

## A Historical Look at the Air Freight Industry

During the early years of aviation, people were constantly looking for practical uses of airplanes. People were amazed with the machines that enabled men to fly, but the question of what to do with them plagued everyone's mind. Of course, the uses for airplanes could not be limited to entertainment, because that would be wasting the huge potential of the technology on a pretty superficial industry. The air freight industry began with the journey of a bolt of silk from Dayton to Columbus, Ohio in November 1910.

That fateful trip gave birth to the airfreight industry as we know it today. After that event, everything just progressed to new heights for the air freight industry. One of the pioneers of the air freight industry is American Railway Express. The name of the company points out to the fact that before the advent of the air freight industry, cargo was usually transported by train.

The airfreight industry made a lot of conveniences possible. First, there was the matter of speed. Air freight sped up deliveries between businesses. This means that the air freight industry made it possible for businesses to acquire various merchandise when they needed it. This also saved a lot of money on storage. Before the advent of the air freight industry, businesses had to keep as much stock as possible. This helped them to meet orders in time. Because of the introduction of air freight, businesses could just fly in any merchandise.

During the 1920's, shipping of cargo via air grew more popular. In November 14, 1926, the National Air Transport Company was born. This company delivered the first air cargo in the United States in September 1, 1927. Many more companies were founded as promoters of the air freight industry. As the industry was still relatively young, these companies did not make much profit.

The air freight industry got to a slow start because of the fact that they had stiff competition coming from passenger carriers. Many established passenger carriers opposed the establishment of an all-cargo air freight industry mainly because they feared it would destabilize the air industry.

Another reason why the air freight industry did not grow as people hoped was that most businesses were unable to sustain the huge losses associated with starting an air freight operation. While some people attempted to remedy this by combining air freight with air passenger transport, they only succeeded in slowing down the industry.

The revolution of the air freight industry came about when a man named Fred Smith noticed that the common practice of combining air freight with passenger

freight was highly inefficient. He proposed that air freights should have different flight patterns from passenger flights. He was successful in gathering funds mainly because of his proposal for a guaranteed next-day-delivery service. And so it was that in April 1973, the Federal Express began operations. Of course, the initial years of business were hard. However, after three years of flying cargo, the company was beginning to show profit.

By the 1980's, Federal express was a household name. This just goes to show you how far a truly great idea can take you. Today, the air freight industry is booming and companies make millions of dollars in profits. That's a far cry from the way that air freight businesses lost money in the past.