

Shippers want more visibility data than terminals are providing: survey



The lack of direct commercial relationships between shippers and terminals leads to a lack of incentives for better communication of data, according to a report from software vendor Kaleris.

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A lack of alignment around visibility data between container terminal operators around the globe and the shippers and forwarders they serve results in underuse of operating systems and general supply chain inefficiencies, according to a report on the subject.

The report, produced by maritime consultant Thetius on behalf of terminal software vendor Kaleris, found that nearly 57% of terminal operators surveyed believe they provide good or very good visibility to their customers, while just 27% of shippers and freight forwarders participating said they are the recipients of good visibility from terminals.

Nearly 82% of shippers said they faced discrepancies between the information provided by terminals and the actual status of their shipments, while 61% said they do not receive automated alerts on key events.

“Marine terminals have invested in infrastructure to support data sharing, often establishing revenue-sharing agreements and data-as-a-service [DaaS] offerings,” Rene Alvarenga, senior director of execution and visibility product management at Kaleris, said in the report. “Despite all these initiatives, shippers still report feeling left in the dark. Marine terminals, meanwhile, bear the brunt of the blame, often unfairly, as they struggle to balance the demands for transparency with operational realities and evolving technology standards.”

At the heart of the disconnect is the reality that shippers and forwarders do not have contractual relationships with terminals, yet need information generated by or housed within terminal systems.

“The key element to reiterate is that the collaboration we are referring to is between parties that do not exchange monetary benefits or penalties via contracts,” Alvarenga said. “For all intents and purposes, the collaboration we refer to here is between complete strangers with no relationships.”

The report cites more than a dozen systems that either generate, consume or rely on terminal visibility data — from transportation management systems catering to a range of entities to terminal operating systems, port community systems, automated gate systems and fleet and yard management software.

The systems mentioned in the report do not include areas such as rail and intermodal systems, nor systems related to customs clearance.

“This gap isn’t just a question of technology products,” Alvarenga said. “It’s about objectives alignment, monetary incentives, and the clear definition of visibility itself. Our research shows that a lack of visibility is a result from multiple factors related to data privacy and security concerns, organizational silos and systems not designed to work together, and lack of standardization of execution systems.”

The report was based on a survey in which terminal operators represented 54.6% of participants and shippers and forwarders the other 45.4%, spread across all global regions.

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