

VIETNAM 2012 - MPL 5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE Arrival 14th October 18th October



Dear MPL Member and Non Member,

We are delighted to announce that the **5th MPL ANNUAL** CONFERENCE will be held in Ho Chi Minh (Saigon) Vietnam, with our Host being PGS Vietnam Logistics Ltd.

The Conference will commence at 19:00H on Sunday, 14th October with Welcome Drinks and Dinner and will climax on the night of the 17th October and into the early hours of the Thursday, 18th October, beginning with Farewell Drinks, and Farewell Dinner, followed by the **MPL Party**.

This last night will be completely different to any of our previous Farewell events over the past 4 years and feel sure you will find it most unusual and enjoyable.

There will be an **MPL Golf Tournament** on the morning of the 14th October, so anyone wishing to participate, must ensure they arrive on Saturday the 13th.

We have planned an intense program for the Conference, in a 5 star hotel, located on the river, and within walking distance

of shopping options such as Saigon Center and Diamond Plaza, near the main tourist district.

The Legend Hotel includes a large outdoor pool and fitness center, with hot tub and saunas and each room is provided with free Wi-Fi and is only 7 km from Tan Son Nhat Airport.

We will arrange transportation from **TAN SON NHAT AIRPORT** to the Hotel and at the end of your stay, pick you up at the hotel and take you back to the Airport. You can fly direct from most Asian Cities, plus from Frankfurt, London-Gatwick, Paris, Moscow, Perth, Darwin, Sydney, Melbourne and Istanbul. The Airport is conveniently located approximately 8 km from the heart of the city.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL LATER THIS YEAR AND DON'T FORGET TO PLEASE INFORM YOU AGENTS OF THIS IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENT.

FURTHER DETAILS, WITH BOOKING FORMS AND COSTS WILL BE ISSUED NEXT MONTH. IN THE MEANTIME ENSURE YOU KEEP THESE DATES FREE IN YOUR AGENDA.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON VIETNAM

HO CHI MINH CITY



The largest city in Vietnam and the former capital of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).

Following the fall of Saigon in 1975, the city was renamed Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC or HCM). However the old name Saigon is still used by both Vietnamese and foreigners, especially when referring to the most central part of the city, to which most tourists go.

ARRIVING

Tan Son Nhat is Vietnam's largest international airport and is conveniently located about 8 km from the heart of the city.

Since early 2010, Duty Free items that you want, must be purchased at your departing airport. It is no longer possible to buy in Duty Free upon landing in Vietnam.

There are 2 terminals - one for international flights and the other older one for domestic flights. Both terminals have limited food facilities once you get past immigration on your outbound journey, with costs double that than anywhere else. There is however a newly opened Burger King located on the upper level of departures in the International building. Everything is priced in USD and appear to be similar to an outlet in the USA.

TAXIS

Under no circumstances take a taxi from the airport to the hotel. First and foremost transportation will be provided for you by MPL, as long as you provide us with accurate flight details for both arrival and departure.

The other reason you should not take a taxi from the airport is because they are notoriously infamous as a terrible scam and one of the worst experiences in visiting Vietnam.

During your entire stay at the Conference there should be no need for you to use a taxi, but if you decide to do so for personal reasons, in general use caution and common sense when hiring a taxi in Ho Chi Minh.

Drivers generally speak limited English and no other foreign languages, so it is wise to write the name and address of your destination, preferably in Vietnamese, to show the taxi driver. Carry small change and bills for paying fares as drivers rarely have change,

AMT

When you clear customs and are about to leave the international terminal, there is a very inconspicuous ATM on the right which probably offers the best exchange rate compared to all of the staffed conversion booths that tout for your business.

There are numerous 24 hr ATMs in the city where you can withdraw cash on MasterCard, Visa and other cards. In HCMC both ANZ Bank and HKSB have ATMs.

CREDIT CARDS

Major credit cards (Visa, American Express, JCB, MasterCard) are gradually becoming more widely accepted, particularly in HCMC. All 5 star hotels accept them, as do a growing number of restaurants and up-market shops catering to the tourist trade, but watch out for the extra taxes – these can amount to an additional 5%.

Cash advances on credit cards are available at the central Vietcombank in HCMC for which you will be charged around 4%.

