

May 2025 Edition

ICFF NEWSLETTER



Building Bridges, Not Walls

Shevon Kotiah was our MC at our JHB roadshow, and we are honoured to share her article with you.

Success is built through connection, not isolation. **Shevon Kotiah** explains why networking and professional community engagement are vital tools for growth, and how they can transform your career and opportunities.

In today's fast-paced world, success is rarely a solo endeavour. It's about connection, collaboration, and creating opportunities together. Networking is more than just swapping business cards; it's about building meaningful relationships that propel both personal and professional growth. By engaging with professional bodies and communities, we open up a world of resources, insights, and shared experiences.

Imagine a space where knowledge flows freely, where ideas are exchanged, and where support circles grow wider every day. This is the essence of networking – a vibrant tapestry woven from diverse threads of expertise and perspectives. When we choose to build bridges instead of walls, we empower ourselves and those around us to achieve more than we ever could alone.

Did you know that Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and other visionary leaders share a simple piece of advice for aspiring entrepreneurs and professionals? They emphasise the importance of networking, noting: “It is as essential as breathing.”

In recent years, I’ve participated in events within the South African transport and logistics industry, which powerfully remind me of the value of networking. These gatherings are not just about showcasing; they’re opportunities to forge meaningful connections that drive mutual success.

When we collaborate, we all benefit

Consider “The Oprah Effect” – seen in Oprah Winfrey’s endorsement of Spanx, which propelled the brand’s sales significantly. Founder Sara Blakely credits her networking with influential individuals for much of the company’s success.

The essential message is that networking facilitates access to opportunities that surpass conventional channels. Learning from others ignites creativity and propels growth.

Five strategies for effective networking:

1. Embrace the opportunity to connect at industry events

Immersing yourself in conferences, workshops, and trade shows opens the door to connect with potential clients, partners, and industry visionaries. Each interaction strengthens relationships and keeps you attuned to emerging trends.

South African entrepreneur and author Vusi Thembekwayo emphasises the importance of networking and communication for business success, viewing it as crucial for building relationships and gaining knowledge. He stresses that networking is about more than just finding connections; it’s about cultivating lasting relationships that can lead to referrals and business opportunities. Additionally, Thembekwayo uses the term “network capital” to describe an organisation’s credibility, financial stability, and the depth of trust it has cultivated within its ecosystem.

2. Become a member of a professional body

Join a community of like-minded individuals dedicated to advancing your career and enhancing your skills. As a member of professional supply chain, logistics, and transport organisations, I can confidently say that groups like the Chartered Institute

of Logistics and Transport (CILTSA), the Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding (ICFF), the South African Production and Inventory Control Society (SAPICS), and the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) can truly transform your professional and business journey.

The immense value of networking in these professional bodies connects you with passionate, like-minded individuals eager to collaborate and share knowledge. These organisations serve as fertile grounds for nurturing relationships, igniting innovation and opening doors to new opportunities across various sectors.

3. Mentorship

Mentoring holds great importance, as highlighted in my previous article for FOCUS. It fuels skills development, nurtures growth, and broadens professional networks crucial for cultivating the next generation of leaders in supply chain and logistics.

Examples like Warren Buffett mentoring Bill Gates and Bill Campbell guiding Eric Schmidt illustrate the profound impact of mentorship. Seasoned mentors impart invaluable knowledge, offering support and motivation during challenging times and paving the way for a sustainable and scalable future.

4. Following up after an event

After attending an event, it's important to follow up with the people you met. A follow-up email, LinkedIn invite, or message possesses the potential to transform a brief encounter into a significant connection. This action opens up further possibilities for valuable networking opportunities and fosters the potential for future collaboration.

5. Leverage and cultivate your online presence

Actively participating on online platforms like LinkedIn provides a unique opportunity to connect with influential professionals across various industries. By sharing insightful articles, engaging posts, and thoughtful commentary, you can significantly enhance your online presence and establish yourself as a knowledgeable voice in your field.

Founded by Reid Hoffman, LinkedIn has become synonymous with professional networking. Its success is built on the powerful connections forged between users, enabling collaboration, mentorship, and career advancement. Effectively leveraging

these relationships can open doors to new opportunities and foster valuable partnerships that help you grow both personally and professionally.

In conclusion, it is essential to recognise that participating in networking opportunities and professional organisations often incurs a cost. However, it's crucial to view this as an investment in your personal growth. Finance your knowledge so you can speak with confidence!

Given the current volatility in the South African market, we must support one another to thrive. As members of the logistics, transport, and supply chain fraternity, let's embrace the power of collective strength, foster collaborations, and unlock new opportunities.

