on weekends, holidays and after hour times.

10. After the event, don't leave the responsibility of returning your temporary materials or left-overs to the event coordinator.

You must be well aware that courier companies doesn't have offices at all destinations. So they may not be able to perform the pick-up of the returning items.

Depending on the size and number of boxes it may be cheaper to return your goods by Cargo Customs and Transportation.

Remember Temporary Imports must be returned using Cargo Customs.

Use a logistics company for consulting and performing the customs and freight procedures up to the delivery at your office/warehouse.

Save time and money! Send your equipment to your next event!

The return process is pretty much like the import process, so all the steps in this e-book must be reviewed.