EXCHANGE RATES FOR VIETNAMESE CURRENCY

Current Dong exchange rates are available on the internet. Note: You cannot buy or exchange Dong outside of Vietnam, so ensure you change money back to your currency before departing.

TIME DIFFERENCE

Vietnam is 15 hours ahead of Los Angeles, 12 hours ahead of New York, 7 hours ahead of London, 1 hour behind Pert and 3 hours behind Sydney (give or take an hour during daylight savings time)







SOUTHERN VIETNAMESE CLIMATE

Is blessed with a more equitable and predictable climate than other parts of Vietnam. The rains are principally from May through to November, but most rain falls in brief afternoon downpours, so you can still get out and about. Daytime temperatures rarely fall below 20C. Once the rains start, humidity climbs to an enervating 80%

MEDICAL PRECAUTIONS

Presently, no vaccinations are required, but we recommend you check your country's rulings on travelling to Vietnam and if in doubt contact your doctor or healthcare provider.

If you do fall ill, pharmacies in HCMC stock a decent range of imported medicines (check they are not past their "use-by" date). Furthermore HCMC has good international-class medical facilities.

HOW SAFE IS HCMC

Relatively safe, but there is an increasing number of thefts particularly in HCMC where pickpockets and snatch thieves on motorbikes are the worst menace. The best tip is to be vigilant at all times, and be aware of cute kids or old grannies with deft fingers. Leave all valuables in the hotel safe (expensive watches, jewelry, etc.) Make sure you have a firm grip on cameras and shoulder bags at all times.

Probably the worst problem is the traffic. Trying to cross the streets in HCMC is an adventure. You'll be faced with a tightly packed stream of scooters, bikes and cyclos which looks completely chaotic at first, but don't despair!! Either walk until you find some traffic lights or just go for it. The key is to walk slowly and steadily out into the traffic. As long as you keep a steady pace and make your movements clear, the traffic will flow around you. Problems arise if you stop or move too quickly and drivers/riders can't anticipate your progress.

Thousands of people visit Saigon each year without experiencing any problems. It is also worth bearing in mind that the situation in Vietnam is certainly no worse than any major city in Europe or America.

VISAS FOR ENTRY TO VIETNAM

Please apply for the visa, via your local Vietnamese Consulate or Embassy, and ensure you give yourselves amply time, because the process could take over a week.

Naturally guarantee your passport is valid.













STARS AMONGST THE MEMBERS

vw.marcopoline.com

WE HAVE ALIGNED OUR COMPANY NAME

MarcoPoloLine

Anyone who has looked at the Network of Offices on the MPL Website recently, may have wondered why some members details have stars next to them.

The MPL Directors decided that long standing membership with the Group should be recognized with merit, subject to there being no complaint against the member which has been upheld by the MPL Board.



Bronze; for two years continuous membership



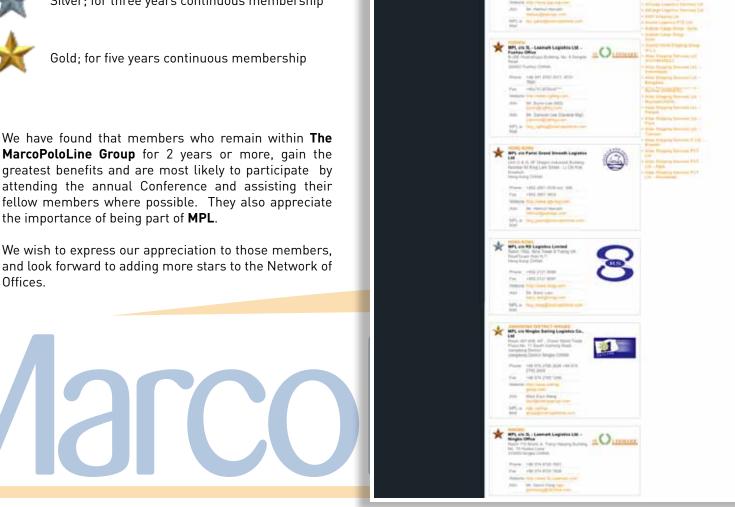
Silver; for three years continuous membership



We have found that members who remain within The MarcoPoloLine Group for 2 years or more, gain the greatest benefits and are most likely to participate by attending the annual Conference and assisting their fellow members where possible. They also appreciate the importance of being part of MPL.

