



**NOVEMBER
2025**

**MARKET
UPDATE**

UNiserve
your **global** business



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OCEAN FREIGHT UPDATE



KEY HEADLINES

- Global freight realigns amid geopolitical and regulatory shifts.
- Infrastructure expansion strengthens Asia's maritime dominance.
- Carriers are managing capacity through service reshuffles, green fleet investments, and new routes.

 [VIEW OUR AVATAR SUMMARY](#)



OCEAN FREIGHT GLOBAL MARKET OVERVIEW

November 2025 presents a complex but opportunity-rich environment for global sea freight. While geopolitical tensions and regulatory shifts continue to influence trade flows, infrastructure investments and strategic carrier realignments are reshaping capacity and service offerings. UniOcean Lines remains agile and well-positioned to support clients across East > West, Trans-Pacific, and Intra-Asia corridors.

Market Trends & Trade Dynamics

East > West (Asia to Europe)

- Demand remains steady post-Golden Week, with a moderate rise in bookings for retail and electronics ahead of the holiday season.
- Port congestion in Northern Europe has eased, but labour disruptions in Antwerp and Rotterdam caused temporary backlogs in October.
- China's port capacity continues to expand aggressively, with mega-terminal projects in Qingdao, Guangzhou, and Ningbo enhancing throughput and automation.

Trans-Pacific

- Carrier realignments are reshaping capacity. HMM has suspended its

PS5 loop and adjusted several others, including adding Qingdao and Busan to key services.

- COSCO is expanding its fleet with \$1.7B in new vessel orders, including methanol and LNG dual-fuel ships, reinforcing its long-term commitment to the trade despite current profitability pressures.

Intra-Asia

- **MSC** launched the new "Cheetah" service connecting Singapore, Colombo, and Mozambique, enhancing connectivity between Southeast Asia and Africa.
- **Evergreen** and other regional carriers are expanding intra-Asia services to meet growing demand from e-commerce and manufacturing shifts.

Infrastructure & Port Developments

China

- **Guangzhou Nansha Phase V:** Adds 600,000+ TEU/year with four 200,000-tonne berths.
- **Qingdao Dongjiakou Terminal:** 11M TEU/year capacity under construction.
- **Yangpu Port (Hainan):** Targeting 5.5M TEU/year by 2025 with direct US routes.

"Infrastructure investments and strategic carrier realignments are reshaping capacity and service offerings."



Steve Ireland,
Director of Surface Freight
Operations
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OCEAN FREIGHT GLOBAL MARKET OVERVIEW

Global

- **Suez Canal:** Potential reopening post-ceasefire could restore 2.1M TEU of capacity to Asia–Europe lanes.
- **Port Houston:** Completed channel expansion to accommodate larger vessels.
- **London Gateway:** £170M automation upgrade underway to boost efficiency.

Carrier Strategy & Service Updates

MSC

- Launched Cheetah Service (Singapore–Mozambique) to strengthen East Africa links.

COSCO

- Investing \$1.7B in 29 new vessels, including methanol dual-fuel ships.
- Facing pressure from US port fees and volatile rates but expanding integrated logistics services.

Pricing Trends & Forecast

- **Rates:** Stable to slightly downward on Asia–Europe lanes due to easing congestion and increased capacity.
- **Trans-Pacific:** Rates remain volatile

amid regulatory uncertainty and shifting alliances.

- **Intra-Asia:** Competitive pricing persists, but demand is rising due to regional sourcing diversification.

Geopolitical & Regulatory Watch

- **US Port Fees:** New tariffs on Chinese-built/operated vessels are impacting COSCO, OOCL, and others, potentially reshaping fleet deployment strategies.
- **Suez Canal:** Reopening could significantly reduce transit times and costs for Asia–Europe services.
- **Environmental Regulations:** Carriers are accelerating investment in LNG and methanol dual-fuel vessels to meet IMO 2030/2050 targets.

“Carriers are accelerating investment in LNG and methanol dual-fuel vessels to meet IMO 2030/2050 targets.”



Iain Brymer,
International Partner
Development Director
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OCEAN FREIGHT GLOBAL MARKET OVERVIEW

INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

- Carriers continue capacity management through blank sailings and service reshuffles, with vessel redeployments from India-Europe to transpacific routes causing tighter capacity and container shortages in South Asian ports like Nhava Sheva and Mundra.
- The UK-India Free Trade Agreement boosts trade flows with tariff reductions accelerating export volumes, especially through UK gateway ports. However, ongoing congestion at Northwest European ports and operational challenges cause uneven reliability.
- The Red Sea route detours have stabilized but still absorb capacity, affecting schedules and container equipment availability from Middle East origins, impacting shipments to UK/EU.
- Special Economic Zones and port infrastructure upgrades in India, along with new deep-water port developments like Vizhinjam, are improving cargo handling efficiency, partially offsetting supply chain bottlenecks.
- The overall ocean freight outlook is stable but cautious carrier capacity management will continue into November 2025 to avoid overcapacity.

