

# Troy Container Line: 35 years in the making

Troy Container Line started out in 1984 as a one-route company out of its Brooklyn, New York headquarters. From day one, the independently owned NVOCC has been helmed by Chief Executive Officer Michael Cadden Troy. Today, 35 years later, Mr. Troy has strategically grown the company to be one of the leading service providers in the logistics and maritime shipping industry.

Mr. Troy founded Troy Container Line on the belief that he could offer individual shippers a superior level of customer service over that of steamship lines. This has been a guiding principle at Troy Container Line for more than three decades - informing new services, expanding routes, and building a company culture of personal-

ized service and care.

The demands of entrepreneurship are varied and scaling an enterprise to be a leading force in its industry is no easy task. During the last 35 years, Mr. Troy has succeeded at both. He has grown Troy Container Line through three recessions, overcoming hurdles and challenges involving international security and regulatory issues, and an evolving technological landscape that demanded round-the-clock accessibility, always striving to establish the most efficient, reliable and convenient service offerings in the market.

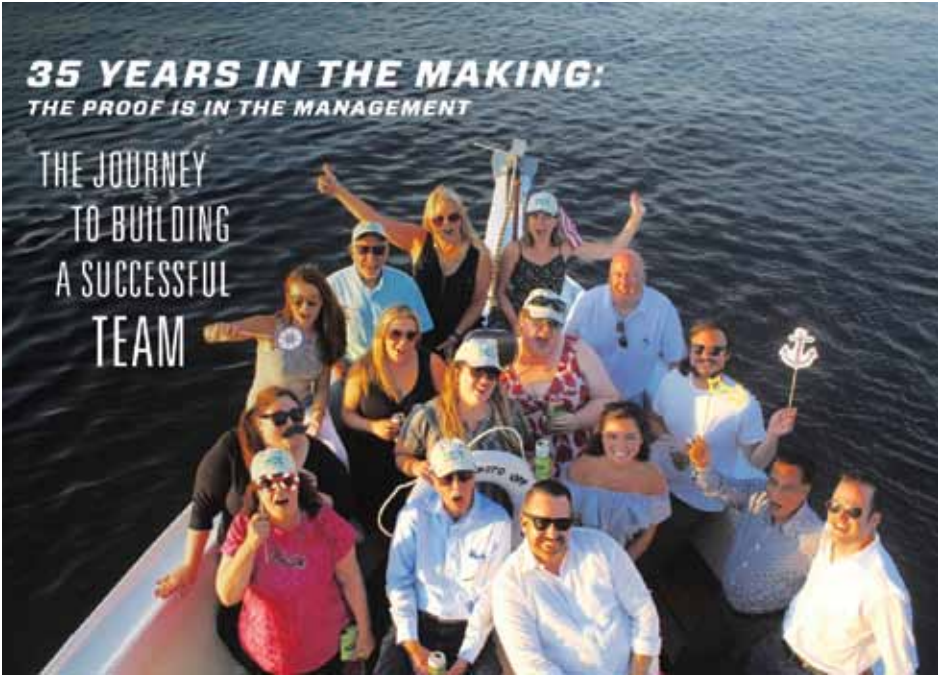
This is exemplified in some of the company's key milestones and achievements. In the 1980s, for example, Troy

Container Line offered only LCL export services to select locations ranging from West Africa to East Asia. The company then worked tirelessly to expand its services to include both FCL export services and LCL trucking services that grew out of its founding LCL routes. Mr. Troy then set his sites on Europe with the purchase of Polar House UK in 1999 with Polar Shipping. In 2001, Troy Container Line commenced its 21st century expansion when it launched a direct route to Germany from New York. This milestone increased service offerings in Europe and included both a direct route and express offerings. Several years later, it expanded to offer direct services to Dubai and 28 other destinations in the surrounding region.

Always looking to the future, Troy Container Line's ongoing commitment to service and satisfaction doesn't only pertain to shipping routes and sailing schedules. It includes a commitment to staying ahead of technological advancements and their overall impact on the industry. In 2006, Troy Container Line was one of the first NVOCCs to provide customers with the ability to make bookings, receive quotes, and track and trace their cargo at any time of the day or night from any location via the company's website. More than a decade later, seventy-five percent of Troy shipping quotes are now generated online and the Troy Container Line team can directly attribute the growth of its import division to the readily-available online calculator used by clients to price ocean freight and destination charges.

In the years leading up to Troy Container Line's 30th anniversary, the NVOCC's

*MAKING – continued on page 6*



# Troy Container Line - 35 years and counting as a neutral NVO

For 35 years, Troy Container Line has been a standout among the neutral NVOs. And Troy Container Line founder Michael Cadden Troy has had a front row seat watching the NVO business grow, literally since NVOs became a business.

Michael Troy's 35-year NVOCC (Non-Vessel Owning Common Carrier) career at Troy Container Line largely spans the history of the NVO industry in the United States. As a neutral NVO, Troy Container Line has been defining and re-defining the best practices for an often misunderstood and uniquely U.S. business.

What is an NVO? Not an easy question to fully answer and it depends greatly on what service segment in the international shipping transaction the query is coming from: beneficial cargo owner, international freight forwarder (IFF), consolidator, trucker, ocean carrier or foreign-based shipping agent. Each partner in the shipping chain has a different perspective on the role of the NVO.

