

INTERNATIONAL FREIGHTING UPDATE

ROB SHELLEY IS THE CEO OF MARITIME CARGO SERVICES

MARITIME CARGO SERVICES IS A SUFFOLK-BASED **FREIGHT FORWARDER** THAT WAS FOUNDED BY **ROB SHELLEY** OVER 20 YEARS AGO. IT IS NOW ONE OF THE **UK'S LEADING** FREIGHT FORWARDING SPECIALISTS IN THE TYRE INDUSTRY LOOKING AFTER MORE THAN **20 MAJOR TYRE IMPORTERS** MANAGING THE CUSTOMS CLEARANCE AND DELIVERY OF CONTAINERS TO WELL OVER A **HUNDRED TYRE WAREHOUSES** AND DEPOTS THROUGHOUT THE UK AND IRELAND.

Black Gold

We recently rejoiced at the news that the Government had postponed August's threatened fuel duty rise. Welcome news whether you are just filling the car or, more critically, looking at the short term fuel bills for a commercial transport fleet.

This announcement follows on the heels of other recent cuts in the price of crude and, if sustained over the longer term, will help reduce overall transport costs across the global supply chain. However, the reason why the cost of oil has fallen is not such good news and, one could argue, reflects an international slump in demand for consumer goods of every nature which all depend on the 'black stuff' to, literally, oil the wheels of global commerce.

The effect of higher oil prices on the major container operators is hugely significant; the fuel bill in Q1 2012 for the world's largest line, Maersk, was \$1.9 billion - up 44% on the same

period last year. So, the recent cut in crude prices should be good news for the shipping companies. Unfortunately, however, the ongoing financial crisis in the Eurozone and further afield means that consumer confidence continues to wallow and this fragile recovery is now looking in doubt. It's a wise 'tyre man' who keeps his eye on the ramifications of the wider, longer term logistics chain.

Slow Steaming and Reliability

Of ultimate, though maybe not immediate, benefit to tyre shippers is the influence of slow steaming practices in the shipping industry. Instigated in order to save fuel and tighten capacity, it may also be having the knock-on effect of increasing schedule reliability.

The suggestion comes as the latest figures show that reliability among the major box lines improved sharply recently while the gap between the best and worst performers narrowed significantly.

According to the latest figures to be released, reliability, measured across various trade lanes as the percentage of vessels arriving within one day of schedule, rose from 81% in June to 83% in July. This represents highs not seen before and the thinking is that improvements are partly due to slow steaming with carriers building more slack into their schedule and the fact that many ships are not entirely full so they spend less time in port. The gap between the top and bottom performers has been narrowing rapidly during 2012. Last year the average gap between top and bottom performers was a 23% difference in vessel reliability. It was announced recently that this gap had shrunk to 13%; a figure driven especially

by previously poor performers massively increasing their service delivery.

For the shipping industry, lower fuel costs and improved reliability should mean improved efficiencies and profitability. For tyre shippers, it might mean that you will eventually see some savings in your supply chain. With the emphasis on the word 'might'.

For more information:

www.maritimecargo.com or visit stand 47

Rob Shelley



BITESIZE

A feature of the Haweka UK stand will be the company's complete range of commercial vehicle alignment equipment, including the all-new Axis 4000.

This fully computerised system can now include a complete data set of truck wheel alignment settings to enable real time comparison of actual readings against manufacturers' specifications. The company says no other wheel alignment machine allows the operator to measure a twin axle semi-trailer in 10 minutes. The Haweka range can do this thanks to its patented wheel clamps, which are attached to the wheel rim by means of powerful magnetic feet (with additional grab arms for aluminium rims) and the measurement can begin immediately. These unique clamps are used on all Haweka aligners.

Visit stand 53

A last minute decision by Wheelwright - formerly Alcar Wheelwright - will see the Kent-based distributor of alloy and steel wheels promoting its extensive range of products to visitors at EventCity.

Drawing on over 30 years' market experience, the company supply automotive retailers with the largest choice of wheel styles available from one supplier. Brands include Calibre, AEZ, Dotz, Dezent and Enzo plus TÜV Approved steel wheels by KFZ Stahlrad, produced to OE standards and ideal for the winter market.

Visit stand 57B