

The Future of Customs



Thursday 26th January 2017 has been designated by the World Customs Organisation (WCO) as International Customs Day. This year's theme is 'Data Analysis for Effective Border Management'.

The key words to consider for this topic for this year and for some years to come are 'data', 'intelligence', 'information', 'technology', 'analysis', 'risk', 'targeted' and 'audit'.

HMRC and the UK Border Force are both very clear that the way forward is intelligence led, targeted operations based on data analysis. This data analysis will lead to a view of how risky a company is and this will lead to greater or lesser intervention in their affairs.

What is meant by 'risk' in this context? This is risk in the international supply chain.

How secure is a particular company's supply chain? Have they taken measures to ensure that their own operations do not make it easy for criminals (drug traffickers, people smugglers, terrorists, gun runners etc.) to make use of their goods movements for their own ends? This includes consideration of who they employ and which third parties they use.

It also means what is the risk to any applicable revenue. Not just import duty and VAT but any other taxes the company might need to pay such as PAYE, Corporation Tax etc. as this gives an overall view of a company's compliance.

Company's should be aware that all aspects of information about them that are publicly available might be used e.g social media, not just the official company sites but also from employees both current or previous. What kind of picture of your company could they form from such details?

Interventions for those designated risky will range from stopping and searching goods and means of transport at ports and airports, flagging all proposed customs entries for more detailed scrutiny prior to export or import clearance, an increased number of official audits which will go into greater detail than might have been the case before to refusing access to beneficial customs procedures.

Whilst we celebrate International Customs Day and the facilitative achievements of previous years now is the time to look to the future and to make sure we are all ready to take advantage of the opportunities it will bring for compliant companies.

Need help? Contact us:

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