



MANIKANDAN YOGESHWAR

A VISIONARY ENTREPRENEUR RESHAPING THE SHIPPING CONTAINER INDUSTRY THROUGH INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AND EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

Shweta Singh | The CEO Magazine

Shipping containers, designed to transport goods worldwide, have revolutionised the transportation industry. These robust steel boxes can withstand the rigours of long-distance travel by rail, road, and sea, dramatically increasing the efficiency of global trade.

In response to this growing demand for efficiency and sustainability, companies like Trade O Container Pte Ltd and Smartboxx Containers Pvt Ltd have stepped up to provide innovative solutions in the container industry. Founded by Mr. Manikandan Yogeshwar, these companies are dedicated to becoming the foremost providers of sustainable container solutions in India and beyond, setting high standards for quality and reliability.

THE GENESIS OF TRADE O CONTAINER AND SMARTBOXX CONTAINERS

As the saying goes, *“The roots of entrepreneurship are often planted in early experiences.”* Manikandan Yogeshwar’s passion for the shipping industry began early on when he started working part-time in his father’s company as a container sales executive while pursuing his bachelor’s degree



MANIKANDAN YOGESHWAR
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in management studies from Mumbai University. This role not only supported his education but also drew him to the intricate logistics and potential of container trading, which inspired him to dream of creating something bigger.

Backed with a decade of experience in management, container leasing, trading, and NVOCC and a shared vision with his father, he decided to start their own business. Thus, Trade O Container Pte Ltd and Smartboxx Containers Pvt Ltd were born, committed to providing exceptional container solutions and services. Under Mr Manikandan’s leadership, both companies strive to set new industry standards by offering innovative and reliable container solutions tailored to diverse client needs. His deep knowledge, strong skill set, and passion for the container industry empower him to deliver optimal solutions for clients, resulting in a significant expansion of their customer base.

Today, their companies focus on supplying both used and new shipping containers across India and Southeast Asia. In addition to container sales, they operate in the NVOCC (Non-Vessel Operating Common Carrier) sector, providing flexible and efficient logistics solutions for clients.

Mr Manikandan reflects, *“Building this business has been an incredible journey, filled with challenges and rewarding moments. I’m proud of how far we’ve come and excited for the opportunities ahead as we continue to grow and expand our services.”*

CLIENT-CENTRIC APPROACH

In an intensely competitive shipping container and NVOCC industry, standing out requires more than just standard offerings. Their commitment to competitive pricing, express delivery, and quality materials, supported by continuous customer care, are the pillars that separate Trade O Container and Smartboxx Containers from others. Quality and customer satisfaction are the foremost priorities for Trade O Container and Smartboxx Containers. They ensure this through strict quality control, reliable partnerships, and proactive customer support. *“We conduct regular inspections to ensure every container meets industry standards,”* explains Mr. Manikandan. Partnering with trusted suppliers guarantees consistency in quality.

Timely delivery and competitive pricing are essential for ensuring customers receive the best value. *“Our clients are at the heart of everything we do,”* Mr. Manikandan states. *“We always prioritise their needs, which is why prompt delivery and customer feedback are central to our operations.”* By striving to understand their client’s needs and exceeding expectations through superior products and outstanding service, the company aims to help them achieve their goals while contributing positively to a more sustainable future. To maintain their competitive edge, they implement dynamic pricing strategies, offer loyalty programs, and prioritise proactive communication to keep customers informed and engaged throughout the process. Additionally, investing in staff training and continuously reviewing processes based on customer feedback helps them uphold high standards and enhance the overall customer experience.

NAVIGATING SETBACKS

The shipping container and NVOCC industry faces several significant challenges, including tough competition, fluctuations in freight rates, and regulatory compliance. To address these issues, Trade O Container and Smartboxx Containers prioritise excellent customer support and competitive pricing to differentiate themselves. Mr Manikandan emphasises, *“Monitoring marketing trends and having flexible contracts to adapt to changes is what keeps us ahead.”* To tackle logistical delays, they have built strong partnerships and invested in technology to optimise routes and schedules. They also adopt eco-friendly practices to meet sustainability demands and embrace digital advancements to enhance efficiency and service.

A CULTURE OF PASSION AND COLLABORATION

At Trade O Container and Smartboxx Containers, the company culture is characterised by a shared passion for individual skills that come together to create a dynamic team. They embrace diversity within their workforce and focus on team-building programs to foster an open and friendly environment. Mr. Manikandan states, *“Our culture thrives on collaboration and inclusivity, ensuring that every team member feels valued and engaged.”*

LEADERSHIP MANTRA

Entering the shipping industry can be both exciting and challenging. Advising aspiring entrepreneurs or professionals, Mr. Manikandan shares, *“The first and*

foremost thing one must do is understand the industry. Research the key players, market dynamics, and regulatory requirements. Gain knowledge of the trends and technological advancements as well as the challenges in the industry. Understand the local and international regulatory landscape.”

Once the groundwork is laid, he emphasises the importance of developing a strategic plan. *“Identify your niche and craft a solid business plan. Knowing your customers’ needs is essential, so conduct thorough market research and analyse your competitors to find opportunities for differentiation.”*

Building a strong network is vital for success. *“Attend industry events and seek mentorship from experienced professionals,”* Mr. Manikandan suggests. *“The relationships you cultivate with suppliers and customers can significantly impact your success.”*

When it comes to customer service, he believes that *“exceptional service and open communication are key to building trust. Always seek feedback and find ways to add value to your offerings.”*

He also stresses the importance of investing in technology. *“Utilising digital tools can streamline operations and enhance customer experiences,”* he says. *“Staying updated on emerging trends is critical for long-term success. Challenges are inevitable in business. For this, Mr. Manikandan advises, “Identify potential risks and develop strategies to manage them. Flexibility and adaptability will help you navigate uncertainties.”*

The shipping industry faces increasing scrutiny over environmental impact and ethical practices. Mr Manikandan emphasises, *“Incorporating eco-friendly practices not only benefits the environment but also enhances your brand’s reputation. Maintaining high ethical standards ensures fair labour practices and fosters community engagement.”* ■