A neutral NVO like Troy Container plays an essential role in making U.S. ocean shipping efficient and cost effective. The NVO is a key link in the middle of the supply chain, negotiating with the ocean carriers on one side and international freight forwarders on the other. As Michael Troy often has said of his own position at Troy Container, "I'm the chief negotiator."

Hessel Verhage, CEO of STG Logistics, a North American independent CFS (container freight station) provider which has been working with Troy Container since the early 1990s, said of the relationship, "Michael [Troy] is one of the shrewdest neutral NVOs around... he personally works extremely hard [at getting things right for his clients] but is

extremely fair, a joy to deal with."

Another service provider, Angelo Capriato, CFO of Logistical Advantage, an asset based 3PL supplying LCL and FCL services, said of Troy Container, the "sustained high level of excellence, customer focus and rock solid dependability makes it easy."



Troy Container Line founder  
Michael Cadden Troy

It's a highly complex relationship-driven business which is often misunderstood. Within the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) nomenclature an NVO is conjoined with freight forwarders under the heading of Ocean Transportation Intermediaries (OTI). Although the FMC has them under one grouping, the functions of the two shipping services are very different.

The NVO name itself is revealing to a point: Non Vessel Owning. NVOs don't

own the ships but have their own House Bill of Lading (HBL). In simple terms, the NVOs buy the slots (space) from the ocean carriers and sell them as their own.

But the NVO moniker only goes so far. The NVOs relationship with truckers, consolidators, warehousing companies, forwarders and agents together forges an important link in a shipper's supply chain. Often for smaller shippers whose freight is Less-Container-Load (LCL), an NVO like Troy Container is vital to shipping their products at a rate competitive to larger companies with greater volumes of freight. Because the NVO buys large numbers of slots from various ocean carriers, they can negotiate volume freight rates over a wide variety of routes which an individual shipper - particularly an LCL shipper - can't match. In a sense, an NVO helps level the playing field on the transportation portion of the economic calculation between big shippers and smaller ones... and in the U.S., there are a lot of small to mid-sized importers and exporters.

But to be as successful as Troy Container Line has been over the past 35 years, now serving 142 countries and around 8,000 destinations, it's worth taking a look back to the beginning when the NVO business in the U.S. was just taking shape.

## 1984 - A LANDMARK YEAR

On March 24th 1984, the newly minted company, Troy Catucci Line [it became Troy Container Line in 1997 when Troy bought out Catucci's interest and the company was renamed Troy Container Line.] opened for business. The

*COUNTING – continued on page 6*

### 35 YEARS OF TROY CONTAINER LINE

**KEY**

- Troy Container Line milestone
- Significant industry date
- Ongoing philanthropic partnerships
- Evolution of container ship size