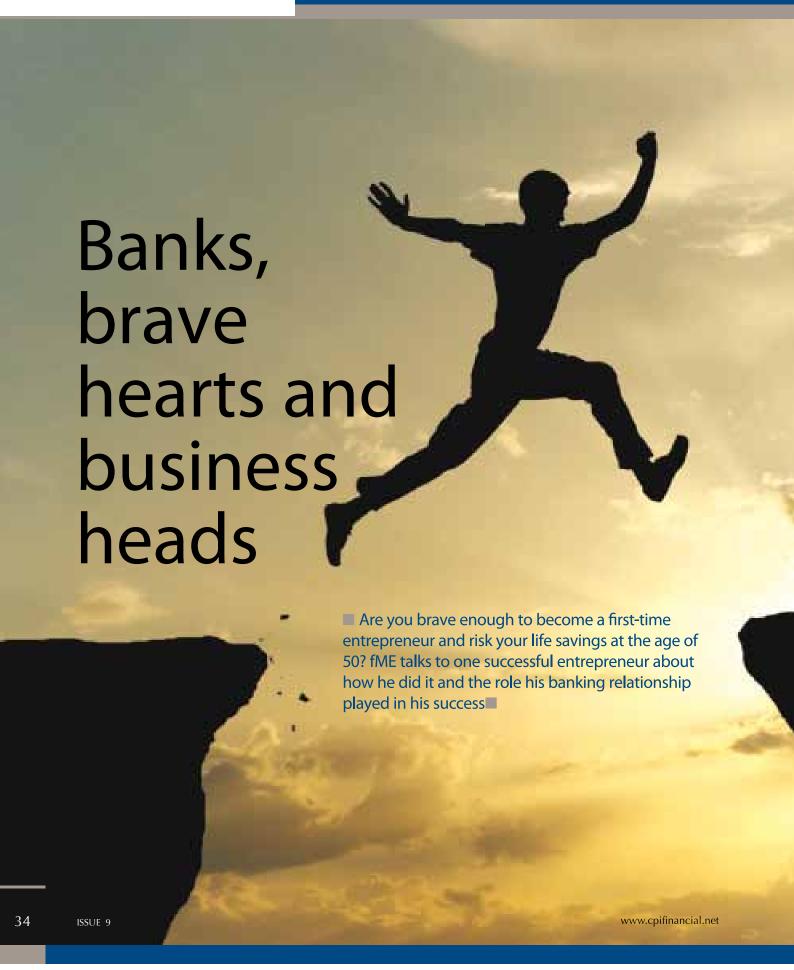
We wish to express our appreciation to those members, and look forward to adding more stars to the Network of















n 2004 at the age of 50 and with no entrepreneurial experience, Ishwar Jodha started his own freight forwarding business.

It was a terrifying move. He did it alone with no financial backing or investment and he used all his life savings to fund it. If it didn't work, he would lose everything and that was a horrifying prospect for a man in his 50s who had a secure job as Managing Director of a large multinational company. But still, he took the plunge and Triple Crown Shipping & Logistics LLC was born in November 2004.

"My motivation was to have something to do after corporate retirement age and the dream of setting up a successful business was always tempting," Jodha says. "The driving force also was to set up something for my family."

Now, about seven years later, Jodha's company is turning over AED 17 million per annum of which a healthy 17 per cent is profit while the rest is put back into the business to cover overheads.

Triple Crown is a definite success story but it hasn't been an easy road. At the end of the first two years, Jodha's doctor diagnosed him with stress-related diabetes - a result of the pressures of the new business. Happily, with his business now stable, the diabetes is gone and Jodha is able to put more time in on the golf course... not too much though because he still has ambitious plans. Jodha has growth on his mind, he sees the next stage as buying warehouses and opening branch offices in the areas delivering the most business, namely India and China and for this stage, help with capital investment from a bank is necessary.

"Next step, I want to buy my own warehouse and other assets. Obviously, for this I need to go back to my bankers because I don't have that kind of money, the capital investment will have to come from banking relationships."

Many entrepreneurs have turned to banks for financing and advice at a number of stages in their business' growth. For Jodha, the use of an overdraft facility from RAKBANK in the early years of Triple Crown was the difference between keeping the business ticking over and seeing it fail.