“The overall ocean freight outlook is stable but cautious carrier capacity management will continue into November 2025 to avoid overcapacity.”



Shruti Jain,
Head Partner
Development - Asia
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AIR FREIGHT UPDATE



KEY HEADLINES

- Air freight market shows resilience amid tariffs, cyberattacks, and rising seasonal demand.
- Major carriers are boosting freighter frequencies, adding pharma and perishables services, and strengthening global connectivity.
- Rates edge up as trade tensions and demand drive market resilience.

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 **UNIair**



AIR FREIGHT GLOBAL MARKET OVERVIEW

Moving into November the air freight market continues to show resilience and adaptability in the face of more tariff changes, conflict and breaches of cyber security.

The US decision to implement a further 100% tariff on imports from China, largely to counter restrictions on rare earth minerals implemented by China, drove a rush to air before the end of October with costs rising steeply, only to drop again on the news of an agreement being reached and the urgency reducing.

Retailers impacted by Cyber attacks have looked to air freight to recover lost time in their supply chains as peak trading period approaches, increasing volumes from East to West. JLR is now recovering manufacturing delays after it's challenges, with significant volumes being air freighted out of the UK to US and Asia to meet pent up customer demand. Costs from the UK to North America have risen because of this, and e-comm volumes heading to Thanksgiving and Black Friday.

So, whilst we are seeing lots of challenges, air freight volumes are expected to rise through November with increasing costs in Asia and other regions. Early planning is advised on any shipment required for the balance of this year.

Market Trends & Trade Dynamics

East > West (China & Southeast Asia to Europe)

- Demand remains steady post-Golden Week, with a mild uptick in e-commerce and perishables ahead of the holiday season.
- Capacity is tightening slightly due to increased passenger services absorbing bellyhold space, especially out of Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Ho Chi Minh City.
- Cathay Cargo reported a 2.2% revenue increase and 11.4% tonnage growth in H1 2025, despite yield pressures and tariff-related volatility.

Trans-Pacific

- Cathay Pacific and United Cargo have increased transpacific freighter frequencies to meet Q4 peak demand.
- United Cargo continues to leverage its strategic hubs (e.g., Houston, SFO) for perishables, pharma, and high-value shipments, with a strong focus on TempControl and LifeGuard services.

Intra-Asia

- Etihad Cargo launched a new freighter service from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, adding 50 tonnes of weekly capacity via Abu Dhabi, enhancing connectivity to Europe and the Americas.

“Whilst we are seeing lots of challenges, air freight volumes are expected to rise through November with increasing costs in Asia and other regions.”



Leighton Bonnett,
Director of Airfreight
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AIR FREIGHT GLOBAL MARKET OVERVIEW

- China Eastern Airlines continues to expand its international network, now reaching all six inhabited continents, with a strong focus on Shanghai as a global hub.

Airline Product & Network Developments

Cathay Pacific

- Added new freighter frequencies and passenger routes to Europe and the US.
- Cargo yield declined slightly, but volumes and network strength remain robust.

IAG Cargo (British Airways, Iberia, Aer Lingus)

Winter 2025 schedule includes:

- New widebody routes: Dublin–Madrid, Madrid–Orlando.
- Increased capacity: Heathrow–Cape Town (7 to 17/week), Heathrow–Miami (7 to 14/week), Heathrow–Bahrain (3 to 7/week).

Virgin Atlantic

- No major cargo disruptions reported.
- Winter schedule includes resumed services to Cape Town, Dubai, and Malé.

United Airlines

- Focused on pharma, perishables, and high-value cargo.

- Expanded TempControl offerings and added new Pacific routes (e.g., Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, Adelaide).

Delta Airlines

- Introduced simplified all-in pricing for US domestic/export cargo.
- Added pharma capabilities in Lisbon and Quito.
- November schedule includes expanded global coverage.

China Eastern

- Launched 23 new international routes since 2024.
- Strengthened Shanghai's role as a global hub with integrated air-rail terminals and digital innovations.

China Southern

- Cancelled plans to spin off its logistics arm due to market conditions.
- Cargo operations continue, but strategic expansion may be delayed.

Infrastructure & Capacity Developments

- Dublin Airport secured €288M from the EIB to fund sustainability and EV infrastructure upgrades.

“China Eastern Airlines continues to expand its international network, now reaching all six inhabited continents.”



Iain Brymer,
International Partner
Development Director
isb@ugroup.co.uk



AIR FREIGHT GLOBAL MARKET OVERVIEW

Pricing Trends & Forecast

- General pricing trend: Upward on East > West and Trans-Pacific lanes due to seasonal demand and capacity constraints.
- Yield pressure remains in some markets due to increased bellyhold capacity and cautious forwarder behaviour.
- E-commerce and perishables are driving premium product demand, especially on Asia-Europe and Trans-Pacific routes.

Geopolitical & Regulatory Watch

- US-China trade tensions continue to influence routing and sourcing strategies.
- Tariff adjustments and the removal of de minimis exemptions in the US have impacted e-commerce flows from Hong Kong and China.
- China Eastern and China Southern are navigating regulatory and profitability challenges, with mixed impacts on cargo strategy.

