

# Family Fortunes in the “United Nations”

**W**orld Class Shipping is what you would call a Family Business. The second ever member of World Cargo Alliance, a staunch supporter of the WCA Family – oh, and run by three generations of the Shaw family from New York.

“We’re all in it together – the Family is a team,” says Bill Shaw III, referring to both his own family and the networks. Of the latter, he believes “it’s us against the [multinational] integrators. Your fellow member is not your competitor – there are 3,000 freight forwarders in New York, so why should I worry about other WCA Family members!”

World Class Shipping was founded in 1989 by founder and president Bill Shaw in 1989, who grew up at New York’s Idlewild airport. Bill Shaw Jr was the son of Bill Shaw Sr., the first US Customs inspector to oversee Idlewild’s first commercial flights, which began on July 1, 1948. The airport was renamed as New York International on July 31 of that same year, although the name ‘Idlewild’

remained in common use and the airport’s IATA code was IDL.

President Bill Shaw spent his life around the seaports and airports of New York with his customs inspector father, learning about the cargo industry from the inside. In 1965 Bill Shaw joined the US Air Force; after leaving in 1969, he spent 20 years at JFK airport with British Airways as a cargo manager and as vice president of sales for K-Line and Pandair freight. In 1989 he formed WCS International Inc.

In 1993 Bill Shaw III (*below and opposite*), known to many in the WCA Family as “Junior”, joined World Class Shipping. He had also grown up in the cargo industry, his first job there at the age of 14, loading cargo containers. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 1984 then spent nine years with Airborne Express, rising to the position of regional cargo sales manager.

According to Bill, WCS was founded with a different philosophy than most US companies, with “two unique traits that are not found in most

American organisations. First, a European approach, much like the German forwarders who have a high degree of experience and who treat the freight forwarding field as a licensed profession. Secondly, the Asian approach, which is based on customer service, where the customer is treated with the utmost respect and devotion.” In developing this combination, WCS “has developed a reputation for providing a very personalised and professional approach to freight forwarding.”

WCS believes in





only hiring “skilled and trained industry veterans. Although this costs more per employee, we have saved money in the long run on mistakes, training and employee turnover. The average WCS employee has over 15 years experience in the business, the average age of our employees is over 40. Our lean, mean approach allows us to pay our employees more and to deliver the value in service that our customers are looking for. To compete at the level of service that our customers demand requires us to only hire the best and most experienced staff.”

Bill explains WCS has used this combination of skill and service to approach companies that are in need of an ‘in-house’ freight forwarder, enabling it to handle every aspect of a client’s transportation needs under one roof. “Many of our clients use WCS as their single source for import, export and customs clearance.”

One of the greatest factors in the growth and success of World Class Shipping, according to Bill, was joining World Cargo Alliance. “In 1998 David Yokeum called our president Bill Shaw and asked him about joining the WCA, at the time Bill and Chuck Seymour of NOVO Express were going to form their own network called the Focus Group 2000. David convinced Bill Shaw that by joining WCA, all of his needs of having an agent network would be met without the headaches or responsibilities of having to run and manage a group. So in 1998 WCS became the second official

member of WCA. Since that time, we also became one of the first members of CGLN.

“WCA has been the best thing that has ever happened to WCS for many reasons. It has given us a global network that money cannot buy. It has allowed us to ship collect freight around the world without fear of losing money. It has introduced us to new markets that we never had before.

“But most of all, it has allowed us to become part of a family, in which we all have common interests and goals. It has brought us a family of friends and colleagues that we can trust for a lifetime. It really is the United Nations of freight forwarding! In what other industry in the world do we depend on each other’s trust and experience so much, many times without even seeing each other... which brings us to the best part of the WCA [Family] – the meetings.

“The WCA [Family] meetings are without a doubt the best bargain for your dollar you can ever get. To meet all of your partners from around the world under one roof is priceless.” The meetings are where trust and social skills really come into their own, Bill believes. “It is where partnerships and friendships develop. There are many life-long friendships that I can say have been developed by attending the WCA [meetings].”

Over the years, WCS has also become extremely involved in project freight forwarding and was the first company to join the WCA Projects Network

which was launched last year. In a call to other WCA Family partners involved in projects, Bill says: “I encourage you to join the WCAPN. WCS was the first member and we have already seen the fruits of this membership. As with any of these groups, you have to have trust and confidence in your partners. This group allows you to develop your project business with fellow members that are specially qualified to handle your needs.”

Bill says he targets the weaknesses of the multinational integrators. “What are their weaknesses? Anything that requires personal service, attention to detail, expertise and heavy documentation. Projects, multi-modal logistics and documentation is an area that requires skills that most integrators do not possess, that is why WCS has excelled in this area.”

During the past 10 years WCS has targeted relief organisations, government agencies, engineering firms and militaries

to handle their special needs. In the last 10 years, WCS has handled shipments to some of the most difficult and dangerous regions in the world, including Kosovo, Angola, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mongolia and Sudan.

Bill travels on many of these projects, based on issues of urgency and need, but says he never has any concerns for his safety. “I never have fears because my partner in the country is almost always someone I have met at WCA Family meetings”

and can trust to take care of him in whatever local situation they find themselves.

“The WCA Family has become the extended family of World Class Shipping. Whenever we travel to a foreign country for a project or business, it gives you a warm feeling to be greeted by your WCA Family partner. You don’t feel strange, you don’t feel like a tourist... you feel at home. WCA Family members are the greatest and most hospitable people in the world.”

In addition to project shipping, WCS is very actively involved in the web-based freight world. In 2001, it hired Christopher Shaw, the former head web-designer for Fox News. Currently WCS has over 16 different web-sites and is developing new sites every month.

“All of our websites are based on different themes and different countries, this has allowed us to experience consistent growth each and every year.” Currently WCS has 23 employees in

offices in New York, Chicago, Cleveland and a newly opened office in Los Angeles.

Bill Shaw sends out an invitation to members of the Family. “Being from New York, I get many WCA partners here on business and for pleasure. I always make sure that I am available for them, even if it is for an emergency – they know they can call me. So for all of the WCA members and the WCA Family, you have a friend and family member in World Class Shipping. Do not hesitate to call.”

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## US is a “difficult” market, says WCS’ Shaw

Bill Shaw offers some advice for members when dealing with the US: “US Customs and Border protection has come under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, which has made it very difficult over the past few years for importers. DHS now inspects many of the shipments being sent to the US, causing delays and increased costs to the importer. Many of the global agents around the world need to understand the complexities of dealing with the newly appointed government agencies. US forwarders are under increased pressure from the TSA (the transportation security agency) and the DHS to comply with all new rules and regulations, and many have received fines and penalties for small infractions. WCA Family members need to understand that your partners in the USA are here to help you and your customer, but we need your understanding and cooperation.”