***Together, we can create robust networks that benefit everyone involved.
Remember, your network is your superpower, and it ultimately contributes to your net worth!***

Shevon Kotiah May 20, 2025

<https://focusontransport.co.za/building-bridges-not-walls/>

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Shevon Kotiah - Bio

Shevon Kotiah is a passionate supply chain professional with over 16 years of experience, having worked with leading companies in South Africa and currently serving as the Demand Manager at Heineken Beverages SA. Kotiah embodies dedication and excellence in her field. A proud member of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILTSA), Kotiah is committed to empowering the next generation through her Shevon K Supply Chain Enabler Programme, which focuses on uplifting young supply chain professionals, interns, women, and youth.

ICFF CEO Feedback to Industry

By Ingrid du Buisson, CEO – ICFF



Since my last article, I have had the pleasure of visiting many companies within the freight forwarding & clearing sector, meeting up with old colleagues from yesteryear and meeting many new faces. The focus of these meetings was to introduce the ICFF to the industry and to share the importance of professionalizing our employees, as well as addressing the legislative imperatives (BBBEE & EE and Customs) of this industry as previously discussed. Suffice to say it's been very positive, and industry is embracing the concept of professionalisation and improving proficiencies amongst their employees and associated supply chains. I have challenged all companies to at least start off with submitting ten employees for competency and proficiency assessments toward professional designation, watch this space as we will be announcing those industry partners in due course.

An important milestone for us is the relationship we have developed with SARS over the last few months, and their support of the professionalization of Customs Operators on all sides of the value chain. We are currently working on a Memorandum of Co-operation with SARS to formalize this relationship with them, and one of the aspects being discussed is the inclusion of a professional designation as a criterion for customs licensing and AEO accreditation. This would be in line with global standards. This will ensure the improvement of efficiencies across international trade and minimise risk to business.

Our roadshows have continued onward to Cape Town. We had a good turn out of industry representatives, as well as the banks, training providers and various other associations. There appears to be a lot of interest from the banks to collaborate with the ICFF on improving their value proposition to their logistics clients, something to look out for.

We have been approached with partnership proposals from universities, one being the University of Stellenbosch, and the IMM Graduate School of business. This will expand our reach across the country as well as our network as far as the winelands.



Our next Roadshow takes us to **Durban**, where we will be touching base with forwarding and clearing companies, as well as ships agents and operators. We look forward to having good conversations with them all and hope to create awareness within this region too.

I will continue meeting all companies in due course, and trust that we will receive as much support as we have been. We were established by industry for industry, and we cannot achieve what we set out to do without our industry's support.

Thanking you all for your continuous support!

 ydubuisson@icff.co.za



Embracing Change and Celebrating Our People

From the Chairperson's Desk

*By Yolandi Dercksen, Chairperson of the
Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding (ICFF)*

As we find ourselves in the gentle shift between seasons, there's an opportunity not only to observe change in nature but to reflect on the changes we must embrace within ourselves and our workplaces. In this time of transition, I encourage each of you to prioritise self-care—physically, mentally, and emotionally. We cannot pour from an empty cup, and as professionals in a high-demand industry, ensuring we are well is the first step toward leading others well.



This past week, we had the privilege of celebrating **International HR Day on Tuesday, 20 May 2025**, a moment to pause and express deep appreciation to all our **HR practitioners**. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the growth, wellbeing, and empowerment of your teams. Your work often happens behind the scenes, but your impact resonates across every department and every career journey. Your dedication is the heartbeat of sustainable organisational success.

I was also honoured to connect with many of you at our **ICFF Roadshow in Cape Town on Thursday, 15 May 2025**. What an incredible day of engagement with freight forwarders, training providers, traders, and ship's agents! The spirit of collaboration and openness to shared goals was tangible. We have already seen the sparks of new partnerships forming, and I am excited about the difference we can make—together—not only in our industry but in our country.

One key focus I want to emphasize again is the **urgency and importance of obtaining professional designations** within our sector. These designations are not just titles; they represent a standard of excellence, credibility, and accountability. We need the **support of organisations** to actively promote this journey among their staff, and we need **professionals** to see the long-term value of being recognised for their skills and experience.

Let's work hand in hand to **elevate our industry standards** and continue building a community that upholds integrity, knowledge, and professionalism. Our collective efforts will shape a stronger, more resilient future for customs and freight forwarding in South Africa.

Wishing you all a season of reflection, growth, and connection.