“US-China trade tensions continue to influence routing and sourcing strategies.”



Iain Brymer,
International Partner
Development Director
isb@ugroup.co.uk



AIR FREIGHT GLOBAL MARKET OVERVIEW

INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

- Air freight capacity remains tight on key routes from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and the Middle East to the UK, driven by sustained e-commerce growth and urgent shipment demands.
- Spot air rates to the UK have increased sharply, reflecting premium transit times and strong demand despite some price softness on mainland Europe routes.
- Airlines have increased freighter services to balance the shifting cargo flows caused by changes in US tariff policies and regional trade shifts, notably benefiting Bangladesh apparel exports.
- UK export volumes to South Asia and the Middle East are growing steadily, supported by the UK-India Free Trade Agreement, which incentivizes air freight for high-value and time-sensitive goods.
- While capacity remains stable, carriers are cautious with fleet deployment amid global economic uncertainties, balancing cost and service quality to maintain margins.

“Air freight capacity remains tight from South Asia and the Middle East to the UK amid sustained e-commerce growth and shifting trade patterns.”



Shruti Jain,
Head Partner
Development - Asia
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WAREHOUSING & TRANSPORT UPDATE



KEY HEADLINES

- Uniserve Tilbury has taken a major step toward a more sustainable future with the installation of a new solar photovoltaic (PV) system.

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UNIuk

WAREHOUSING & TRANSPORT MARKET OVERVIEW

Solar Power Boost for Uniserve Tilbury

Uniserve Tilbury has taken a major step toward a more sustainable future with the installation of a new solar photovoltaic (PV) system. The project features 1,104 AXITEC AXIpower AC-270P/156-60S panels, delivering a total generating capacity of 300 kW.

According to PV*SOL modelling - which factors in long-term local climate data and system performance assumptions - the solar array is expected to produce 277,258 kWh of clean electricity each year. This renewable energy will directly supply around 181,807 kWh annually to the Tilbury DC, meeting 33.8% of the site's total energy demand.

Beyond supporting on-site operations, the system will also export approximately 95,451 kWh per year of surplus electricity back to the national grid, helping to power other homes and businesses in the area.

From an environmental perspective, the impact is equally significant. The solar installation is projected to avoid around 57,389 kg of CO₂ emissions each year, contributing meaningfully to broader carbon reduction goals.

While actual performance may vary with weather and operational conditions, these figures represent a strong forecast, and a clear step forward in Tilbury DC's commitment to sustainable energy and environmental responsibility.

“This renewable energy will directly supply around 181,807 kWh annually to the Tilbury DC, meeting 33.8% of the site's total energy demand.”



David Barry,
Director of Warehouse
& Transport
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EUROPEAN TRANSPORT UPDATE



KEY HEADLINES

- Europe Addresses Critical Truck Parking Shortage to Support Drivers and Strengthen Supply Chains.
- New EU entry and Exit System (EES).

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UNIEurope

EUROPEAN TRANSPORT MARKET OVERVIEW

Europe Addresses Critical Truck Parking Shortage to Support Drivers and Strengthen Supply Chains

Europe's logistics sector is experiencing a significant shortage of safe and secure truck parking areas, with the EU currently lacking nearly 390,000 spaces needed for commercial vehicles. This deficit creates challenges for transport operators seeking to recruit and retain qualified drivers, as many drivers are concerned about the lack of secure rest facilities and the associated safety risks. Inadequate parking not only affects driver security but also makes it harder to comply with mandatory rest periods, contributing to fatigue and operational inefficiencies across the industry.

In response, European authorities and industry stakeholders are prioritising investment in new and upgraded truck parking sites along major logistics corridors. Enhanced facilities are being developed to include better lighting, increased security measures, access to basic amenities such as showers and food, and improved digital reservation systems. These improvements are intended to support driver wellbeing, address driver shortages, and reinforce the resilience of Europe's supply chains.

New EU entry and Exit System (EES)

The EU Entry/Exit System (EES), soft launched on 12th October 2025 and expected to be fully operational across external Schengen borders by 10th April 2026, marks a major shift for UK-European trade, particularly affecting freight operations. This digital system replaces manual passport stamping with biometric checks such as facial scans and fingerprinting for UK drivers entering the Schengen Area.

The EES digitally enforces the 90/180-day rule, limiting UK drivers' stays in the Schengen Zone to 90 days within any rolling 180-day period. This may result in entry refusals for drivers exceeding the limit, disrupting delivery schedules and freight operations. UK logistics firms must now track driver itineraries to avoid overstays flagged by the system. Operationally, the EES requires UK drivers to leave vehicles at border points like Dover and Eurotunnel for biometric registration. This step has caused delays and congestion at key freight gateways by extending crossing times and altering driver routines. However, we remain responsive to evolving border rules to keep your supply chain running with minimal impact.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at unieuropecommercial@ugroup.co.uk.