**PANAMAX**  
1980

**MAR. 24 1984**  
Troy Catucci Line LTD opens  
First LCL Service departed on an APL ship to Hong Kong

**JAN. 1985**  
LCL Export Services: Europe & UK

**OCT. 19 1987**  
Black Monday

**1987**  
LCL Export Services: Middle East & South East Asia

**POST PANAMAX**  
1988

**JAN. 1 1990**  
Recession 1 begins

**1990**  
Troy expands FCL Exports to Asia opens the door to 15 countries

**1993**  
FCL Export Services: Middle East

**1993**  
Troy's LCL Export Services connect to more than 300 destinations

**1997**  
Company becomes Troy Container Line  
Patricia Fitzgerald, COO of Exports

**1997**  
Troy Foundation established to support education, health & welfare

**2000**  
Gopal Roy announced as CFO  
Troy opens Chicago, St. Louis & Cleveland CFS

**POST PANAMAX + 2000**

**MAR. 10 2000**  
Technology Bubble Bursts Stock Market Crash

**JAN. 2001**  
Tom Sciro announced as VP of LI.

**MAR. 1 2001**  
Recession 2 begins

**JUN. 2001**  
Direct Route to Germany from NY

**2007**  
Troy begins support of local food pantry Lunch Break in Red Bank, NJ

**2010**  
Michael Troy II announced as Global Sales Manager

**FEB. 2012**  
Work with Kiva begins via the Troy Family Foundation

**2014**  
Expand Service from Mid-West & South Atlantic Regions

**2016**  
Improved direct Service Chicago to Mid-East

**1984**  
LCL Export Services: China & Japan

**JAN. 1 1984**  
50 Mile Rule Passes

**JAN. 10 1984**  
Act of Navigation: First defined an NVOCC

**PANAMAX MAX**  
1985

**FEB. 1986**  
LCL Export Services: South, East & West Africa

**1989**  
First FCL Contract Signed: FCL Services to Rotterdam

**JAN. 2 1989**  
50 Mile Rule declared unconstitutional

**1991**  
St. George Warehouse becomes Troy's NY/NJ CFS  
Troy Container Line Moves to NJ

**NOV. 30 1991**  
Recession 1 ends

**1995**  
Troy offers LCL Trucking Services

**MAY 29 1995**  
Jeter Called up to the NY Yankees

**1996**  
Walter Gimbart announced as V.P. of Operations  
Troy Moves to Red Bank, NJ

**1998**  
Chris Hellow, COO of Imports  
Import Services begin! First route Hong Kong

**APR. 2 1998**  
Planning for succession begins

**1999**  
Troy & Polar Shipping purchase Polar House UK

**SEP. 11 2001**

**NOV. 30 2001**  
Recession 2 ends

**2005**  
Demack Magee announced as head of FCL Department

**2006**  
Online services for booking, quotes & tracking & tracing launch

**DEC. 1 2007**  
Recession 3 begins

**JUN. 30 2009**  
Recession 3 ends

**MAY 2011**  
Direct service to Dubai & 28 destinations in the Region

**2013**  
Direct LCL Service from Atlanta to Asia

**TRIPLE E**  
2013

**2018**  
New Import service from Shenzhen and Xiamen

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**TROY**





Troy headquarters in Red Bank, New Jersey

# 35 years in the making: The proof is in the management

## The journey to building a successful team

Troy Container Line’s success in the logistics and maritime shipping industry can be accredited to the vision of its founder, Michael Cadden Troy, and the dedication and experience of its management team. When speaking to Troy Container Line management and staff, the word “family” is often used to describe the company culture and work environment at its Red Bank, New Jersey headquarters and Charlotte, North Carolina office. This familial feel is rooted in a shared commitment to customer service and personalized care on behalf of all managers and department staff. Teamwork is an essential aspect of every decision and task that is performed at Troy Container Line, and the management team’s commitment to this shared effort allows Troy Container Line to prosper in its industry.

Under the direction of Mr. Troy, all Troy Container Line management are cross-trained in the inner workings of each department. This allows them to lead by example and to provide a strong support system for employees. Troy Container Line clientele benefit from the fact that the majority of its management team has worked for the company for more than a decade. They not only bring a wealth of industry experience and know-how to their positions at Troy Container Line, but they also are eager to mentor

new employees and promote growth from within. The fast-paced, collaborative work environment at the NVOCC, along with its managers’ dedication to teamwork and clear communication, creates an effective workflow where every employee is provided with the resources to succeed.

During the course of the company’s 35-year history, Mr. Troy has carefully assembled a management team with various styles and strengths to grow the company as an industry leader. Currently, Troy Container Line management includes a group of officers that each oversees sectors of the business. This leadership team works collaboratively to foster collective growth for the company while working within their individual departments to ensure the day-to-day success and efficiency of their individual teams.

With more than 32 years of experience in the logistics industry, Patricia Fitzgerald, COO of exports at Troy Container Line, understands exactly how to provide professional service to each of her clients. Patricia believes each employee at Troy Container Line is an integral part of Troy’s overarching success, and always makes time to meet and speak with her team daily. She appreciates the opportunities Troy Container Line provides her to grow as a logistics professional and, as

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such, always strives to surpass the goals she sets for herself and for her team. As a result, one of her many accomplishments at Troy Container Line has been establishing long-term client relationships around the globe and contributing to the company culture of teamwork, commitment to excellence, and fun - including

a Thanksgiving potluck organized every year by Patricia.

Troy Container Line’s North Carolina office is headed by COO of imports, Chris Hellow. At the start of his career at Troy Container Line, Chris worked as a customer service representative in the FCL department of the company’s Red Bank, New Jersey headquarters. Because of his innate sense of customer service and acumen for the industry, Chris quickly excelled to manager of the FCL and imports departments and then was appointed chief operating officer of imports. In 2008, he was charged with opening the company’s Charlotte, NC import office and overseeing the company’s expansion in the South Atlantic region. He has been in this role for the last 11 years and has strategically established new routes while enhancing current offerings throughout the lower 48. Chris thrives off the family atmosphere that is ever-present at Troy Container Line and enthusiastically accepts his responsibility of developing new trade lanes and negotiating vendor rates to provide the best possible service to his clients and partners. He enjoys the personalized customer service Troy Container Line offers its clients. And, as a result of the problem-solving aspect of his job, Chris is constantly learning new strategies in the industry. He is a dedicated employee at Troy Container Line who upholds the company’s mission to provide excellent customer service.

Based in the company’s Red Bank headquarters, Thomas M. Sciro, VP of information technology, ensures Troy Container Line is always on the forefront of technological advancements. His expertise in computer programming coupled with his shipping-industry knowledge has positioned Troy Container Line

