

FREIGHT MARK
Customs Clearing and Forwarding Services

FREIGHT MARK SERVICES

MAKING TRADE HAPPEN



www.freightmarkservices.com

MAKING TRADE HAPPEN

A relatively small company is playing a big part in facilitating trade in a country with a troubled past that is gradually getting back on its feet

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‘With God on our side’ is not the official slogan of Freight Mark Services—but it could be. It certainly

underlines the guiding principles of how the business operates, as explained by Mandela Katsande, the logistics manager of this Zimbabwean company. “We are a Christian-based business,” he says, “and we conduct ourselves with complete transparency and strong ethics.”

Positive statements such as these are good to hear because officially, Zimbabwe doesn’t have the best of reputations. The 2011 survey by Transparency International ranked Zimbabwe 154th out of 182 countries in terms of the level of corruption. “There are two sides to every coin,” says Katsande. “It’s not possible to deny that there isn’t corruption in the country; but since the formation of the Government of National Unity there has been steadily increasing levels of transparency and with them, improvements in the overall economy.”

There is certainly a lot of faith in the air when talking with the people from Freight Mark Services. After all, when William Ndava started the business in 2008, it has to be noted that not only was the global economy on the brink of collapse but Zimbabwe was going through its nightmare of hyper-inflation. Nevertheless, Ndava saw an opportunity and a need; and from one man and a single vehicle five years ago, the business has built up to a fleet of 15 self-owned vehicles and a permanent staff of 20.



Freight rail is fast
moving and low cost

But this doesn't tell half the story. This small company, from its base in Harare, has some of the country's most important companies on its client list. The biggest by far is Zimbabwe Phosphate Industries (ZIMPHOS), Zimbabwe's largest fertilizer manufacturing company, and the services offered are typical for many of the other clients involved with gold or diamond mining or from within the manufacturing and farming sector.

"One of the services we provide to ensure total customer satisfaction and retention," says Katsande, "is to manage the movement of goods and materials on behalf of clients. We don't have the financial resources to provide our own specialist vehicles—dump trucks, wagons or carriers for abnormal loads—so we outsource these to reputable partners we work closely with."

But over the years it has applied the strategy of identifying an opportunity and then acquiring the skills needed to compete for that line of business. As such, it has developed expertise in handling goods in many specialised areas such as dangerous materials, containerised consignments and bulk shipments.

On a day-to-day basis, though, it is the clearance of various consignments through



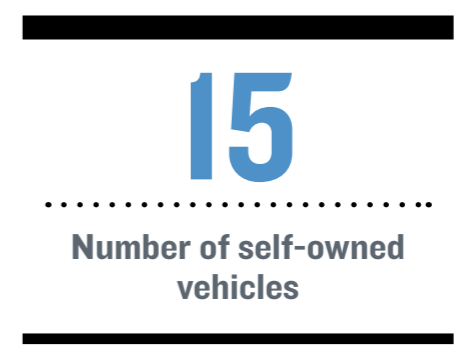
Quality, cost effective and efficient air freight services to or from major cities in Zimbabwe

the country's border posts which provides the bread and butter income. "Zimbabwe is land-locked," reminds Katsande, "and the government in its search for income has import duties on almost everything. Our job is to facilitate the smooth and efficient movement of goods—mostly inward, especially on surface routes—for the benefit of our valuable clients."

With four neighbouring countries

– Zambia, South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique, Freight Mark Services has six offices alongside the relevant customs post. By far the most busy of these is at Beitbridge—the connection with South Africa that straddles the Limpopo River—where there can be 50 trucks or more a day passing through.

The potential for delays here is enormous and something that Freight Mark Services works hard to avoid. Among many other tasks, ZIMRA, or the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, has the responsibility for collecting customs duty on goods imported



into the country. Like many countries, Zimbabwe uses ASYCUDA—the Automated System for Customs Data—designed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to administer a country's customs. It is worthy to

note as well that the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority is the first Revenue Authority in the COMESA Region to migrate to ASYCUDA World System and this has drawn a lot of interest from other countries within the region.

Freight Mark Services' solution is to have dedicated runners with the sole responsibility of processing one of its client's

“SINCE THE FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY THERE HAS BEEN STEADILY INCREASING LEVELS OF TRANSPARENCY”



Effective and efficient movement of cargo throughout sub equatorial Africa and the world

“OUR JOB IS TO FACILITATE THE SMOOTH AND EFFICIENT MOVEMENT OF GOODS—MOSTLY INWARD, ESPECIALLY ON SURFACE ROUTES—FOR THE BENEFIT OF OUR VALUABLE CLIENTS”

loads. They can't perform miracles but they can avoid unnecessary delays by avoiding paperwork going on the pending pile.

In fact, Freight Mark Services has taken this concept one step further and offers an 'implant' to clients who will be the key account manager within a company, dedicated to freeing client staff from the daily hassle of managing freight movements. At no

additional cost to clients, an implant will deal with queries about customs and duty payments, providing tracking information on import and export charges. “Not having the adequate payment required for customs duty is often a cause of delay when clearing goods at the border,” explains Katsande. “If the client is taking this responsibility, then it is out of our hands and can result in

delays and demurrage payments. Give the responsibility to one of our implants and that problem is negated.”

In a relatively short time, it is important to note that Freight Mark Services has made a place for itself within the Zimbabwean economy; and it has major plans for the future to ensure the growth of the company. “Within five years,” says Katsande, “we plan to have offices not just in neighbouring countries but globally. We will take the implant concept to the extreme and put offices in key locations to suit our clients' needs. So, as is the case with Chemplex Animal and Public Health (Zimbabwe's largest chemical manufacturing company), we will have an office in England where

some of the raw materials and specialist equipment is sourced.”

In the meantime, the improved conditions being experienced in Zimbabwe are encouraging many Zimbabweans who had left the troubles behind them to return to their homeland. This is good news for Stuttafords—Freight Mark Services' international removals partner—but also for the country as a whole, where all the skills and entrepreneurship possible are needed. **BE**

For more information about Freight Mark Services visit:
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