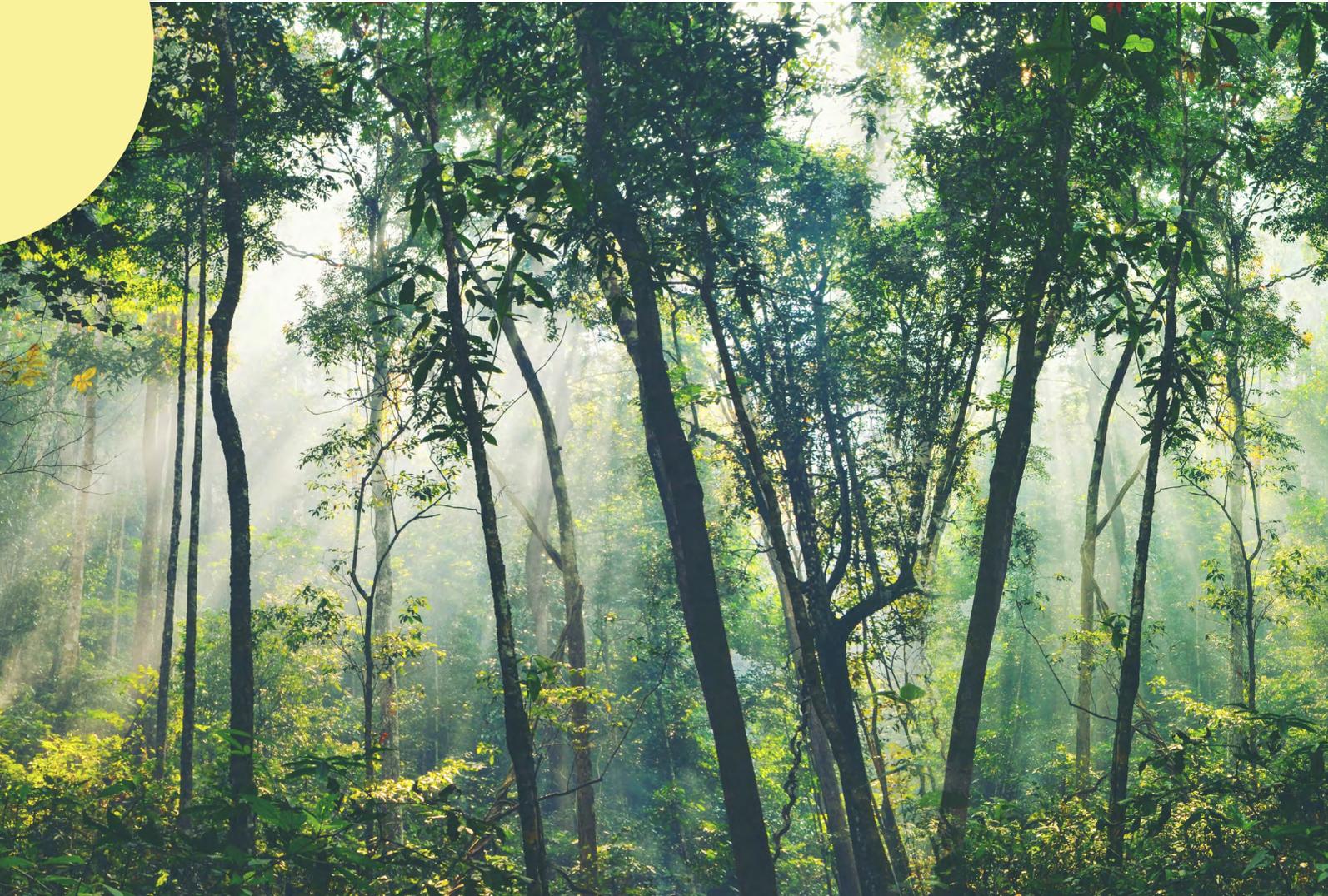
“The EES digitally enforces the 90/180-day rule, limiting UK drivers' stays in the Schengen Zone to 90 days within any rolling 180-day period.”



Lauren Liddell,
European Network
Development Manager
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ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE UPDATE



KEY HEADLINES

- Beyondly partner with Walpole, the official sector body for UK luxury.

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BEYONDLY

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE MARKET OVERVIEW

Beyondly partner with Walpole: the official sector body for UK luxury

Our Director of Policy & Public Affairs, Alex Hilton, recently spoke with [Walpole](#) in an interview about Beyondly becoming an Associate Partner of the association.

Walpole: Tell us about your company...

Alex Hilton: Beyondly is a B Corp-certified environmental compliance scheme and sustainability consultancy. We're trusted by businesses to guide them through their compliance journey and help elevate their sustainability strategies with real precision and confidence. What sets us apart is the combination of deep regulatory expertise and a bespoke approach; we don't believe in one-size-fits-all. Our goal is to help organisations meet complex environmental obligations while also strengthening their reputation for responsibility and excellence.