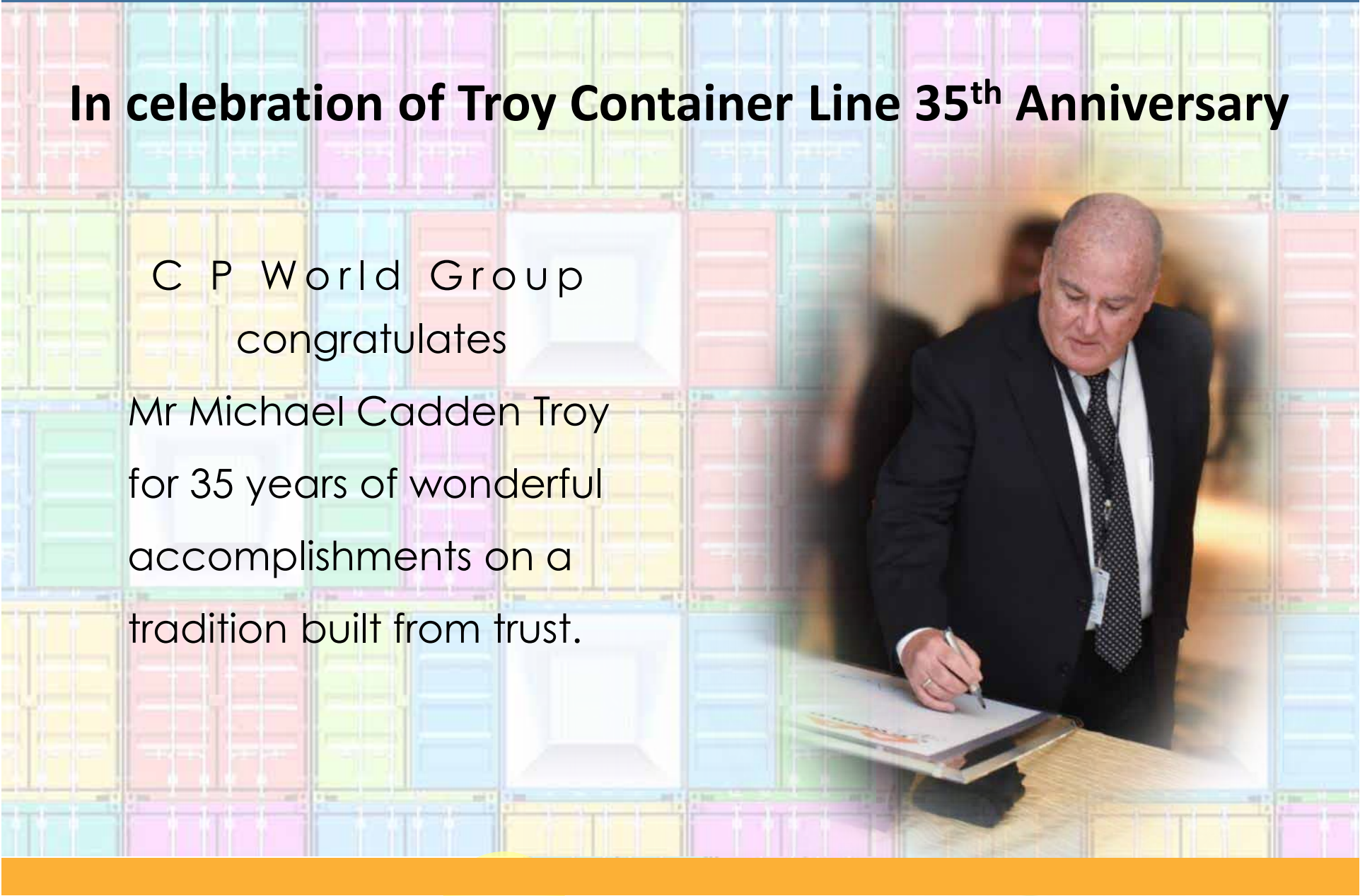
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\* Figures mention above are per month numbers





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For more than 35 years, Troy Container Line, one of the largest American-owned NVOCCs, has continuously strived to expand and improve its maritime transportation services while maintaining the highest level of quality customer service. This dedication has fueled the company’s expansion and the establishment of additional reliable logistical routes around the globe. Troy Container Line’s significant presence on the West Coast and Pacific allows the NVOCC to build upon and enhance the superior array of services it offers to its global clientele.

Even after 35 years, Troy Container Line’s commitment to growth knows no bounds. This April, Troy Container Line is excited to kick-off the celebration of its anniversary year with a new LCL export service from Los Angeles to Singapore. It also aims to expand its existing Asia portfolio of direct inbound services to Los Angeles and Oakland CFS locations. Troy Container Line’s new investments in these additional services allow it to further expand the resources it can provide to its clients. With more destinations and shipping routes, Troy Container Line is able to improve its services in various trade lanes including LCL export services to Europe, India, Africa, South America, and the Middle East via Los Angeles and Oakland, while supporting its mission of having the most efficient and reliable shipment options available to its clients. Troy Container Line also has FCL rates and export services contracted from all West Coast ports to destinations all over the world.

Through its ability to plan for long-term strate-

gic growth, Troy Container Line has a multitude of services available on the West Coast. This, in turn, has allowed the company to import and export cargo to myriad global locations. Today, Troy Container Line provides various import services from China, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Ningbo, Port Kelang, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Singapore and beyond to destinations across the West Coast. Over the next five years, Troy Container Line plans to enhance direct consolidation import service offerings from Europe to the West Coast, and increase the number of Far East services into Los Angeles and Oakland.

While Troy Container Line has been well known for its East Coast and Midwest services, the company has thrived for more than three decades because of its ability to look to the future and ensure quality of service. This foresight and preparedness allows for reliable partnerships to be formed that then create the most dependable service offerings. From its first West Coast maiden voyage route, the company, under the direction of Michael Cadden Troy and his management team, has worked to continuously expand and build upon already established routes and relationships in order to increase the number of services it can provide. This now includes the continued expansion of service offerings for both import and export on the West Coast in 2019. With 35 years of industry success already behind them, the Troy Container Line team has the experience and vision to maintain its standing as an industry leader for decades to come - from coast to coast.

## Traveler’s Tales – An NVO’s life as a world traveler

An NVO’s business life can result in the accumulation of a lot of frequent flyer miles and some hard-won knowledge.