"RAKBANK came in when I was seeing an increase in business volumes, in particular project shipments. The difficulty I was facing was that the funds were being remitted from the origin country, e.g the US, for a shipment and these were very large amounts of money. The thing was, we had to pay upfront on behalf of the customer for freight and duty and we had to pay this before we'd received the remittance from the client. RAKBANK helped with an overdraft facility to cover that interim period. This was about three years after the start up by which time my own resources had been used up."

Today, Triple Crown is in good financial shape and to date Jodha has not needed to take out a loan. For the next stage of growth though a bank loan would be essential.

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Ishwar Jodha

Entrepreneur and founder of Triple Crown Shipping & Logistics Ishwar Jodha describes the agony and the ecstasy of launching your own business...

- Why did you decide to start your own business? After more than three decades in the shipping industry andclimbing the corporate ladder from a sales rep to Managing Director of the company, I was convinced it was time to pursue my dream of owning my own company. Having lived in Dubai for over 25 years at the time, I chose Dubai as the place to start it.
- 2. What were the biggest challenges involved in starting and running your own business?

 One of the major concerns I had was the fact that I was starting at a later stage in my life. I knew that a start up requires a lot of hard work, dedication and long hours yet here I was at the age of 50 venturing into something normally done when one is at least 20 years younger. Some of my friends even advised me against it, especially since I was in a very good job that

Starting and growing a business

provided the security and comforts that one looks for at that age. It reminds me of the book, 'Who moved my cheese'. The other concern was that I was risking all my savings in a venture with no fixed assurance. Most business plans are made on the back of assurances of contracts, back to back business and so on. I had none of that; I had assurances from friends, faith in myself and a family backing me to follow my dream.

- 3. The biggest obstacles to overcome? The biggest obstacle was the fear of losing everything if I didn't make it because I had put at stake all my savings; I had no financial backing or investor supporting me.
- 4. How did the banks help with getting your business off the ground and growing it? Unfortunately, banks do not come in at the stage of getting the venture of the ground, at that stage you are on your own. Yes, they contribute in expanding it and sustaining it once you have weathered the critical start up years. I had approached banks but was told that they had a practice of not lending or granting facilities to private SMEs before a three year period of operation. Unfortunately, I feel that's the time one needs the help the most, but I can understand their policy is to ensure that they are lending to a stable company.

For me, RAKBANK stepped in with their new SME products at the right time, about three years after we started, by which time my own resources were stretched to the max.

5. Was RAKBANK's contribution only financial? Yes, at the time it was only financial, though I must admit, I went in with a pure loan request and it was they who suggested the overdraft facility which in fact served my needs much better than a loan because I needed those extra funds only for short periods of time when remittance from the client was delayed.

When we started work with RAKBANK they were not the only bank we dealt with, but today they are my main bankers, that says it all. I am getting served well. I keep asking my accounts staff, 'is there anything we need to discuss with our bankers?' and all I get back is 'no, all is well', a famous line from a famous Indian movie.

- 6. What's the best part of having your own business? There are several good things, especially when you see it grow. If you ask me the one best part, it is surely the satisfaction of providing employment and support to staff and their families.
- 7. What are your plans for future expansion and/or exit?
 We are a medium-sized company, but one that is operated with top class governance, employee and customer satisfaction. Basically we have worked towards keeping all our stake holders happy, we have been chosen for the Dubai Government's Dubai SME 100 initiative and are proud of that achievement.

We have plans of expansion which involve offices in air and sea port free zones and some additional products to sell. Exit plans are at the back of every 56-year-old's mind I guess, but there is lot to achieve before that. Maybe on our own or through mergers.



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DUBAI-SME 100 RANKING NOW OUT!



12TH Feb 2012, The Dubai Economic department recognized and facilitated the TOP100 SME's of the 72000 Registered SME in Dubai. TCSL was ranked 79th.