Our specialist services cover Packaging EPR and WEEE compliance (both in the UK and internationally), guiding our clients through every step of Extended Producer Responsibility, helping them navigate the ever-evolving legislation, and ensuring they stay compliant with ease.

We've built our sustainability team to drive lasting impact, offering services from B Corp consultancy and Net Zero planning, to Zero Waste to Landfill, Product Footprinting, and Sustainable Packaging - seamlessly integrated with our compliance solutions.

What is your area of expertise and how can luxury brands benefit from working with you?

As legislation evolves and tightens, and stakeholders increasingly expect more from businesses, we provide the insight and support needed not just to stay compliant, but to make sustainability a real differentiator; a hallmark of quality and trust.

Ultimately, we help organisations turn regulatory requirements into opportunities: opportunities to show leadership, build stakeholder confidence, and demonstrate a genuine commitment to sustainability that has a lasting impact. As a B Corp organisation, we can help businesses grow to be a force for good.

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do here at Beyondly, and we

“Our goal is to help organisations meet complex environmental obligations while also strengthening their reputation for responsibility and excellence.”



Emily Baker,
Marketing Leader
emily.b@beyondly.ly



ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE MARKET OVERVIEW

place the utmost priority on our customer service. We believe our customer service offering sets us apart from our competitors, and we have had many pieces of positive feedback from customers and prospects to corroborate this and are proud to say we are the only compliance scheme to hold the CSE accreditation, which we have maintained for over 10 years.

What luxury brands has your company worked with previously?

We collaborate with leading luxury brands across a range of industries, establishing ourselves as a sought-after scheme and consultancy for luxury drinks companies, including Mirabeau, Ridgeview Estate Winery, Barrique Fine Wines, and Berry Bros & Rudd. We also work with prestigious brands in fashion, lifestyle, and luxury goods, including Aspinall of London, Citizen Watch, Charbonnel et Walker, Fine Décor, Augustina Bauder, and Silver Cross.

What has been a significant achievement in your company's timeline?

Two milestones really stand out for us. First, achieving B Corp certification in September 2022, and then our rebrand to Beyondly in March 2023.

From the very beginning, we've operated as a business for good, focused on working responsibly and ethically with all our stakeholders, from customers and suppliers to employees and the wider community. Transparency, honesty, and integrity are central to everything we do, and we believe these principles are essential not just for delivering a premium-quality service but also for driving sustainable business growth. Becoming a B Corp was a natural progression for us, and it actually influenced our decision to rethink our brand.

In March 2023, Comply Direct became Beyondly. Comply Direct will always have a special place in our hearts, but the name no longer reflected the full scope of what we do. We needed an identity that could grow and evolve with the business.

Beyondly isn't in the dictionary, and that's deliberate. It's a name we created to capture the vision and ethos of our business: looking forward, going above and beyond for our clients, and taking bold steps today to create a brighter tomorrow. Beyondly represents innovation, optimism, and a climate-positive mindset, inspiring action and impact.

“Beyondly represents innovation, optimism, and a climate-positive mindset, inspiring action and impact.”



Emily Baker,
Marketing Leader
emily.b@beyondly.ly



ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE MARKET OVERVIEW

Why was it important for your organisation to be involved with Walpole?

Our purpose is to lead, inspire, and educate to positively impact society and the environment. We believe that by empowering individuals and businesses, we can collectively make a significant difference. Our commitment to this purpose is unwavering, and it fuels our passion to innovate and advocate for a more sustainable future.

In many ways, our purpose complements Walpole's mission, supporting the development and protection of the luxury sector as brands navigate shifting environmental legislation, sustainability demands, and policy changes.

We also take a selective approach to partnerships, choosing to work with associations and brands that share our commitment to advancing sustainability. We help brands leverage environmental compliance and sustainability as a competitive advantage, growing responsibly while driving positive impact.

The luxury sector, of course, is renowned for its quality and heritage, with sustainability increasingly central to brand narratives. As

environmental policies and expectations continue to evolve, Beyondly strives to be at the heart of environmental education, policy expertise, and industry influence, guiding Walpole members to prioritise long-term success through sustainable practices. We hope our partnership with Walpole has a positive, influential impact on the luxury sector.

Tell us about an exciting development or new launch for your brand in the coming months?

As packaging Extended Producer Responsibility continues to evolve, Beyondly is excited to launch their advanced data management software in early 2026. Built for efficiency, flexibility, and producer needs at its core, the offering enables accurate data handling and a user-friendly interface to support ongoing regulatory demands in the Recycling Assessment Methodology (RAM).

These advancements will ensure brands working with Beyondly are not only compliant but also equipped with actionable insights to improve packaging sustainability over time.

“We hope our partnership with Walpole has a positive, influential impact on the luxury sector.”



Emily Baker,
Marketing Leader
emily.b@beyondly



ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE MARKET OVERVIEW

Upcoming webinar:

**The Future of E-Commerce Packaging:
From EPR Compliance to Sustainable
Circular Choices | 9th November at
10:00am**

E-commerce businesses are under increasing pressure to meet environmental regulations, reduce waste, and make informed packaging choices that resonate with eco-conscious customers. We'll unpack what EPR means for e-commerce, how to select packaging that protects products while minimising environmental impact, and the key sustainability metrics every online brand should be tracking.