Back in 1984 when Michael Troy founded Troy Container, the only way to properly find an overseas agent and indeed to understand the other side of the trade lane was to hop on a plane and fly there – wherever “there” might be and meet people “face-to-face.”

Michael Troy calls his role in Troy Container ‘agent relations and partners’ and that involves meeting counterparts. In the early days, it was much different. “You go to places - I mean I went to Hong Kong and China in the mid-’80s ... and you’re looking for companies, trying to find people like yourself, to work with,” Troy recounts. “There was a language barrier” and other inconveniences like flying into strange airports like Hong Kong’s old Kai Tak. And the road trips were demanding, “In the beginning, I was spending six months of the year traveling,” Troy said.

Besides the expected differences, there were other distinctions between U.S. and foreign business practices...especially being a neutral U.S. NVO. An NVO in the U.S. is unique compared to the rest of the world. As Troy explained, “I think [of

the places] I traveled and the tremendous amount of time it took just to find one agent. I remember going to Europe, and I couldn’t decide whether Rotterdam or Antwerp was going to be our first service, or the U.K. I spent three weeks meeting with the forwarders – and I’d say to the [European] forwarder, ‘okay, you’re a freight forwarder’ and if I use you then that doesn’t make me neutral anymore, so I need an NVO.”

But for Troy it was like something was lost in translation, “In Europe when I asked, ‘Are you an NVO?’” They would answer, “Yes, I’m an NVO.” “Are you a forwarder?” “Yes, I’m a forwarder.” “Do you handle air freight?” “Yes, I handle air freight.” “Well then how are you an NVO?” Michael wondered.

Europeans have had a much longer time to develop their logistics than the U.S., and “Logistics in this country is only 200 years old. How we define things as opposed to other countries that are thousands and thousands of years old and have been doing logistics [for hundreds of years] is different. They are truly doing the logistics under one heading. That’s why they are NVOs. And they’re air freight people.” And Michael

**TRAVELER – continued on page 6**



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**PROOF** – continued from page 2

as an industry leader when it comes to cutting-edge advancements in online services and automation that heighten the company’s ability to work with clients around the globe 24 hours a day, seven days a week. By integrating new technology into the company’s service-based philosophy, Tom ensures that Troy Container Line and its network are agile in their approach and well-positioned to serve and address myriad customer needs. He takes pride in putting his clients first and encouraging his team to search for the best solution, not just the quick one.

Since Gopal Roy joined Troy Container Line in 2000, he has consistently contributed to the company’s overall success. As the VP of finance, Gopal manages the fiscal operations of the company. He is responsible for accounts payable and receivables, and the yearly budget for Troy Container Line, as well as daily cash flow monitoring systems. In the workplace, he cultivates a productive environment that is dedicated to improving the services Troy Container Line has to offer. Gopal’s diligence for his financial responsibilities gives other employees a prime example of how managers at Troy Container Line represent the company’s mission day in and day out.

Cross-trained in various aspects of Troy Container Line’s daily operations, Derrick J. Magee, VP of FCL exports, appreciates the variety of work he gets to engage in every day with his team. Derrick left a steamship line to work at Troy Container Line because of the opportunity to diversify his skill set and get involved in multiple facets of the company’s export division. As a result of his industry background and enthusiasm for his role at Troy, he is well-versed in pricing, booking, trucking, and client communication. In addition to his own role at Troy Container Line, Derrick takes pride in the environment he has created for his employees and enjoys the close-knit atmosphere that is present at Troy Container Line. He understands and values that Troy Container Line’s personalized service and fast transit times set it apart from its competitors and prides himself on contributing to Troy’s standing in the industry. Because of the size of Troy Container Line and collaborative work environment, Derrick makes sure he is communicating with sales teams, client networks, and his internal team to uphold the founding principles of the company.

As the VP of sales for Troy Container Line, Michael C. Troy II successfully links office operations with Troy Container Line’s international customer base and agent network. Michael constantly explores new markets to increase Troy Container Line’s impact in the industry. Through his leadership position on the management team, he works every day to create and maintain a wide variety of relationships with agents and partners around the globe. Michael values Troy Container Line’s emphasis on having a long-term perspective when it comes to growth strategy,

and always strives to set specific goals for each department he is working with to develop the best possible outcomes for Troy clients and staff.

From the passion each manager has for Troy Container Line, it is clear this NVOCC, as an independent enterprise, stands out from the rest. With an emphasis on goal setting and collaboration, new ideas and business strategies are always being created. Workplace traditions and outings at Troy Container Line are able to bring employees and clients together to honor long-standing relationships and form new partnerships. Across the board, members of the management team appreciate the opportunities the company provides to build relationships with their fellow team members, agent partners and clients inside and outside the office.

It is not surprising that the management team is constantly looking for new, faster and more reliable trade routes to expand Troy Container Line’s available

service offerings. It is most certain that Troy Container Line’s dedicated management team will continue to build and fuel an industry powerhouse that will lead the maritime shipping industry for decades to come. Over the course of the next five to ten years, the logistics and maritime shipping industry is expected to expand at an accelerated rate due to the implementation of automation and due to changes in technology and processes. Under the direction of its management team, Troy Container Line is well-equipped to continue improving the services and routes they offer their clients while meeting the demands of the technological landscape.

