



Portall: Bringing In New Wave



Introduction: With the introduction of various reforms precisely reflects the government's efforts to improve the "ease of doing business" eventually encouraging the weak economy. Though India still follows old school models in certain arenas, the country is taking giant steps towards digitalisation; Shirishchandra Shah, COO, Portall shares the ideology & challenges behind introducing a logistics management application in old fashioned business environment.

By – Namrata Nikale Tanna

With the country embracing the greatest tax reform — replacing an array of provincial duties with a nationwide goods and services tax, could you share the impact of the reform on logistics industry of India?

Shah: GST has been beneficial for the logistics industry. This reform has drastically reduced the expenses by unifying the market. There has been marginal improvement in the movement of goods across borders where the wait time has reduced to almost zero. It has reduced execution of multiple similar activities making the trade more efficient.

Could you share the ideology behind introducing a logistics management application and what were the challenges as India still follows old school models in certain industries?

Shah: The idea of introducing Logistics Management application came from the understanding that our infrastructures needed to be under a single window. India has understood the importance of Ease of Doing business and Digital India. As we grew, our idea's scope became wider and started including more stakeholders.

Yes, India still follows old school models like making payments with cheques/DDs instead of online payment, multi-layer coordination, repetitive documentation etc. It is this inefficiency that Portall resolves.

How is Portall, a logistics management application, catering to the needs of exporters and importers, is helping the shipping industry of the country?

Shah: We as Portall are providing Transparency All the Way. Currently, there is loss of time, increased amount of repetitive documentation and no proper updates or standardization which slows down the process of Import-Export. Portall bridges the gap and increases the productivity by bringing every stakeholder onto a single window that offers them a seamless experience.

Despite of the weak economic sentiments, the logistics industry continues to witness growth due to the growth in retail, e-commerce and manufacturing sectors, do you think this new trend will boost Portall's growth?

Shah: The industry has become stable after the 2008 recessions and other global trends. There has been visible growth for the stakeholders in the ecosystem. The sectors have increased visibility for logistics industry as a whole. The concept of Make in India has also been prominent for pushing the retail, e-commerce and manufacturing sectors. This new trend definitely boosts Portall's growth since we are a Logistics Management Application and provide services for the same.

Could you kindly share with us Portall's growth strategy in the coming years?

Shah: The coming years will see a growth in Portall. Currently, there has been a very positive response from the users. They prefer to use Portall as it saves time and money, provides live updates, etc. We already have 900+ registered customers on Portall and the graph will only go higher from here on. Portall has a specific scope for now and as we grow our scope, both horizontally and vertically, our stakeholders will increase too. We plan to have an empty yard solution, more e-documentation, coastal shipping and many more. Portall is currently present in our JMB infrastructures in Kandla, Haldia, Mumbai, Vizag and Delhi. As we grow, we tend to expand to the rest of the country to cater to the larger segment of our customers. Portall's growth strategy is all based on simplifying the trade practices and making it less tedious.

Off late, we believe the logistics infrastructure has gained a lot of attention both from business industry as well as policy makers, kindly share your opinion on the same and which reforms have proved extremely beneficial?

Shah: We all are aware that Indian Logistics lacks in infrastructure and that definitely pulls us back at a global level. For e.g., our ports have challenges of longer turnaround time, pre-berthing delays, etc. The infrastructure development either privatised or in PPP model will

help India fill in this gap. The Sagarmala project is one such example that is proving to be extremely beneficial. The make in India concept has also pushed for more investments in India. The GST reform has simplified the tax structure and the delays have reduced. The growing e-commerce industry has also contributed in increasing the number of warehouses. The dedicated freight corridor, increase share of railways in land transport are few other aspects proving to be beneficial.

May we request you to address the major challenges since past few previous years for Shipping Industry in India and how will Portall help in overcoming this challenges?

Shah: Having been in this industry for quite some time now, I have observed the challenges that the entire industry faces on a daily basis. Each stakeholder in the industry has certain pain-points, certain setbacks which Portall is trying to overcome.

The biggest challenge of handling multiple co-ordinations has been tackled by Portall by getting everyone under a single platform and coordinating simply by clicks. The major pain point for our stakeholders is transparency. For a shipping line/CFS/Port/CHA or the end customer, update on their shipment is crucial and they can now have these as notification through Portall. We offer a range of services from the perspective of various stakeholders. We have a CFS Module, Customs Module, line module, terminal module. Each module caters to the coordination of various stakeholders involved. From the end of a CHA – we offer to them a Customs module in Portall where they can now generate bills of entry/ shipping along with their activities of CFS if any.

This single window system reduces cost, saves time, and brings in standardisation, live updates in the form of notifications and alerts. The delay in receiving documentation is another challenge to which we have our e-documentations- e-D/O, an e-invoice, etc.

Another challenge is the payment aspect which we address through e-payments. Our business has multiple location based documentation which Portall provides on the app and the website. This way, our customers can access all documents anywhere anytime.

“Portall caters to all the challenges as by bringing transparency all the way.”

We have been witnessing lack of infrastructure as a tremendous hurdle in the growth of logistics sector, According to you how will India be able to overcome this challenge?

Shah: As mentioned, India does lack infrastructure but in the recent times there have been reforms, policies, new projects looking at building infrastructure in India. This challenge of lack of infrastructure will be overcome with more dedicated freight corridors, more privatisation/ PPP models.

Finally, is India ready for complete digitalisation?

Shah: Yes India is ready for digitalisation but not completely yet since many still prefer the old school ways. Digitalisation can be completely owned by India as the new generation is

more tech-savvy and the older generations are trying to match their pace. With more and more e-platforms such as PORTALL, India will soon be completely digital.