

Is Your Customs Team Ready to Scale?

A CHECKLIST FOR FREIGHT FORWARDERS

Scaling customs operations isn't easy. Freight forwarders face growing pressure from shifting tariff rules, documentation errors, and compliance risks. Manual processes and small teams can't keep pace.

This customs compliance checklist will help you uncover gaps in documentation, broker reliance, and compliance so you can see if your customs team is ready to scale without adding headcount.



1 Documentation Accuracy in Customs Compliance

INDUSTRY REALITY:

80% of customs delays stem from missing or incomplete information or poor descriptions.

- ☐ Do you still rely on manual data entry for invoices, packing lists, or bills of lading?
- ☐ Are small errors frequently causing delays, fines, or rework?

2 Adapting to Changing Tariff Rules and Regulations

INDUSTRY REALITY:

EU CBAM requires quarterly reports through 2025, with financial obligations starting in 2026².

- ☐ How quickly can your team adapt to new tariff codes, sanctions, or compliance updates?
- ☐ Does it take days or weeks to reconfigure processes when rules shift?

3 Over-Reliance on Customs Brokers

INDUSTRY REALITY:

According to CBP, importers are held to a "reasonable care" standard and cannot delegate compliance responsibility to brokers³.

- ☐ Do you rely on outside brokers for critical filings?
- ☐ What happens if they stop shipping to a lane or can't keep up with new requirements?

4 Visibility Into Customs Exceptions

INDUSTRY REALITY:

CBP's ACE system provides entry status and error feedback, but many forwarders lack the tools to act in real time⁴.

- ☐ Can you track customs documentation status in real time?
- ☐ When exceptions happen, does it take hours or days to resolve them?



5 Customs Teams Stretched Too Thin

INDUSTRY REALITY:

Labor shortages and rising volumes mean small customs teams are burning out while compliance risk grows.⁵

- ☐ Is your team already working overtime just to keep up?
- ☐ Could you scale volume 2x without doubling staff?

6 Customs Compliance Risk Exposure

INDUSTRY REALITY:

Recent DOJ actions show real exposure: \$22M FCA settlement for customs duty evasion (2020)⁶, \$2.338M FCA settlement for tariff misclassification (2018)⁷, \$8.1M FCA settlement for unpaid customs duties (Mar 2025)⁸, and \$4.9M FCA settlement with Grosfillex Inc. (Jul 2025)⁹.

- ☐ Are audit findings or penalties a growing concern?
- ☐ Do you have confidence your filings are compliant across all regions?

How Raft Helps Forwarders Scale

PUBLISHED OUTCOMES

- **Masterpiece International:** Automates up to **93% of documents per month**, saving nearly 1,000 labor hours monthly. In one month alone, operators processed **30,000 packs/packing lists** with Raft.
- **Navia Freight:** Automates about 75% of invoices. Of these, **35% required no human touch** and another 40% minimal input. Raft **saved 3,000 minutes of document processing per week**, freeing staff for higher-value work.

CUSTOMER-REPORTED OUTCOMES (ZEBRAFI BLIND CASE STUDY)

- Processes **130,000+ documents per month** with Raft.
- **Saves 5–7 minutes per document**, equating to ~65 FTE equivalents.
- Achieves **70–80% automation coverage** of viable documents.
- **Avoided hiring 6–10 additional people** to handle equivalent workload.

Together, these results show how Raft enables forwarders to scale operations up to 5x with the same staff, while reducing broker risk and staying ahead of compliance.

Next Steps

If you checked “yes” to more than two of these challenges, your customs team isn’t ready to scale.

→ [SCHEDULE A CALL WITH RAFT](#)

References

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6. U.S. Department of Justice. [Apparel Importer to Pay \\$22 Million to Resolve False Claims Act Allegations of Customs Duty Evasion. Press Release, Sept 25, 2020.](#)
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