"DubaiSME, the agency of the Department of Economic Development in Dubai (DED) mandated to develop the SME sector, has announced the first-ever DubaiSME 100 ranking of companies in a ceremony held at the Dubai World Trade Centre. The companies that made into the first list of top 100 SMEs were honoured by His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Economic Sector Committee in Dubai, President of Dubai Civil Aviation and Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates airline and Group, at the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, His Excellency Sami Al Qamzi, Director General of DED, said, "The Government of Dubai has launched various initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and SME development under its SME 5-year plan. This commitment to promote entrepreneurship and SMEs is in the DNA of Dubai, supported and led by our socio-economic stability, openness and visionary leadership. The DubaiSME 100 initiative will serve to inspire our emerging SMEs. It will encourage them to think outside accepted parameters, push their creativity and thus achieve their goals."

He added, "I congratulate the first batch of Dubai SME 100 companies who have demonstrated the willingness and capabilities to be evaluated under the DubaiSME 100 model. They have shown commendable performance and vision for growth and development. I also commend DubaiSME for launching such an initiative to create a dynamic platform for all SMEs to come forward on their own will, participate, exchange information and share best practices. I am sure SMEs will be curious to know how their fellow-enterprises have grown and developed."

The DubaiSME 100 initiative was launched by His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktoum on 14 Mar 2011. The initiative, aimed to identify outstanding SME performance and potential, forms a critical component of the DubaiSME five-year plan approved by the Economic Sector Committee in 2009.

Abdul Baset Al Janahi, CEO of DubaiSME, said, "Dubai has been the epicentre of global business opportunities and development for decades. Many great companies and global brands have been built in Dubai over the last three decades. Indeed, their story is the story of Dubai's economic development. Moving forward, to sustain Dubai's dynamism and the can-do spirit, we need a new wave of thinking, action and energy. We need new ideas, more innovations; we need new ways of doing things; we need to take more risks, stretch ourselves, and overcome challenges. In short, we need to overcome all barriers to create new value for the economy. Dubai SME 100 is a major means to achieve this."

"By ranking and recognising the top SMEs, we are opening several fronts. These top 100 SMEs have persevered to achieve major triumphs for their business models, innovations and brands over the years. They have become successful in their own right. Dubai SME's role is to create a platform for evaluating these top SMEs. Investors, in particular will be interested to know who these promising SMEs are, and perhaps invest in them. Through Dubai SME 100, we hope to create an indirect pipeline of SMEs for a secondary SME listing market in Dubai. This will help SMEs gain additional external capital, new talents, markets and brand enhancements."

Al Janahi noted that Dubai is home to a rich diversity of companies, especially SMEs across varied sectors such as trading, services and manufacturing. "Yet we do not often hear or know who among them are the fastest growing and most talented, or what their ambitions are. These SMEs have used Dubai as a base to start their business journey, and are now flourishing," he said, adding that Dubai SME 100 will bring the spotlight on these SMEs, enabling them to accelerate growth.

The SME sector in Dubai is a major driver of the economy, accounting for 95% of the enterprises and 40% of the workforce in Dubai and contributing 42% of the annual value-add created by the emirate. Many SMEs that originated in Dubai have grown on to become global enterprises. The SME sector, in addition to being a key source of innovations, new products, services, markets and new business models, also supports a whole business ecosystem and all parts of the industry value chain making up the economy of Dubai and the UAE.

Dubai SME 100

The Dubai SME 100 ranking will act as a platform and catalyst to identify promising SMEs – to groom them to become bigger, better and sustainable enterprises; eventually graduating them to large globally-oriented companies. At its core, the ranking is aimed at:

- Celebrating Dubai's top performing SMEs
- Creating greater awareness of the importance of SME development
- Creating a national motivational psyche in the nation's social and business community
- Encouraging SME role models to share best practices.
- Marketing the capabilities of Dubai's SME's to regional and global investors





- Providing opportunities for SMEs to raise capital
- Creating a base of SMEs for a potential secondary listing of SMEs (IPO) that can attract equity capital for growth.
- Providing development path for SMEs to graduate
- Creating a culture of transparency and corporate governance.

Unlike other rankings which are based mainly or purely on financial indicators, the Dubai SME 100 ranking places a balanced emphasis on financial and non-financial dimensions that affect enterprise performance and development. The non-financial dimensions cover innovation, international orientation, human capital development and corporate excellence. The ranking will also serve as a tool for helping SMEs identify capability gaps for improvement. This is the real value add of Dubai SME 100.

The ultimate outcome will be for Dubai to have more growthoriented, innovative, capable and sustainable enterprises that can fly the UAE flag high.

