

AllCovered NEWS

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HIGHLIGHTS TO HELP YOU THIS WEEK

- SALES – Cash-In By Listening
- Challenge of Enforcing Fuel Surcharges
- Security Bills Moving in Washington
- Be A Hero – Help Clients Prep for Disruptions

Monday, 8 May 2006 --- Edition #487

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DETAILED CONTENTS THIS WEEK

SMALL BUSINESS:

Cash-In By Listening
ASPs Draw Attacks
New IM Viruses

TRUCKING:

Challenge of Enforcing Fuel Surcharges
Last Week's Truck Strike: "Little Effect"
Could Rally Lead to Indy Trucker Union?

SECURITY:

US House Passes Security Bill
US Senate Panel OKs 100% Screening High-Tech Cargo Protection

OCEAN & AIR FORWARDING:

Only 33% Of Shippers Ready for Disruption
Be A Hero
FMC To Examine NVOs Closely
Air Cargo Surcharges Up Again
Micro-Jets This Year

JUST FOR FUN:

Who Knew "Bounce" Was Magic?

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<http://www.allcovered.net/AC-News-PDF.htm>

>> SMALL BUSINESS SECTION <<



SMALL BIZ – SALES – CASH IN BY LISTENING

--- Excerpted from an article by Laura Laaman – Link at end ---

Listen to customers. They will tell you how best to serve them.

You and your company can profit greatly by listening to what customers do not like, and what customers wish they had.

Success stories include overnight courier services because people wanted packages delivered faster. Digital cameras have become a way of life because we want our pictures now and don't want to wait for film development.

They are huge successes because they listened to what customers wanted.

Listening should be part of the success plan for every company and every salesperson.

One of my clients was struggling because the product it offered required some self-training on the part of its customers.

This smart company made a habit of briefly interviewing customers who opted for a refund. It discovered the training was not taking place, either because customers didn't have time or they were uncomfortable taking care of the training themselves.

After reviewing the customer interviews, I suggested the company offer the training as a service.

"Who's going to pay for that?" my client replied, assuming I was suggesting his company absorb the cost.

"Your customers."

"You really think they'll go for that?" he asked.

"There's only one way to find out."

That day, I went out and sold his first training package. The customer loved the fact that the company offered training. The company now sells millions of dollars of training each year -- all because the business owner figured out what his customers wanted.

So the next time a customer complains or wishes for a service you don't offer, don't be offended. Instead, be opportunistic and figure out how to take their wish all the way to the bank.

MORE: http://www.bizjournals.com/extraedge/consultants/sell_more/2006/04/24/column215.html?hbx=e_sol

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NEXT WEEK

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Links to source stories at end of excerpts

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SMALL BIZ – HEALTH – CONSUMER GROUPS FEAR ASP’S: Several medical advocacy groups and AARP plan to make a "lobbying push" against a bill that would allow small businesses to form association health plans under certain conditions.

MORE: www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/print_report.cfm?DR_ID=36796&dr_cat=3

SMALL BIZ – HEALTH – 39 STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL OPPOSE AHP: The Attorneys General in 39 states oppose Association Health Plans because AHPs would be regulated by Washington, not by individual states.

MORE: www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/print_report.cfm?DR_ID=36854&dr_cat=3

TECH BIZ – 3D CAD-CAM FREE FROM GOOGLE: Google has added another dimension to its application canon with Google SketchUp Beta, a powerful yet surprisingly easy-to-use 3D drawing tool that could introduce a whole generation of online users to simple CAD-like drawing.

MORE: <http://ct.eneews.pcmag.com/rd/cts?d=184-2775-4-54-205416-339209-0-0-0-1>

TECH BIZ – IM VIRUSES GROWING: Researchers are pointing to a dramatic upswing in viruses coming via AIM and other instant messaging systems, and warning users to beware.

MORE: <http://ct.eletters.whatsnewnow.com/rd/cts?d=181-652-1-278-261855-34627-0-0-0-1>

>>>> TRUCKING SECTION <<<<

TRUCKING – CHALLENGE OF ENFORCING SURCHARGES

As an independent trucker always vigilant about his razor-thin bottom line, Glen Eicher doesn't enjoy the leverage bigger haulers have in making up their soaring fuel costs through surcharges.

So with his payout for diesel fuel up about one-third over the past year, the driver from Colon, Michigan must be creative in making ends meet and milking fuel economy: He obsesses about tire pressure, religiously rotates his tires and doesn't speed. He scours online for bargains on petrol.

It affects trucking companies too... but independents find it much harder to pass along the added costs because they lack the bargaining power.

Nearly 70% of all manufactured and retail goods in the US are carried by the big rigs.

The industry burned through 44 billion gallons of fuel last year, all but 9 billion gallons of it diesel, according to the American Trucking Association, which represents 37,000 motor carriers. By ATA estimates, fuel this year will cost the industry \$94.3 billion - up \$6.7 billion from last year.

MORE: <http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/14493633.htm>

TRUCKING – MONDAY STRIKE LITTLE NATIONAL EFFECT

Demonstrations and work stoppages were supposed to bring May in like a lion, but for trucking, May 1 arrived more like a lamb.

Activities planned nationwide on May 1 to demonstrate Hispanic economic clout and protest illegal-immigrant legislation passed by the US House did little to affect trucking or any of the major US ports, said various trucking associations and port personnel.

