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A focus on...

How Tokyo became a crucial market for airfreight

Historically, Tokyo has always played a significant role for global airfreight, both in Asia and globally. Japan's capital and largest city is home to numerous industries, including manufacturing, pharmaceutical, automotive, technology, and many more. Likewise, it is one of the world's most prominent financial markets, frequently mentioned in the same breath as New York, Hong Kong and Zurich.

So it's only fitting that Swiss WorldCargo will soon begin flying its flagship aircraft, the Boeing 777-300ER, to the

Japanese metropolis. In the past, Zurich and Tokyo have enjoyed a daily connection with an Airbus A340-300, which offers between 16 to 20 tons of capacity. With the update in aircraft, however, the carrier will be able to offer a roughly 40% increase in capacity, with an offer of between 22 to 28 tons on flights.

The Market in Tokyo

What is it about Tokyo that makes it so attractive for cargo? The answer is manifold. At once, the market is home to diverse industries, which leads to the production of various specialized goods, ranging from manufacturing to auto parts electronics. This portfolio of goods aligns nicely with Swiss WorldCargo's focus areas of "care intensive goods" – those which require specialized a shipping and handling set-up.

Another big focus is the transport of pharmaceutical goods. Over the past years, Swiss WorldCargo has cemented its position as a carrier of pharmaceutical goods, which we have promoted in different ways. A major highlight was the launch of a dedicated truck livery for Swiss WorldCargo, emphasizing the RFS (Road Feeder Service) from Tokyo to other destinations nation-wide. Of course, a major advantage here is that these products are not only shipped between Switzerland and Japan, but can also continue their journey to the manifold destinations around the world within the Swiss WorldCargo market.

The Team in Tokyo

In Tokyo, Swiss WorldCargo's team consists of five staff members, focusing on sales, steering, bookings and reservations, in addition to two third-party staff members. It is led by Tango Tomonari, who has over 30 years' experience in the airfreight sector.

"Over the years, Swiss WorldCargo has built up a reputation in Japan in handling the quality goods that are often exported from or imported to the home market, Switzerland. Our sales policy focuses on ensuring the transport of these products, based on our expertise in this area and capability in handling these special products," he says. "Additionally, we benefit from our Zurich hub, through which we can ensure quick handling or transfer to onward destinations if needed. In the future, the increase in capacity will be beneficial to us, as we will be able to continue focusing on these commodities but at a larger quantity."

The ground handler supporting Swiss WorldCargo at Tokyo Narita Airport is ANA Cargo, which has a reputation for their quality service and speedy delivery.

Expansion in Japan

As we will focus on in the next several weeks, Switzerland and Japan have historically enjoyed a close partnership, which stems from their relationship as trade partners. But it is also reflected in the cultural similarities that have led to a strong mutual respect between both nations: a focus on precision, quality and strong work ethic, among other factors.

Alongside our introducing the Boeing 777-300ER on the Tokyo route, we will also introduce direct flights to Osaka, operated with an Airbus A340-300. This is a "double win" for the Japanese airfreight market, as it means we are suddenly able to carry more freight on board, headed to a diverse array of Japanese destinations.

Expanding the capacity on our Tokyo route – which is wildly popular from a cargo perspective, makes sense – as cargo is in many ways a reflection of the business relationship and export between two regions. Tokyo Narita was just again ranked as the ninth largest cargo airport in terms of volume, and has enjoyed a position in the top 10 for the past years. So it will be interesting to see this airport continue to succeed and how Swiss WorldCargo can meet the needs of its customers there.



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