

APEC Customs-Business Dialogue

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Speaking points from

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Levi Strauss & Company

Panel #3: "Opportunity: Identifying the Next Generation of Customs-Business Partnerships"

Panel Members:

Moderator: Ms. Maria Luisa O'Connell, Senior Advisor, Office of Trade Relations

Panelist: Mexican Customs, Trade Relations (**TBC**)

Panelist: Singapore Customs, Head of Trade Relations

Panelist: Mr. Matt Varner, Director of Trade Operations NIKE

Panelist: Ms. Laurie Goldman, Levi Strauss

Discussion Topic

- Explore the various models by which APEC economies approach Customs-business partnerships.
- Highlight opportunities to enhance Customs-business partnerships in an effort to meet the international Customs-business goals of securing and facilitating trade to meet goals of economic growth and prosperity
 - Nationally: Examples of steps economies can take, independently, to enhance their collaboration with the private sector, and
 - Multilaterally: Examples of mechanisms that can be used in the multilateral context to ensure sustainable collaboration between the sectors.

Points to Make (five minute intro)

1. Self-intro; Currently GA at Levi Strauss with previous experience at DOC working with U.S. Customs on NAFTA implementation? “*Where you stand*” comment.
2. **Business interest** = time to market, cost, predictability = reduce govt. intervention in transactions
3. **Government interest**= lower cost, work with fewer resources, risk = efficient work streams reduce costs and focus govt. intervention
4. Business derives economic benefits from programs as C-TPAT, AEO
5. Business wants a leveling the playing field- e.g., partnership on IPR, better targets “bad actors”
6. Example of a potential Customs Business Partnership: Asia –Pacific Interactive Tariff Database
 - a. presented earlier today at lunch
 - b. Business problem solved: under-utilization of FTAs due to lack of information, ability to better understand sourcing options, enhanced compliance, predictability
 - c. Customs problems solved: knowledgeable businesses improve compliance with regulations (understand the rules of origin, tariff rates, etc.), more time available to focus on higher risk importers), better ability to disseminate information (scalable to include other import rules: product safety, standards, taxes, etc.)

Potential Questions

1. What is a partnership? What types of partnerships have been most successful?
 - a. An endeavor that has a mutual benefit for all participants
 - b. Successful partnerships have a clearly defined scope and common objective, an understanding of the parties of each side’s specific interests, metrics to measure success.

- c. In general, a partnership is different than a relationship or cooperation.
- d. Partnerships with Customs at many levels: partnerships between global Customs (WCO) and industry, national Customs organization and industry, national Customs and specific business entities

2. What are the elements of a successful Customs-business partnership?

- a. Provides mutual benefit (e.g., businesses save time and cost, government reduces risk and cost)
- b. Solves a problem that affects both business and government
- c. Commitment by both sides to identify workable solutions
- d. Measurable benefits (both govt. and business are accountable to higher ups)

3. Has the APEC Forum been helpful in achieving business objectives in the region and why? Does the combination of non-binding discussions and formal business involvement help APEC to achieve results?

- a. Although the APEC forum itself is not a partnership per se, it provides a unique opportunity for both government and business to interact in a way that is designed to achieve results without pressure. Because APEC commitments are non-binding on governments, the dialogues tend to focus on real problems in an atmosphere that encourages problem solving
- b. APEC also has a formal process (ABAC) for involving business in discussions. It is business that has brought many of the issues being addressed in APEC to the fore.
- c. Because APEC has a record of achievement, I am able to convince senior execs at LS&Co. that investing our time and resources is worthwhile. For example: the supply chain connectivity work, transparency initiative, etc. have all led to an improved business climate.