While the industry may be moving towards an all-online approach, the Troy Container Line management team, while technologically equipped, will never falter on its dedication to providing its global and local client base with a 35-year tradition of personalized customer service and care.

# Info-X Software congratulates Troy Container Line on 35 years

Heartiest congratulations to Troy for the 35th anniversary and to AJOT for publishing this anniversary edition,” says Rishi of Info-X Software, who has been the technological partner of Troy for the last 14 years. “When Michael and I met for the first time in 2005, I could realize his unusual zest for growing his business by adopting new technologies, tools and systems including process outsourcing for his logistic operations, but at the same time retaining his status as an independent NVO. That is how we started the partnership of TROY and Info-X, who had at that time been solving the pain points of NVOs and freight forwarders in the logistics domain by infusion of new technology and tools.

I am glad that this association has remained intact in the last decade and a half, with Troy growing multi-fold and Info-X continuously providing innovative technological solutions like on-demand rate matrix, auto-quotes and the like with full back-office support for the entire supply chain, leading to increased efficiencies, reduction in cost and improved customer satisfaction for Troy. I compliment Michael Troy for evolving as one of the largest companies in its industry, catering to the needs of more than 2,000 customers with over 20 strategically placed warehouses and 700 destinations on six continents, even though still retaining its independent status. Michael’s strategy has indeed paid off.



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**MAKING** – continued from page 1

commitment to service only grew stronger. In addition to the ports of arrival in Hong Kong and Singapore, Troy Container Line clients gained access to 300 additional on-carriage destinations in the Far East. It also expanded its services from the Midwest and the South Atlantic Regions of the United States. These expansions allowed the company to open new doors for customers located around the world while continuing its mission of providing superior customer service.

Since 2015, Troy Container Line has only worked to surpass previously accomplished milestones and goals - providing some of the most competitive and logistically efficient maritime shipping solutions in the industry. These efforts included an enhanced presence on the West Coast, which opened up trade lanes for Troy Container Line and its customers in Southeast Asia.

While much can be said for Mr. Troy's vision and the company's incredible longevity in an ever-changing industry, the Troy Container Line management team and personnel exemplify the company's founding mission everyday. As a whole, Troy Container Line's dedication to expanding routes, quality customer service, and ongoing investments in technology continue to propel the company forward.

Since celebrating three decades in business, Troy Container Line has introduced an array of new services and announced valuable agent partnerships. This includes an ongoing dedication to establishing new import and export routes, including import services from Shenzhen and Xiamen. It also announced a direct import service from London to New York, an important addition to Troy Container Line's ongoing effort to offer direct import services worldwide. This weekly import service gave Troy Container Line the ability to offer faster and more efficient transits at competitive rates to customers throughout the lower 48 and Europe.

Aside from offering new import services, Troy Container Line also worked to launch and improve various direct and express services. This encompassed direct services from Chicago to destinations like Dubai, as well as expanded LCL services to and from South America. An increase in cooperation with long-time warehouse partner STG Logistics was developed which included the establishment of Atlanta and Chicago warehouse facilities. This not only strengthened the partnership with STG Logistics but also streamlined processes and transits for clients moving freight throughout the United States from terminal to terminal. Through partnerships of this ilk, and reliable routes around the globe, Troy Container Line continues to prove it is an industry leader in quality and service.

It is clear Troy Container Line has experienced incredible success during the last 35 years. While its achievements required vision, dedication and hardwork, another important element to the

company's ongoing success has been its commitment to giving back. In 1997, Mr. Troy founded the Troy Family Foundation to formally support philanthropic giving both locally and internationally. Highlights of Troy Container Line's corporate giving programs include being a major donor to the local Red Bank, New Jersey non-profit Lunch Break in support of a capital campaign responsible for expanding their much needed facility, as well as micro-lending initiatives through the non-profit organization Kiva. This pay-it-forward approach is integral to Troy Container Line's 35 years of success and is a key component to the company's overall business philosophy. The Troy Container Line team truly thinks locally and acts globally, and in this process, has grown a team dedicated to the shared commitment of service.

As discussed at the onset of this piece, growing an independent enterprise is no easy task. Scaling that business to be an international powerhouse is even more difficult. Mr. Troy has been able to accomplish these tasks by establishing a strong vision for how he wanted Troy Container Line to impact the industry and then creating a collective mission for quality and service that is brought to fruition everyday by the management team and employees at Troy Container Line.

Today, as Mr. Troy and his team celebrate an incredible 35-year milestone, there are no signs of the company slowing down. In fact, considering the NVOCC's incredible history and ongoing success, it is clear Troy Container Line's 35th anniversary is only the beginning of what the company is able to achieve.

**COUNTING** – continued from page 1

then Brooklyn-based NVO's first LCL (Less-Container-Load) service began with a departure on an APL vessel to Hong Kong.

It wasn't an accident Troy chose Hong Kong for their first foray into the NVO business. As Michael Troy explained, "Back then everybody had their specialty, even down to the point where the NVO had trade lanes. They didn't do global." Fledgling Troy Container had the local connection in Hong Kong and as Michael said of the first sailing, "that's where it started, and that's where we started."

And it wasn't just about

determining a trade lane - at the same time, Michael established the important operational ground rules that Troy Container still adheres to today. Among the most important first steps was deciding on the nature of the relationship with forwarders. By making the forwarders the client and not going directly to the shipper - a complaint of many forwarders - Troy established a strong relationship with the forwarding community right out of the gate.