[Register here.](#)

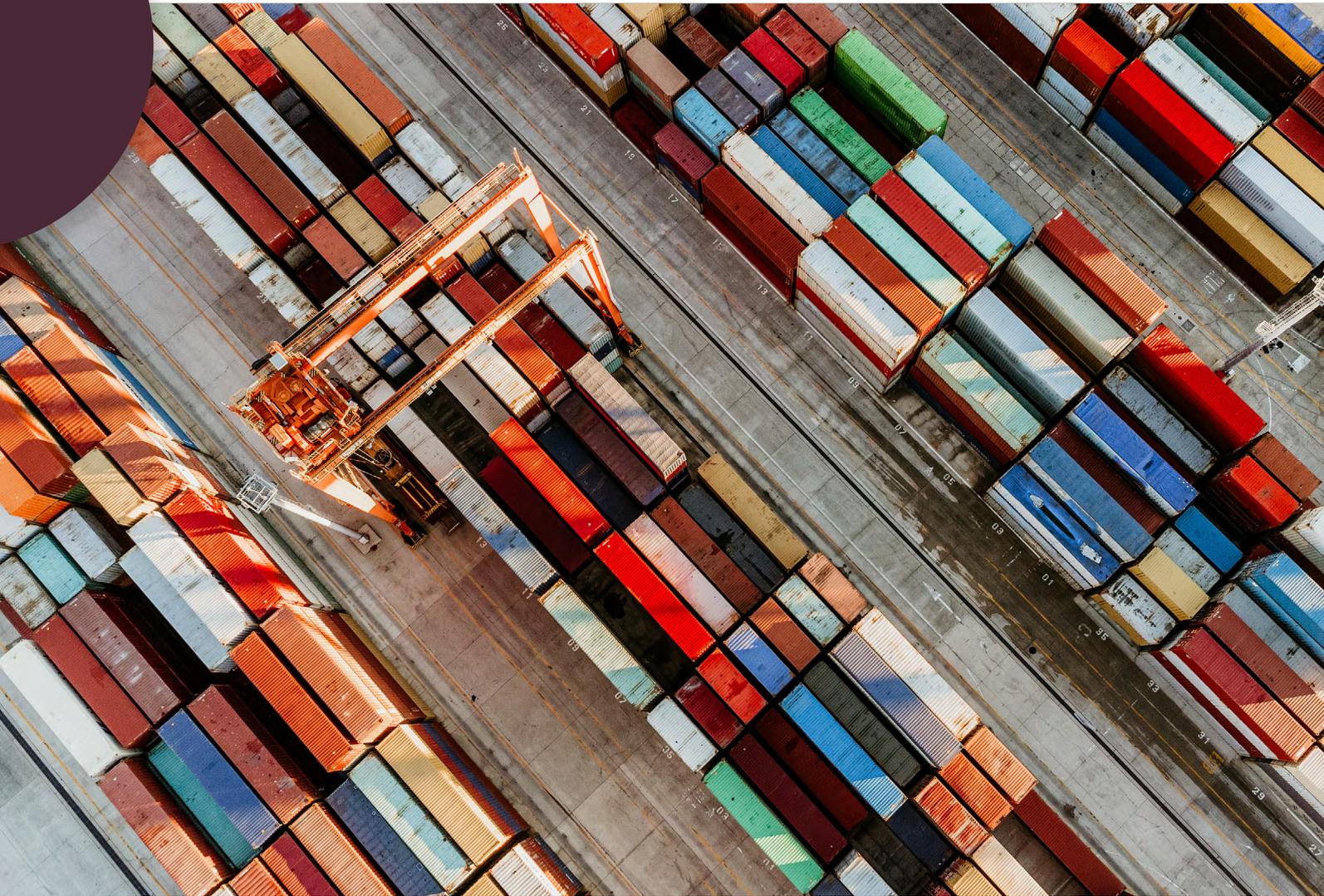
**“Upcoming
webinar: The
Future of
E-Commerce
Packaging, 9th
November at
10:00am”**



Emily Baker,
Marketing Leader
emily.b@beyond.ly



BKR CONSULTANTS UPDATE



KEY HEADLINES

- The fashion industry continues to lead the charge in global cross-border e-commerce, offering consumers unprecedented choice, competitive pricing, and elevated service standards.

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BKR CONSULTANTS MARKET OVERVIEW

International Returns – Power or Pitfall

The fashion industry continues to lead the charge in global cross-border e-commerce, offering consumers unprecedented choice, competitive pricing, and elevated service standards. As online platforms compete for our attention in the pursuit of style, the success of each transaction often hinges on the strength of the logistics network behind the glossy websites and curated photo shoots. This becomes especially critical when purchases are returned, whether due to a change of heart or unmet expectations – both of which bringing reverse logistics into sharp focus.