The basic criterion is that the applicant must be an SME based on the official definition of Dubai's SMEs. In addition, it must have audited financial statements for at least three years, and be an independent entity registered in Dubai (under DED or the Free Zones). SMEs will be ranked only after they have submitted all relevant information voluntarily. Hence the ranking does not necessarily represent Dubai's top SMEs, but SMEs that have undergone the Dubai SME evaluation process for ranking.

Key facts and figures of the DubaiSME 100 applicants and short-listed candidates are:

- 1. A total of 1092 SMEs registered for the initiative, of which 196 SMEs applied to move on to Stage 2 of the application and evaluation process. From these 196 serious applicants, the top 100 were selected and ranked based on complete submissions of financial statements, supplemented by either a management interview or site visit to ascertain facts and evaluate the merits of each case.
- 2. Of the 100 ranked SMEs, based on Dubai's official SME definition, 15 % are classified as micro SMEs, 52% as small SMEs and 33% as medium-sized SMEs.
- 3. In terms of sectors, 62 % are from the Services, 13% are from the Manufacturing and 25% belong to the Trading Sector.
- 4. The combined turnover of the top 100 SMEs based on their latest financial records is estimated at AED 2.3 billion. Their estimate total assets are worth at AED 1.4 billion and the combined profit is AED 220 million.
- 5. Together, the top 100 SMEs in Dubai have 4,319 employees.

MICHAEL BYRNE

Here are some pictures from the event.



CEO's/MD's of the ranked companies, notice the TCSL LOGO with Ranking.



Close up of CEO's of 76 to 81







With our Air Freight manager Nachappa, The lady behind the success and our Commercial Manager Ramesh Pillai.



Nachappa(Air Frt mgr), Binesh (admin mgr) and Ramesh(Commercial Mgr)



With Strongest Support. The WIFE J



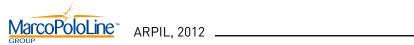
With Mr. Abdul Baset Al Janahi , CEO of Dubai SME100



With Natasha (Dubai SME100 management Team and Gay)



At the Press Interview





With Ishwar submitting these photos, it grabbed my attention and sparked my curiosity as what exactly qualifies as SME, particularly as The MarcoPoloLine Group only accepts small to medium enterprises.

So I did a little research and this is what I learned.

SME Small and medium enterprises or Small and medium sized enterprises

SMB Small and medium-sized businesses or variations thereof.

> The abbreviation 'SME' is most commonly used in the European Union and in international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, and the WTO

In most economies, smaller enterprises are much greater in number than large companies and SMEs are often said to the driving force in innovation and competitiveness.

Here below are just some examples of how an **SME** is defined or the terms used

Canada

Industry Canada define a small business as one that has fewer the 100 employees - if the business produces goods. 50 employees - if the business is service-based.

Europe

Individual countries definition of an SME varies extensively. For example traditionally the definition in Germany is a limit of 225 employees, whilst in Belgium it could be 100.

In July 2011, the European Commission have said that in 2012 they would open a consultation on the definition of SMEs.

Currently there are 3 broad parameters - micro-entities are companies up to 10 employees; small companies employ up to 50 staff, and medium sized enterprises contain up to 250 employees.

New Zealand

A SME has to be 19 people or less.

Nigeria

The Central Bank of Nigeria defines Small & Medium Enterprises on the basis of assets and number of staff employed.

South Africa

In South Africa the term is SMME for Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises. In most other parts of Africa MSME is used for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

United States

The Small Business Administration sets small business criteria based on industry, ownership structure, revenue and number of employees, which in some cases may be as high as 1500 although is typically capped at 500 employees.

Finally congratulations to Triple Crown Shipping and Logistics on their success in being ranked 79. That is a great achievement with so many companies categorized as SMEs.







































International Freight Forwarders





















































































































































































































































MERCATOR





































Next Newsletter

The next edition of the MPL NEWSLETTER will be publish in **September 2012**. Please ensure your input is received no later than July or August, or you can start sending it now!!

Kindly help us make the NEWSLETTER indispensable, with photos, views, stories and new trade information.

Please Note: We do not accept publicity material, and articles are accepted at the discretion of the Editor.

Send you input to:

sandy@marcopololine.com