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Simplifying Operations



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'E-Filing in Customs' for members
of Kochi CHA Association*

Amit Maheshwari

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MUMBAI: Softlink, one of India's leading software product companies is entering into a strategic alliance with various Custom House Agents Associations across 23 locations in India to educate the Custom House Agents (CHAs) on the technological advancements taking place in Indian Logistics industry. The company jointly with Custom House Agents Associations is conducting workshops on 'E-Filing of documents in Customs'. The workshop is aimed to demystify ICEGATE and Indian Customs EDI Systems (ICES) 1.0/1.5.

Customs in India have started automating the process of customs clearance to reduce the cost of transactions and help Indian industries to become more competitive. As a part of the automation drive Customs have implemented ICES 1.5 at several Inland Container Depot (ICD) and will soon cover all the ports and ICDs. It has now become mandatory for CHAs to understand the working of ICEGATE to get optimum benefits out of it.

The company recently in association with CCHAA (Cochin Custom House Agents Association) successfully conducted a workshop on 'E-Filing of documents in Customs'. The workshop was part of a series initiated by Softlink in association with CHA associations, aimed at "DEMYSTIFYING ICEGATE and ICES 1.0/1.5." This is the second such workshop, the first being held at Goa in conjunction with the Goa CHA association on the 27th of January 2010.

The workshop which was attended by around 60 CHAs from Kochi was

presided over by Shri. C.P. Xavier, President, CCHAA who welcomed Mr. Amit Maheshwari, C.E.O & MD of Softlink and its sales head Mr. Arun Ashan. The President in speech said that "CCHAA is proud to be associated with Softlink". He spoke on length about the CHAs role and lauded their efforts in facilitating international trade. Shri C. P. Xavier said "CHAs play a vital link in the export import operations connecting importers/exporters with various statutory authorities other agencies." He applauded the role of Visual IMPEX saying "It assumes significance as it is India's highest selling software for CHAs and all the requirements of CHAs are built in the software with latest updates about Customs compliances."

The workshop conducted by Mr. Amit Maheshwari started with the evolution of EDI in Customs with explanation about its gradual evolution at major ports. After introducing Icegate Mr. Maheshwari spoke about the process of online filing and revealed its functioning 'behind the scene'. Mr. Maheshwari held the audience captive with his presentation on the advantages and benefits of Icegate, ICES 1.5, its benefits, reach, swiftness & accuracy. He introduced 'Visual IMPEX', a software solution used by over 40,000 users in around 2000 companies. Visual IMPEX helps simplify operations of Customs House Agents (CHA) and Self Clearing Companies in their core business of Customs clearing while complying with complex Indian Customs procedures.

Addressing the event

Mr. Maheshwari said "I would like to thank Shri Xavier, president, Shri Savio, Admin officer and other members of CCHAA, for their support in making this initiative a success. I am sure many of the questions about Icegate would have been answered today." He said "Icegate along with Visual IMPEX will not only help the CHAs in reducing their transaction costs but also help them in staying competitive and achieving profitable growth." He further added "We will continue to be in the forefront of simplifying operations of the logistics and international trade and uphold the tradition of reliability, trustworthiness and excellence."

The event was highly appreciated by all the participants. They opined that the workshop has given them a deeper insight into the working of Icegate and were confident that it would help them conduct their business more efficiently. One of the participants Shri P.M. Muraleedharan, past President of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry and past Chairman of Kerala Chamber of Commerce & Industry appreciated Softlink for their service to the CHA fraternity. He said the software would minimize the effort of Ex-Im documentation and increase the efficiency of CHA organization to handle more and more clients effectively. Shri Savio Mathew Admn. Officer, CCHAA proposed the vote of thanks and spoke highly about this initiative and the range of services being provided by Softlink which is very useful for CHAs for their day to day documentation with Customs.