A company's true character is often revealed not when everything goes right, but when a customer is dissatisfied. In e-commerce, return rates can reach 40–50% for certain brands, a figure that reflects more than just customer dissatisfaction. While some returns stem from unmet expectations, the majority are now a behavioural norm, shaped by the convenience of having products delivered to the doorstep rather than requiring consumers to visit physical stores. Managing these returns is already a complex task within domestic markets; when international logistics and cross-

border regulations enter the equation, the challenge intensifies significantly

This year's infamous trade tariff increases and volatility have made the minimisation and cost-effective management of international returns even more important than before. It is therefore critical that the relevant business units of e-commerce companies selling internationally are joined-up operationally, and across-the-detail of customs and international trade compliance.

In a commercial sector where timely delivery, and the prompt 'recycling' of returned items back into stock is so important, investing in the capacity to confidently trade and move goods efficiently across borders can pay dividends in the contribution it can make to problem free customer experiences, enhanced company reputation, and the generation of repeat orders.

However, the challenges of extended distances and cross-border market access formalities often erode a company's ability to maintain consistent service quality in both delivery and returns. When compounded by the cost of import duties, which in some markets can exceed 40% of the sales value, poorly managed returns

“This year's infamous trade tariff increases and volatility have made the minimisation and cost-effective management of international returns even more important than before.”



Toby Spink,
Director at BKR Consultants
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BKR CONSULTANTS MARKET OVERVIEW

can do more than jeopardise customer loyalty; they can significantly undermine profitability

Efficiently managing international return imports, which are often high in volume, low in value, and logistically complex to coordinate, can significantly impact business performance. The challenge therefore lies in executing this process in a way that is administratively seamless, easy for both the customer and the retailer, cost-effective for the business, and fully compliant with customs regulations, all while minimising duty and tax liabilities. It's a solution that's far easier said than done.

While the most effective approach to managing international returns is to reduce the likelihood of returns in the first place, processing them remains an unavoidable reality of online retail. As such, any robust strategy for handling returns should incorporate several key elements:

- **Returned Goods Relief** – import duties will have likely been paid in the country in which the customer is based when the sale was made. However, unless a suitable customs procedure is used on the return leg, retailers are at risk of paying import duty again in the country

of re-import. In many cases, utilising procedures such as Returned Goods Relief is essential for mitigating these undue costs.

- **Drawback Schemes** – in some territories, duty drawback schemes allow businesses to apply for a refund on import duties paid against goods that were subsequently re-exported (i.e. returned). In sales locations where both the cost of sales and percentage of returned goods are high, utilising drawback schemes can be essential to maintaining profitability in that region. However, be mindful that eligibility to apply for a drawback refund is often strictly defined and requires a clear returns strategy that allows returned orders to be considered as eligible.
- **Resource** – accessing and managing relief procedures can require additional expertise and administrative resources. In instances where the 'cost of returns' is high, consider outsourcing suitable aspects to ensure internal constraints aren't at fault for leaving avoidable duty payments on the table.
- **Compliance** – on the flip side, it is not uncommon to see goods declared

“Any robust strategy for handling returns should incorporate several key elements.”



Toby Spink,
Director at BKR Consultants
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BKR CONSULTANTS MARKET OVERVIEW

incorrectly under duty relief procedures where the importer does not have the appropriate evidence to support the claims to relief. Work with responsible logistics parties to ensure there are clear instructions and expectations set around the business's returns policy and procedures.

- **Policy & Process** – have a clear, straightforward returns policy in place which is easy both for the customer to understand and for your company to administer. Where possible, provide your customers with return options that are convenient and practical, such as prepaid labels or local consolidation points. To ensure return orders are processed effectively and import duties are recovered, both outbound and return movements need to be controlled. Allowing customers to return goods freely without instruction or oversight will significantly increase the likelihood of mis-declaration and limit eligibility to recover import duties within both the country of export and country of re-import.
- **Traceability** - duty relief options available for returned goods all place

the burden of proof on the applicant to prove that the goods in question met the criteria for a duty relief claim and usually require the applicant to provide a full audit trail to prove as such. Where possible, utilise technology to ensure individual consignments are fully traceable throughout each cross-border movement.

Of course, whether sending goods to another country or bringing them back, it is important to be mindful of the customs and trade facilitation arrangements that may be used for goods entering / leaving markets that might help reduce costs and improve profit.

For example, de minimis provisions mean that goods consignments below a certain value threshold are not liable for duty / tax. However, these thresholds vary from country to country and as witnessed earlier this year in the US, they are not guaranteed to be available indefinitely.

Every order that results in a partial or full return carries additional costs, often borne by the retailer. With import duties in some markets now surpassing shipping costs, the focus of return management is shifting from supply chain logistics to customs

“It is important to be mindful of the customs and trade facilitation arrangements that may be used for goods entering / leaving markets.”



