SECTOR MARKET BRIEF

OCTOBER 2026 EDITION

Freight forwarders

Market indicators, potential customer segments and practical routes to new business.
Global market.



PUBLIC-SOURCE RESEARCH / EDITORIAL SERIES

A short guide to the market, potential customers and useful first conversations. Published figures retain their dates and scope.

29 OCTOBER 2026
Global market

01 / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Understand the market.
Choose a focused segment.

Freight prospecting starts with the trade lanes you can serve. Companies selling similar products can have very different cargo and shipping arrangements.

$24.43T
World merchandise trade
2024 / current USD [S01]

+2%
Value growth
World / 2024 [S01]

$3.36T
US merchandise imports
2024 / destination benchmark [S01]

01 What you can offer

Offer a transport service matched to the shipper's origin, destination and responsibilities.

02 Where to start

Choose one supported lane and cargo type.

03 What to ask

Ask about origin, destination, cargo and shipment frequency.

About this brief

Market
Global market

Data periods
Shown beside each indicator.

Purpose
Understand the context and choose a relevant customer group.

Your next step

Choose one customer group from this brief. Write down what you could offer and what you need to learn in the first conversation.

02 / MARKET INDICATORS

What the numbers tell us.

The scale of goods trade supports a separate search for cross-border buyers. Choosing a destination still requires research into buyers for your product and workable delivery terms.

World merchandise trade

2024 / current USD [S01]

$24.43T

Value growth

World / 2024 [S01]

+2%

US merchandise imports

2024 / destination benchmark [S01]

$3.36T

What these figures cover

The chart compares Chinese exports with US imports. These differently directed flows are not additive or a destination ranking. They include more than industrial goods.

Consider international customers

Foreign shippers and destination agents are distinct from domestic exporters; qualify the lane and party paying for transport.

03 / CHARTS AND MARKET REACH

Compare the figures.
Choose where to start.

The chart brings the published figures together. Below it are two ways to turn this context into a more focused customer search.

World merchandise trade benchmarks

2024, USD trillion

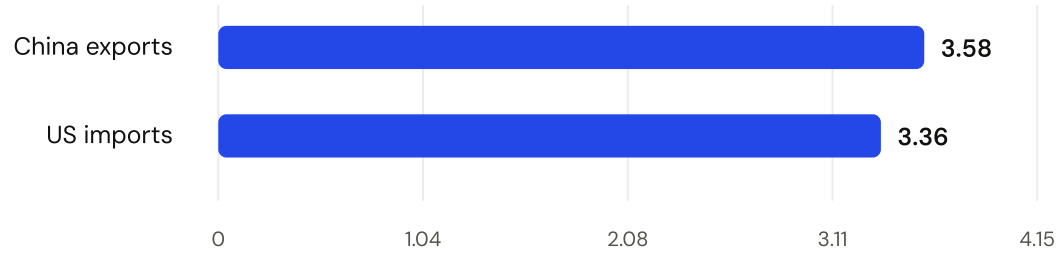


Figure 01 · Source: [S01]

01 / FIRST CUSTOMER GROUP

Start with a specific job

Choose one supported lane and cargo type. Research manufacturers and trading firms that could ship along it.

02 / INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMERS

Consider international customers

Foreign shippers and destination agents are distinct from domestic exporters; qualify the lane and party paying for transport.

The chart compares Chinese exports with US imports. These differently directed flows are not additive or a destination ranking. They include more than industrial goods.

04 / POTENTIAL CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

Find a buyer group you can serve well.

These four groups offer different starting points. Choose one that fits your experience, then use the suggested discussion topic to learn about the company's needs.

PROFILE 01
Potential buyer

Exporting manufacturers

What to discuss
Discuss export manufacturers' regular origins, cargo types and destination countries.

Who to speak with
Logistics lead or trade manager

PROFILE 02
Potential buyer

Importing wholesalers

What to discuss
Ask importing wholesalers about supply countries and the transport services they need.

Who to speak with
Logistics lead or trade manager

PROFILE 03
Potential buyer

Ecommerce brands

What to discuss
Explore ecommerce brands' shipping patterns and destinations within your coverage.

Who to speak with
Logistics lead or trade manager

PROFILE 04
Potential buyer

Project-cargo buyers

What to discuss
Clarify dimensions, weight, site access and scheduling for each project-cargo assignment.

Who to speak with
Logistics lead or trade manager

These are suggested buyer groups. Confirm the company's current needs and the right contact before preparing a proposal.

05 / SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

Turn the context into a useful conversation.

Use one of these approaches to begin a focused discussion. Learn what the customer needs before deciding whether to prepare a proposal.

01

Choose your starting point

Choose one supported lane and cargo type. Research manufacturers and trading firms that could ship along it.

Next step

Research a small group of relevant firms.

02

Define the work together

Ask about origin, destination, cargo and shipment frequency. Establish who arranges transport and who pays for it.

Next step

Write down the agreed requirements.

03

Look across borders

Foreign shippers and destination agents are distinct from domestic exporters; qualify the lane and party paying for transport.

Next step

Check how you would deliver the work.

ANIVO / PRACTICAL WORKFLOW

From research to the first conversation.

1. **Define the search.** Describe your service, target customer and market in Anivo.
2. **Review the plan.** Check the proposed research approach before starting.
3. **Assess the firms.** Review company information and save suitable firms to the CRM with your notes.
4. **Prepare your introduction.** Review the email draft before sending. Track replies and the next step in the company record.

Make the message relevant

In your introduction, explain why you are contacting this company and which part of its work you can support. Ask one clear question that can start a useful conversation.

06 / SOURCES AND NOTES

Read the original sources.

Use these links to read the original publications. The date beside each indicator is its measurement period, which may be earlier than this report.

S01 **Annual Report 2025, pp. 12–14**
WTO · 2025
www.wto.org ↗

How we prepared this brief

We selected published indicators to explain the market context. Customer groups and suggested approaches are Anivo's practical interpretation of that context.

When using the figures

Keep the stated dates and geography when sharing a figure. Wider-sector data do not measure every specialist service. Source updates may change the published values.

Choose one group. Begin one conversation.

Use the customer profiles to select a manageable starting point. Learn about the company's needs, then decide whether your service is a fit.

Related sector workflow · anivoapp.com/for/freight-forwarders/

Sources accessed 29 October 2026 · OCTOBER 2026 EDITION