

Interview

LA CHANG, Chief Executive Officer – TGL

Paul Zalai, Co-founder / Director at Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) recently sat down with La Chang, CEO at TGL to get his thoughts on the freight forwarding industry.



La Chang (CEO TGL) Julie Tran (Operations Manager TGL) and Paul Zalai (FTA)

1. Paul Zalai - What is the most important thing you want the users of freight forwarding services to know that they don't already know.

Just because you always do something the same way does not mean it is the right way. Freight forwarding is all about process, and frankly most of these processes have not changed or evolved. Most of us simply follow how we have been taught and carry on that process without question or critical thinking. In most of my previous experiences in various freight forwarding environments, I have seen actions being taken simply because that is how it's always been done, without any consideration of alternate ways. It doesn't translate well when something goes wrong because people quickly become unstuck in finding solutions. Often these workplaces will have highly segmented processes that solely focus on transactional quantity without accountability. This reality then gets passed on to the customers who accept it as the norm. And then we, the freight forwarders, wonder why the market we serve treats us with such contempt.

2. Paul Zalai - As someone who's been pushing the boundaries of the logistics industry, what do you consider to be key elements and challenges for the logistics industry?

It has always been about people, and while we talk about automation, AI, blockchain, and all the other GREAT but not yet REALISTIC nor practical ideas, PEOPLE remain the KEY for our industry. It is also the LACK of quality people that seek to join our industry that has held this industry back. Don't get me wrong, I have met and worked alongside many intelligent people. However, our industry simply hasn't been cohesive nor smart enough to have the pulling power of quality talent other critical industries command.

3. Paul Zalai - What is the future of logistics, and how does TGL fit in the freight forwarding landscape?

This is a massive question and one that keeps me up at night. Our industry will be heading to a future automated through AI, Robotics and Blockchain. There are a lot of big names in our industry that have already

built such technology in varying degrees to run their operations smoother and more efficiently, and these advances don't come cheap. So, this is what keeps me up at night! Because even with a great future tech idea, huge investments are required, and an SME like TGL won't have the luxury of resources compared with our multinational colleagues. The traditional freight forwarder and its DNA have always been risk-averse regarding investing money into experimental developments. The most significant risk has always been the expansion of physical assets, offices, and HR. Often there is very little left for anything else. But the world is changing fast, and having multiple offices and sales is no longer the key to survival; it is the building of meaningful technology. So, whether you are a small or large company, if you don't focus on the tech, you will be largely redundant within 10 years. I profoundly believe that the role of a freight forwarder will evolve to a completely different capacity from what we are known for today. In short, we all need to evolve or die.

4. Paul Zalai - What role is TGL taking to reshape and modernise the supply chain industry?

At TGL, one of our core values has always been about improving how our industry is perceived by the markets we serve. We do this every day by delivering essential service to our customers.

In addition, we believe that skilful promotion of our industry (and not just ourselves) is the only way we can attract better talent. This is the only way we can hope for our industry to not only move with the times but lead the markets in innovation and future development. Our approach can be described as grassroots, whereby we reach out to different educators such as local and international universities, TAFE, and other bodies to promote our industry. We don't sell TGL but instead, we present our industry by focusing on what it means to be in logistics and the daily outcomes of our labour. We talk with students who often have never thought about logistics. We also offer internships in our business so they can also get first-hand experience of what it means to be in logistics. We hope through our unique approach to logistics processes with the modern and fun working environment we have worked hard to create, these young folks can see how critical our industry is whilst enjoying it. At TGL, we never dumb down our people by keeping them in a cubical doing one function for years. Instead, we encourage critical thinking through empowerment, as the success of our people is the true essence of TGL and will lead to the betterment of our industry.

