

## SERVICES OFFERED BY CUSTOMS BROKERS

- customs valuation;
- tariff classification;
- customs clearance;
- international trade consulting;
- electronic data interchange (EDI);
- freight management and consolidation;
- import/export management:
  - obtaining permits and authorizations;
  - reviewing documents sent by the exporter, making the import petition and preparing the customs declaration;
  - inspecting shipments at the border to ensure that they correspond to the invoice and packing list;
  - obtaining a guarantee or bond on temporary imports;
  - covering all expenses related to the operation on behalf of the customer;
  - providing advice on letters of credit, insurance, taxes, warehousing and duty drawbacks;
  - providing information on modes of transportation and carriers, as well as on tariffs and transportation time; and,
  - shipping merchandise from the port of entry to the final destination;
- regional and national warehousing;
- non-resident import services;
- rulings requests; and,
- other specialized logistics services.

## SELECTING A CUSTOMS BROKER

When selecting a customs broker, talk to other companies, use personal referrals, if possible, and take the time to make a thorough assessment. Look for evidence of the broker's reliability and reputation. And don't forget to make cost/service comparisons between several candidates.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK A PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMS BROKER

- Does the broker specialize in certain commodities and/or shipping methods?
- How long has the broker been in business?
- What resources does the broker have for clearing and delivering goods?
- How does the broker advise clients of delays in handling or clearance? Will the broker offer suggestions on how to avoid such delays?
- What kind of physical facilities does the broker have? Do they include secure areas for high value commodities or hazardous materials?
- What kind of security systems and procedures does the broker have?
- What insurance coverage is carried by the broker for facilities and operations?
- What records maintenance does the broker offer?
- Can the broker's bond be used to provide the necessary surety coverage?
- What are the terms of payment and financial arrangements?
- What is the broker's financial stability?
- Are the offices of the broker located in the major ports of entry that will be used?

*When you find a good customs broker, stay loyal and do not try to go around the broker, even if the services cost more than doing it yourself. Think of your broker as a representative and partner in your business. It is not appropriate, for example, to contact customs directly if you have engaged a customs broker.*