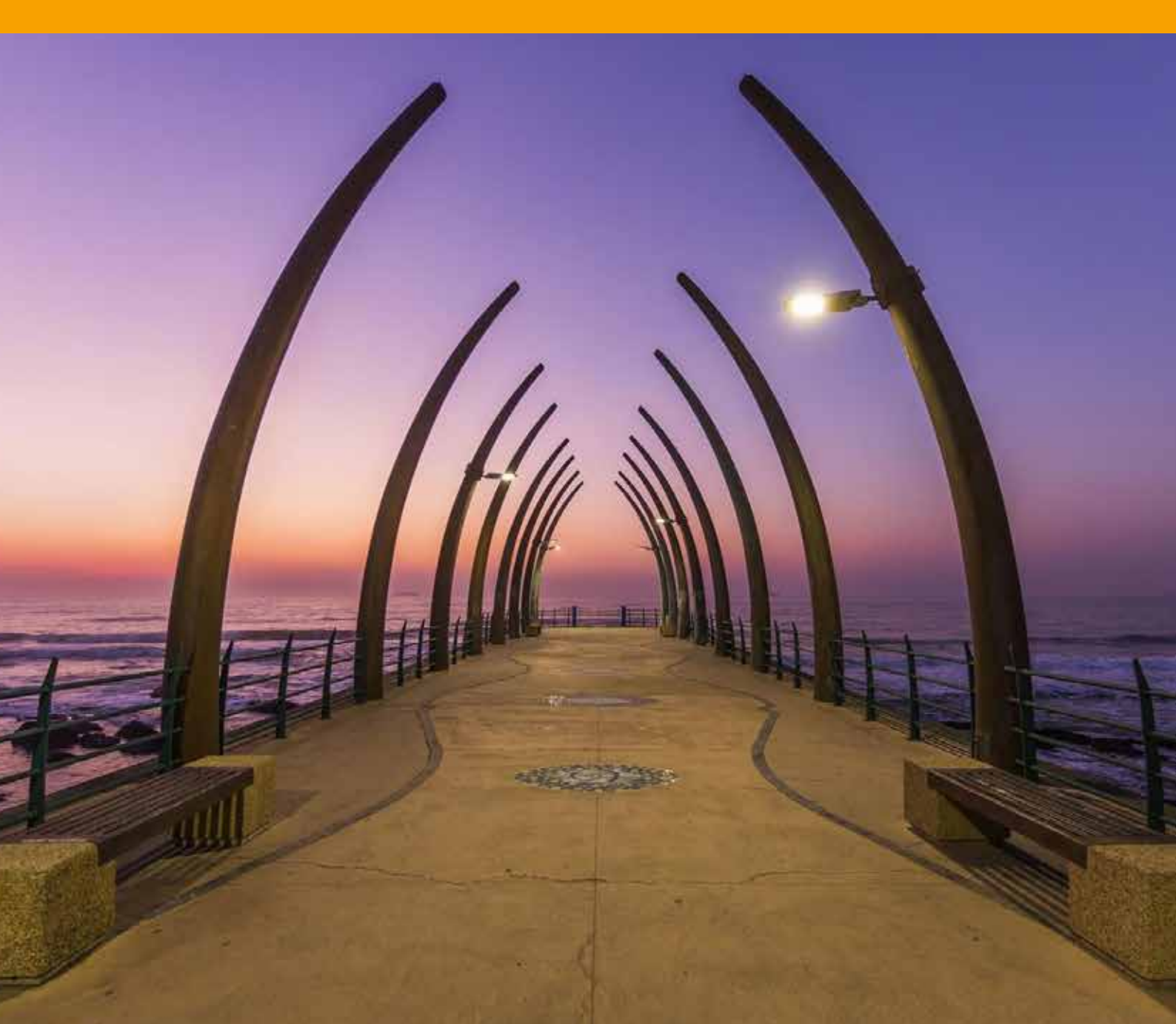
Warm regards,
Yolandi Dercksen
Chairperson, ICFF



ICFF ROADSHOW CAPE TOWN

The ICFF Roadshow in Cape Town, held on 15 May, was a resounding success, bringing together an inspiring community of industry professionals.





ICFF ROADSHOW - DURBAN

Save the Date – Durban ICFF Roadshow 2025!

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, 10 July 2025**, for our next Roadshow in **Durban**!

Join us to hear the latest insights, industry trends, and expert commentary on what's ahead for freight forwarding and customs in South Africa. RSVP to Lerato to secure your spot.



ICFF Fix

Bite-Sized Insights



11 June 2025
via MS Teams
from 12:30 – 13:30

Topic: Developing a Level of Intimacy with Customs Compliance & Freight Forwarding Professionalization

Guest Speaker: Devlyn Naidoo

Devlyn Naidoo (MBA) an admitted chartered member of the chartered institute of logistics and transport is a dedicated professional, passionate about education, compliance, youth empowerment, academia and the facilitation of legitimate trade for the benefit of South Africa, her economy and people. Prior to his current role, Devlyn served as the Head of Department for Customs & Freight Forwarding at a privately held institution, building capacity across multinational enterprises and delivering insightful contributions to various academic and mainstream publications. He currently serves as the Executive for SARS & Other Government Agencies at SAAFF.



R200.00 for non-members.

✉ RSVP to Imapheto@icff.org.za

Or Email:

🖱 www.icff.co.za

