â€œInternational shopping has become second nature; shipping should be tooâ€Ł

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7 questions for Tijs Reumerman about international shipping International shopping feels to consumers like one big market without borders. A few clicks, an order placed, and a few days later the parcel is delivered. That seems logical and self-evident. For webshops and logistics partners, however, it is a different story. Behind this apparent simplicity lies a world of rules, borders and choices that are changing at lightning speed. What worked smoothly yesterday may come to a halt today due to new legislation, geopolitical tensions or stricter sustainability requirements. As a result, international shipping is no longer an automatic process, but a strategic puzzle. Tijs Reumerman, Managing Director Platforms at PostNL, sees how international logistics is shifting from operational to strategic. â€œInternational shipping today requires flexibility and insight. Those who adapt to this can continue to grow across borders.â€Ł

1. How do you view the current international e-commerce market?

“International e-commerce has become an integral part of everyday life. Almost every consumer in the Netherlands orders something from abroad from time to time, sometimes very consciously, sometimes without realising that a webshop or platform is based in another country. Recent publications by Thuiswinkel.org show that more than 10% of all purchases come from abroad. Online shopping has instantly expanded the reach of webshops far beyond their own national borders. Half of Dutch webshops also sell to consumers abroad. That international market continues to grow, but it has also become more diverse. Rules and expectations differ from country to country, while consumers hardly notice this.

Europe remains a key engine for webshops. At the same time, expectations and conditions vary even within Europe. Markets outside the EU, such as the US and the UK, have become more complex in recent years due to stricter customs rules and import duties. Webshops and logistics partners therefore should not be hesitant, but make sharper choices: where do you want to be active, how do you set up your supply chain, and which flows fit your business model? Those who make these considerations consciously can continue to grow internationally; even in a rapidly changing world.”

2. Last year showed how quickly international

circumstances can change. How do you look back on 2025?

"2025 demonstrated just how vulnerable and resilient international logistics can be. A concrete example is the situation surrounding shipments to the United States last summer. When the US government abolished the de minimis exemption – meaning that parcels up to $800 could no longer be imported tax-free and at speed – this came as a shock to many webshops. According to the Universal Postal Union, the number of shipments to the US fell by more than 80% in the period that followed. Together with international partners, we were able to develop a solution in a short space of time so that business shipments could resume. This clearly shows the impact of policy decisions and how important close cooperation is."

3. Is the European Union also taking measures to protect its own market?

"Absolutely. We are seeing that movement closer to home as well. Major trading blocs are protecting their markets more actively. Within Europe too, measures are being considered to better protect the market and make it fairer, such as the announced EU fee on parcels from outside the EU. It is important that such measures are introduced carefully and in a workable way. National acceleration of these kinds of rules only works with good coordination between governments, customs authorities and customers, precisely to prevent disruption in the supply chain. That is why I am in favour of a level playing field between EU countries.

At the same time, the bigger picture remains important. The European market continues to be extremely attractive for webshops. The EU offers scale, purchasing power and relatively short distances. This creates many opportunities for further international growth within Europe. Dutch consumers are increasingly ordering products from other European countries, and Dutch webshops are finding new customers there. That seamless experience requires strong alignment throughout the logistics chain."

4. What is needed for an organisation to keep pace with developments in international logistics?

"Our role is shifting from carrier to orchestrator of international flows. We connect webshops with consumers worldwide. We do this as asset-light platform through shipping partners, local networks and shared infrastructure. This provides flexibility. Together with our subsidiary Spring GDS, we are active in more than 190 countries. We are a platform and therefore do not own the physical infrastructure ourselves – such as sorting centres and delivery vans – but instead connect those of our partners to bring supply and demand together. Precisely by working with different partners, we can respond more quickly to change. Customers

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expect not only speed and reliability, but also transparency and flexibility. To achieve speed, webshops can think about where they store their inventory. By using international fulfilment and storing products closer to the consumer, delivery times are reduced, dependence on border crossings decreases, and reliability increases."

5. Where do you see opportunities to make international shipping simpler?

"Shipping within the Netherlands is second nature for a webshop. Our goal is to make cross-border shipping just as straightforward. If international shopping is so easy for consumers, why does international shipping still feel complex for webshops? PostNL offers various options to deliver parcels across borders with ease, with insight into shipment status, attention to sustainability, and integration with multiple delivery options. Smart integrations that combine import and export flows optimise routes, saving costs, time and COâ,, across the entire chain.

International shipments involve more handover points and therefore a greater risk of deviations. The sooner you detect these, the better you can intervene. Transparency is therefore no longer an added service, but a basic requirement. We aim to lower the threshold for webshops to do business internationally as much as possible. There is a suitable solution for every company. Either through PostNL itself or via one of our subsidiaries, such as Spring GDS or MyParcel."

6. What does this require from webshops and logistics partners in practice?

"International growth is increasingly less about volume and more about strategy. Webshops need to make deliberate choices: which markets fit my proposition, where do I want to offer speed, and where is reliability more important than 'as fast as possible'? Successful international webshops look not only at potential demand, but also at local expectations, return behaviour, regulations and cost structures. Sometimes this means phased growth or focusing on a limited number of markets where you truly want to be relevant.

By aligning inventory, fulfilment and delivery options with these choices, the international operation remains manageable and can scale with demand without getting ahead of itself. This calls for a logistics partner that thinks along, is scalable and remains agile, even in uncertain times. For logistics partners, this means looking beyond individual transport movements. You take responsibility for the whole picture: from customs clearance and data exchange to return flows and customer communication. International supply chains have become more complex. That is precisely why customers expect predictability and control, and that can only be achieved through cooperation."

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7. What do you believe will determine the success of international e-commerce in the coming years?

"The international e-commerce market will continue to grow. Success will depend less on who is the fastest, and more on who collaborates most intelligently. That requires transparency in the supply chain, clear choices in markets, and a realistic approach to sustainability. Sustainability is not separated from logistics as it is an integral part of decision-making. Shorter routes, more efficient networks and the conscious use of fuels reduce the ecological footprint. At the same time, solutions must remain affordable.

International growth is no longer something you simply 'add on'. It requires partners who think along and take responsibility. I believe international e-commerce will remain future proof if we organise it together; agile and reliable, in a world that continues to change."

Source: PostNL

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