As Michael Troy said of the relationship with the forwarders, "We at Troy Container Line [require that] none of our salespeople or sales team is allowed

to call on direct shippers. We still only deal with freight forwarders and NVOs, we're mutual-based, though, which I think still differentiates us from a lot of the other NVOs."

Another important facet of Troy's NVO business model was neutrality. By running a completely independent and "neutral" NVO business there was never any question of conflicts of interest between parties in the complex shipping equation.

**NVOs ARRIVE**

1984 was also a landmark for the US maritime industry  
**COUNTING** – continued on page 7



Cathay Pacific aircraft landing into the Kai Tak Airport, Hong Kong circa 1980.

**TRAVELER** – continued from page 4

thinks maybe they are right and years from now U.S. logistics services might be similar to the European model - certainly it is trending that way.

For Michael, there is a lot to be gained both professionally and individually from traveling overseas and meeting other people engaged in the business, "I think the contacts you make in life, whether they're personal

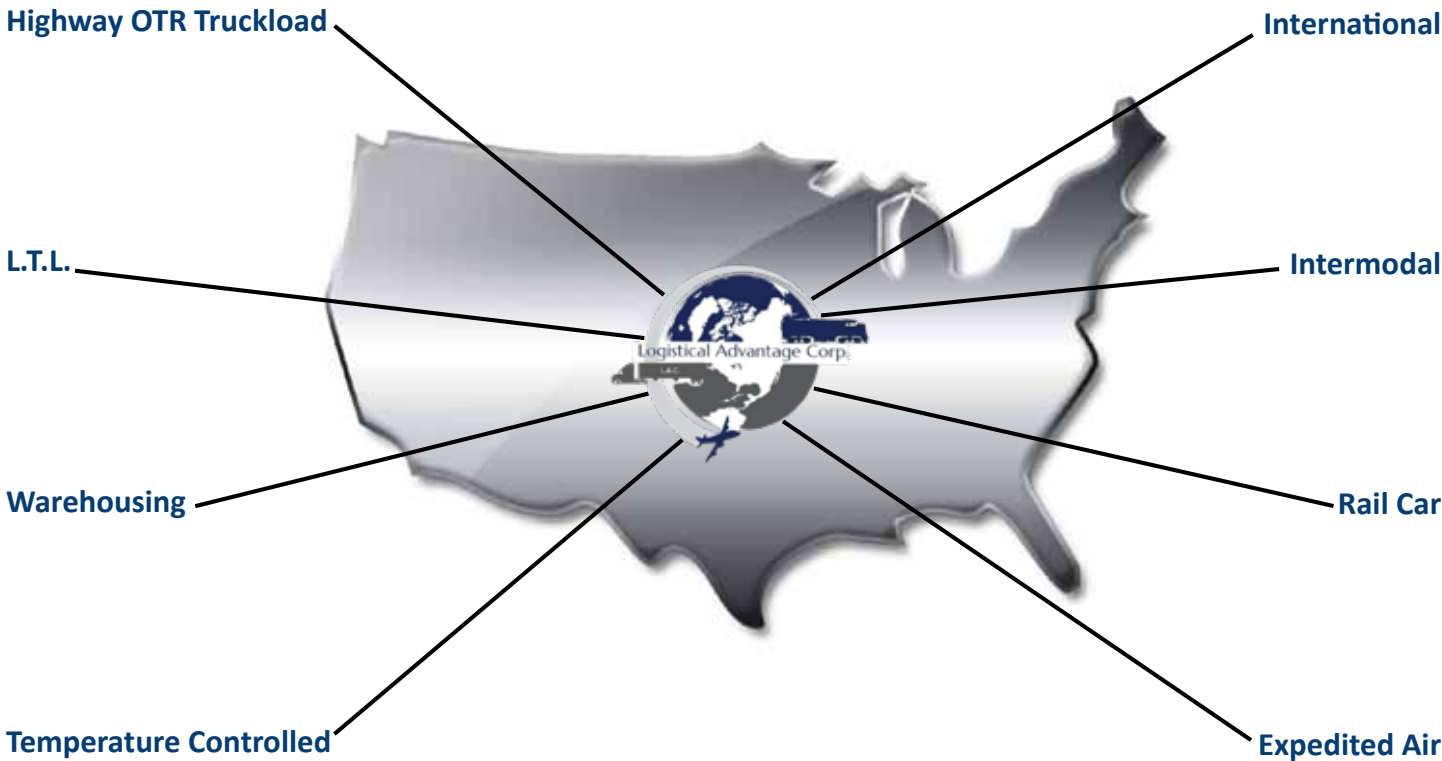
or professional, are valuable. If I'm in Brazil and I'm talking to someone, I mean I might see this guy five years in a row, never do business with him, but at least I know him, and you know what? I understand his culture better." After 35 years of travel, Michael still likes getting on the plane, although some things have changed. "It's still interesting. I still love traveling to places for the first time, not so much to the 35th and 38th," Troy says.

Troy remarked, "I'll be at it [convention] for three days, usually they're four or five days long, it's amazing when you walk away from it, you always come out with a new idea, maybe a new service, maybe a new way of doing something because you heard someone else's way of doing it. Maybe some technology that's being worked on somewhere else in the world that they're trying." And that is what keeps him getting on the plane.

