“Finding solutions is our job”

Crucial to each link in the supply chain is the ‘getting things done’ mentality. What better evidence to prove this than the following testimonials of five people from the port community itself.
Finding solutions is our job

Fast and flexible

Some 60,000 people in and around the port of Antwerp each day give their very best to expedite the cargo. Crucial to each link in the supply chain is the ‘getting things done’ mentality, which enables the port community to swiftly and flexibly respond to customer demands and unexpected events. What better evidence than the following testimonials of five people from the port community itself.

“Flexible hands-on approach

Peter Beliën
CEO, NOVAEDES

“The customer is King,” says Peter Beliën of Novaedes, which specialises in the packaging and conditioning of maritime and air freight. “It’s our mission to immediately address the concerns of our customers. Also if we’re not primarily responsible for the action, by working together with other companies in the port, we try to solve problems as quickly as possible. If a ship is ready to leave and a crate is found to be broken or goods still need to be packed, it’s all hands on deck to find a solution. I can still vividly remember the day we had to pack a 100 tonne cargo. The project had been frozen for political reasons. Part of the goods had already arrived in the port and could not be accommodated. In a joint effort with other companies in the neighbourhood, we managed in a short time to install walkways and to safely accommodate the cargo. This flexible and hands-on approach is the strength of the port of Antwerp.”

NOVAEDES
• activities: industrial handling, packaging and conditioning for maritime and air transport, marshalling and logistic support
• # employees: 150
• located in the Port of Antwerp since: 1987
• origin of goods: worldwide, mainly Europe
• destination of goods: worldwide

Dock-workers in the Port of Antwerp

dock-workers: 6,172
logistics employees: 1,003
maintenance and repair technicians: 879

Source: Cepa
Finding solutions is our job

“Always have a plan B and a plan C”
Jan Pauwels
Chief Traffic Controller,
ANTWERP PORT AUTHORITY

Smoothly piloting ships from the North Sea to and from the port is an operation that requires the greatest care and attention to detail. Is there a maritime pilot available? A river and dock pilot? Is there not too much wind? Is there a lock available? Are there enough tugboats? Is there a berth available? These are just some of the questions that need to be answered. The entire chain must work perfectly for every ship. “It’s a matter of continuous interpretation and adjustment,” confirms Jan Pauwels, Chief Traffic Controller of the Antwerp Port Authority. “And making ad hoc decisions. The other day we feared a river pilot would show up too late, which would jeopardised the entire chain. We made every effort to find a solution. I guess you could call us make-doers. We always have a plan B and a plan C on hand. A big advantage is the great flexibility that prevails among the various stakeholders in the port of Antwerp.”

ANTWERP PORT AUTHORITY
- activity: management of the Port of Antwerp
- # employees: 1,600
- located in the Port of Antwerp since: 1997

“Don’t take no for an answer”
Bernard Moyson
CEO, ACL BENELUX

“Boundaries are there to be pushed,” says Bernard Moyson. The CEO thus summarises the mentality of its shipping company and also that of the port of Antwerp. ACL’S ConRo ships carry both containers and rolling stock, and are a familiar sight in the port of Antwerp. “Every assignment is a challenge. It’s a continuous investigation into how the available ship space can be utilised as efficiently as possible. If the customer wants a complete ro-ro deck (roll on, roll off), we organise it. The customer’s wishes come first. One example: to transport machines for one of our custom- ers, we use flatbed trailers. The latest machines, however, were wider and no longer fitted on the trailers. We were able to offer the customer a so- lution by extending the trailers and having them approved, so that the distribution could continue via Antwerp. With such an out-of-the-box attitude you create a win-win situation. This flexible at- titude is also a great plus in the port of Antwerp. Crucial to every project is that we work with the right partners, which enables us to ensure the speedy and absolutely safe handling of cargo.”

ACL BENELUX
- activity: total shipping services for the Benelux
- # employees: 45
- located in the Port of Antwerp since: represented in the port since 1967 and official ACL- office since 2009
- origin and destination of goods: Benelux, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, worldwide in transshipment
“In Antwerp we are willing and able to solve all problems”

Marc Huybrechts
General Manager, LOGISTICS-ATLANTIC NV

“I do everything I can to keep the can-do mentality in the port of Antwerp alive and well,” says Marc Huybrechts. As general manager of the logistics department of the Wijngaard Natie Groep, he describes the corporate philosophy as ‘looking for and finding solutions’. “All the more so because we provide customised solutions. In Antwerp you have a chain of people who share that can-do mentality. Whenever there is a problem, everyone becomes part of it. As a result, there is an effective willingness to jointly look for a solution.” I remember the time when a container of a Swiss customer had gone missing in the port. “It had to be found within two hours as the ship on which it was to be shipped, was ready to leave. I jumped into my car to go searching for the freight on the quay. I managed to spot the container a little later, so that it could still travel with the ship. What matters is to never give up. This attitude in combination with a high degree of flexibility gives the port of Antwerp an edge. Customers are often unaware of this, until something goes wrong in another port.”

ATLANTIC NV
- activity: freight forwarder, 4PL-logistics service provider
- # employees: 16
- located in the Port of Antwerp since: 1976
- origin and destination of goods: worldwide

“Dock-workers with lots of experience”

Daniël Bries
Dock supervisor, ZUIDNATIE

Daniël Bries is an experienced old hand. As dock supervisor of Zuidnatie he overlooks the operations on sea-going vessels. Every day is a challenge for him as he must ensure that unloading/loading proceeds smoothly and safely. Is the proper material present? Are there enough dock-workers? He counters these questions with great enthusiasm. “The purpose is to load each ship with great care and as well and as quickly as possible. Safety is our absolute priority. Zuidnatie and the port of Antwerp have, however, an extra asset: the many years of experience of their employees. We have been working for a long time with the same dock-workers. This builds expertise and great mutual trust. Especially at times when solutions have to be found on the spot, for example, when the cargo on a ship has fallen over in stormy sea weather. We then immediately have to find a crane, as every ship needs to be able to leave the port as quickly as possible, for financial reasons. This flexibility and solution-oriented mentality are inherent in the Antwerp port community.”

ZUIDNATIE
- activity: stevedoring, logistics, warehousing, transport, forwarding
- # employees: 440
- located in the Port of Antwerp since: 1870
- origin of goods: various countries
- destination of goods: worldwide