Toby Spink,
Director at BKR Consultants
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BKR CONSULTANTS MARKET OVERVIEW

treatment. Geopolitical developments such as Brexit and the recent “Trump Tariffs” have underscored both the complexity and strategic importance of handling returned goods effectively. In an environment of rising sales costs, these return-related expenses are no longer peripheral strategic decisions but are now essential to maintaining commercially viable pricing for international consumers.

If your company is experiencing challenges with its international returns, or indeed in other areas of international trade management, BKR is ready to support your business in helping you to develop agile and pro-active strategies to improve arrangements and to better manage associated risks and costs and enhance efficiency. Get in touch to find out how we can support your business in this area.

“BKR is ready to support your business in helping you to develop agile and pro-active strategies to improve arrangements and to better manage associated risks & costs and enhance efficiency.”



Toby Spink,
Director at BKR Consultants
Limited
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SUPPLY CHAIN ACADEMY



KEY HEADLINES

- Join our upcoming webinar on Cyber Security & AI in the Supply Chain
- Invest in your career or your workforce with the Supply Chain Academy's NEW Level 5 Leadership & Operations Manager Apprenticeship.

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SUPPLY CHAIN ACADEMY OVERVIEW

Elevate Your Supply Chain Career with The Supply Chain Academy

Since 2012, The Supply Chain Academy has been the UK's only business academy dedicated entirely to supply chain excellence. We are trusted by leading organisations, across multiple sectors, such as Airbus, Alliance Pharma, Bentley, Martin Brower, Travis Perkins and Uniserve. Our programmes are designed to deliver measurable results for employers while developing the next generation of supply chain professionals.

For existing employees, business performance goals such as improving OTIF, reducing lead times, increasing inventory accuracy, or lowering cost-to-serve can be built into the learning as live projects. This ensures every programme delivers real-world impact.

LAUNCHING IN FEBRUARY 2026 - Level 5: Leadership & Operations Manager Apprenticeship

Who it is for?

Current or aspiring Operations Managers, Warehouse Managers, Production Supervisors, Retail Operations Leads, or Team Leaders across sectors such as logistics, manufacturing, food production, pharma, retail and customer service. This programme is designed for those looking to progress into senior leadership roles.

Programme content includes:

- Leadership and management
- Operations and process management
- Project and change management
- Finance and sustainability
- Lean thinking and continuous improvement
- People management

Delivery:

Blended learning with virtual 3-hour sessions every two weeks, plus quarterly in-person workshops. A bespoke in-company version is also available.

“Since 2012, The Supply Chain Academy has been the UK's only business academy dedicated entirely to supply chain excellence.”



Alex Mortimer,
Head of Business Development
at Supply Chain Academy
am@supplychainacademy.org.uk



SUPPLY CHAIN ACADEMY OVERVIEW

Funding:

Fully funded through the Apprenticeship Levy for large employers, with up to 95% co-funding available for SMEs.

Join our upcoming webinar on Cyber Security & AI in the Supply Chain

As supply chains become increasingly digital, the intersection of cybersecurity and artificial intelligence (AI) is now a top strategic concern. Ahead of the Supply Chain Academy's upcoming webinar, "Cyber Security and AI in the Supply Chain", businesses are urged to strengthen cyber-resilience while leveraging AI for efficiency.

Recent research* shows over 70% of organisations experienced a supply-chain-related cyber incident in the past year. AI offers huge potential - optimising forecasting, logistics, and supplier management - but also expands attack surfaces through data, APIs, and third-party tools. New regulations such as the EU's NIS2 Directive are heightening expectations for transparency and supplier-risk oversight.

To mitigate threats, companies should:

- Map and monitor extended suppliers and software vendors.
- Integrate cyber risk into procurement and vendor management.
- Govern AI use responsibly, ensuring data integrity and identity control.
- Build joint incident-response plans with key partners.

The Supply Chain Academy's webinar will provide practical frameworks and real-world insights for embedding cybersecurity into AI-enabled operations. In 2025, cyber-resilience is not just an IT issue - it's a critical pillar of sustainable, intelligent supply-chain management.

Who Should Attend

Supply chain, procurement, logistics, IT/cybersecurity, risk, and HR/L&D professionals.

Agenda

1. Digital Supply Chains & AI – Opportunities and risks (10 mins)
2. Cyber Threats & Vulnerabilities – Recent examples and Key trends (15 mins)

“The Level 5 programme is designed for those looking to progress into senior leadership roles.”

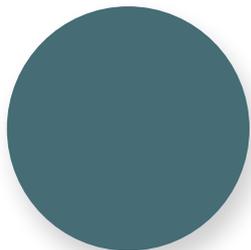


Alex Mortimer,
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SUPPLY CHAIN ACADEMY OVERVIEW

3. Managing Risk & Building Resilience – Practical frameworks (25 mins)
4. Leadership & Culture – Embedding awareness (10 mins)
5. Roundtable Discussion – Sharing challenges and strategies (25 mins)
6. Key Takeaways – Actionable steps (5 mins)



*Research source: Report by SecurityScorecard titled 2025 Supply Chain Cybersecurity Trends: Why Visibility Is the Next Competitive Advantage.

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