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**COUNTING** – continued from page 6  
and the NVO business.

On one hand the controversial 50-mile rule was deemed legal after a lengthy wrestling match between four federal agencies. In essence the 50-mile rule said that waterfront union labor under “the Rules on Container” were entitled to strip or stuff containers within 50-miles of a port, the exception being beneficial owners of the cargo. While at the time a contentious problem in 1989, the rule was declared unconstitutional opening up the consolidation business.

However, the most far-reaching development was The Shipping Act of 1984. Prior to the 1984 act, US maritime trades were under the Shipping Act of 1916, which was woefully out of date with the advent of containerization. Tariffs (filed with the FMC) prior to containerization were largely commodity and service route driven, but the box revolutionized the shipping industry and made such tariffs obsolete.

Under the 1984 Act, contract carriage was introduced to the freight rate process rather than exclusively using the public tariff posting system. Finally, in a segment of the Act often overlooked, for the first time, the NVOCC business was defined within the context of US maritime legislation. The NVO had formally arrived.

But the NVO business still had a wild, wild west quality to it. As Michael Troy explained of the unregulated period just after the Act, “it got a little crowded... and the FMC started to get a lot of complaints and said ‘Okay we have to figure out how to regulate this.’”

As was often said, it felt like anybody with a pen and pay phone could take a booking and call themselves an NVO.

Even with the Shipping Act in place, the real change in the NVO business began with the introduction of the NVOs paying an NVO “bond” to the FMC in 1987 granting a license to operate.

“I think the ‘87 bond...did give some legitimacy to the business. You had to have either cash [the bond was \$75,000] or history, if you will - credit integrity. I think that helped the industry,” Michael said of bonding and the impact on the industry.

The most noticeable change in the industry following the introduction of the bond was the number of NVO shops that closed their doors. But the culling of the herd might have saved the industry. As Michael Troy observed, “I think today we have a more solid NVO base than we have ever had before, meaning that the ones that are here; the ones that have survived, ... I’ll say neutral NVOs, are stronger because of what has happened over the last 20 to 30 years. It’s weeded them [less fiscally able NVOs] out.”

**BUSINESS BOOMS AND CHANGES**

When Troy Container’s first ship left the Port of New York/ New Jersey for Hong Kong in 1984, the average size of a container ship was 3,000-3,400 TEUs but with the boom in U.S. consumer imports from Asia,

vessel sizes rose rapidly. By the end of the decade 4,000-5,000 TEU containerships were the norm. A mere fifteen years later and containerships ships over 15,000 TEU were in regular service reflecting the increase in goods and the ocean carriers’ relentless pursuit of economies-of-scale.

With the rise of Wal-Mart and Target and other mega-retailers pushing imports, Troy Container’s business expanded. Troy says during the days of booming business “you’d go weeks at a time with little sleep just trying to keep up with customers’ container flow.”

And the booming business brought a new and unexpected dynamic to the NVO business. As a business model goes, for most ocean carriers, NVOs were an ancillary part of the ocean shipping equation. The exception was an up and coming Swiss/Italian ocean carrier Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC). MSC looked at the LCL market as an undervalued seg-

ment, and by targeting the LCL side looked at NVOs more like an extension of their sales team. MSC grew rapidly and now is one of two in the world in size. And it wasn’t long before other ocean carriers began emulating the model and utilizing the services of NVOs.

Working with the ocean carriers was the other side of the shipping equation to the freight forwarder and shipper. In the 1980s -1990s, volume was king. “Back then you needed to have volume, to sign volume contract,” Troy said. Adding, “Some [NVOs] joined associations to pull volume - to have the association sign the contracts.”

The contracts with the ocean carriers required volume commitments and Troy Container early on signed with MSC. Troy related that the year-long commitment was fulfilled in only two or three months. The difference was back then you might be signing for 10,000 containers whereas the volumes the carriers might sign for now could be a

fraction of that total.

Other features of the NVO business changed as services were added as Michael Troy explained, “Back then, the forwarder handled the inlands and the on-carriages with their agents. Today, that’s a demanded service. Today we handle about [at the forwarder’s request] 75% of the mobile needs for our clients. Where back then, that was completely separate.”

There have been many other changes to the NVO business since the early days. But none more dramatic than the digitalization of shipping. As Michael Troy observes, “technology is one of the driving forces” in the NVO business today.

As Michael related, you can go to sleep and wake up the next morning and the company might have done 15% more business and “I’ll say, wow we did 15% more business after I went to sleep...it’s wild but that is what it is all about – technology has to be there – that’s where the small companies that don’t have it,

really can’t compete.”

Troy Container was an early adopter of digital technology. Rishi Parti, Director of Info X Software Technology recalled, “When Michael and I met for the first time in 2005, I could realize his unusual zest for growing his business by adopting new technologies, tools and systems including process outsourcing for his logistic operations, but at the same time retaining his status as an independent NVO.”

But finding the balance between technology and staff is a key ingredient in success.

“Still at the end of the day, it comes down to people picking up that phone and calling you. Your search engines, your tracking and tracing, your online web services – all that stuff is needed. But they want a person that’s going to help them.” Troy says of the customer service.

And it is the balance between service to the clients and the best in class capabilities that makes Troy Container a success for 35 years and counting.

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