MORE: <http://www.etrucker.com/apps/news/article.asp?id=53108>

TRUCKING – COULD RALLY LEAD TO INDY TRUCKER UNION?

For some of the thousands of truckers who normally roll through Southern California's ports, staying away from work last Monday was more than a statement about their views on US immigration policy. It was an attempt to kick-start changes in working conditions that many complain are dismal.

The port drivers... predominantly Latinos... forced a vast warehouse and distribution network and the nation's largest seaport complex to work furiously over the prior weekend to make up for deliveries that wouldn't be made Monday. They helped ensure that many businesses would close or not function as normal.

Union officials wonder if this may lead to some new push to unionize independent port

truckers, something not possible under current law.

Because most own their trucks, the drivers are classified as individual contractors and are paid per load by the trucking companies with which they do business. The truckers are barred by federal law from joining a union to set minimum rates and they can't engage in collective bargaining.

--- LESSONS FROM VANCOUVER ---

But similar restrictions on Canadian drivers didn't prevent a seven-week work stoppage in Vancouver last summer that crippled that country's busiest port.

The effect was so severe that the Canadian government waived its organizing restrictions and set its own, higher rate for hauling cargo containers. A government task force determined that the shipping industry had failed to provide truckers an adequate income. Since then, many of the drivers have joined the Canadian Auto Workers Union.

MORE: <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-truckers4may04.1.6774444.story?coll=la-headlines-business&track=crosspromo>

SECURITY FOCUS – HIGH TECH SYSTEMS PROTECT OCEAN & TRUCK CARGO: See "Security" section

TRUCKING – DIESEL UP AGAIN: The US national average retail price of a gallon of diesel increased 2 cents for the week ending May 1, to \$2.896. That is 63 cents more than in the same week of 2005. The price now has increased for five weeks in a row.

MORE: <http://www.etrucker.com/apps/news/article.asp?id=53106>

MORE: <http://www.thetrucker.com/News/Stories/2006/5/1/Dieselpriescoupbutmuchlessthanpreviousweeks.aspx>

>>>> SECURITY SECTION <<<<

SECURITY – US HOUSE PASSES PORT SECURITY BILL

The US House of Representatives passed legislation that would tighten security at US seaports, requiring more "dirty" and nuclear bomb detectors and background checks on dockside workers.

Under the measure, which was approved 421-2, the Homeland Security Department would have to put in place enough radiation monitors to scan 98% of the cargo coming into the US by the end of the next fiscal year, which is Sept. 30, 2007.

Within 90 days of enactment, the Homeland Security Department must check whether port workers with access to secure areas are illegal immigrants or on the terrorist watch list.

DHS must expand the data it puts into a computerized system used to detect suspect cargo.

The focus now moves to the US Senate which plans to consider a similar measure.

MORE: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=10000103&sid=a49MpcOZOhsg&refer=us>

SECURITY – NO 'ALL SCAN' IN HOUSE PORT SECURITY BILL: When the US House of Representatives passed the Security and Accountability for Every Port Act by an overwhelming margin, the final bill did not include a measure supported by Democrats that would have required the screening of all US-bound containers prior to loading.

MORE: <http://www.ioc.com/20060504/sections/ocean/w26296.asp>

SECURITY – US SENATE PANEL OK'S 100% SCREENING

All US-bound cargo would have to be screened overseas for dangerous materials or be turned away from American ports under a bill approved by a Senate panel that left unclear when the measure would come into force.

(The US House version of this measure does not include 100% screening – see above).

The Senate Homeland Security Committee chose not to set a deadline for the far-reaching measure after shipping industry warnings that US screening ultimatums could disrupt commerce and upset trading partners.

The Senate measure could get caught up in a jurisdictional battle between two committees.

The Senate Commerce Committee last year passed a bill on port security that calls on the government to develop standards for inspecting cargo overseas. It was unclear which measure might advance first to the Senate floor.

MORE: http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=politicsNews&storyid=2006-05-02T230231Z_01_WBTO05264_RTRUKOC_0_US-CONGRESS-PORTS.xml

SECURITY – US RETAILERS: “DON’T SCAN ALL US IMPORT CARGO’

MORE: <http://www.logisticstoday.com/displayStory.asp?sNO=7879&OASKEY=BreakingNews>

SECURITY FOCUS – HIGH TECH SYSTEMS PROTECT CARGO

How easy is it to break into an ocean container or truck trailer?

A group advocating better port security recently delivered a colorful plastic strap and a pair of child's scissors to US Rep. Dave Reichert's (R-WA) office.

The strap, which looks like a cross between a Lance Armstrong bracelet and a zip tie, is one type of device used to seal thousands of cargo containers that arrive at US seaports every day.

It is easily snipped with blunt scissors.

Replacement seals cost 18 cents apiece on the Internet.

"You can open a container, insert whatever you want and reseal it with your own little seal," says Christy Margelli, a Seattle spokeswoman for the Washington, DC-based group, Americans United.

"Because only one in 20 containers is inspected, you have pretty good odds of getting something through."

--- WHERE WE ARE ---

The debate about port security has focused mostly on container inspection. But the spotlight has largely missed one of the largest gaps in port security: Shipping containers, like truck trailers on the highway, are generally easy to open in transit, even after they are inspected.

Starbucks recently became one of a few companies using a new high-tech system that radios an alert when a container is opened. But most still use seals like the strap Margelli took to Reichert's office. Sturdier seals made with metal foil, stranded cable or steel bolts are easily cut and replaced.

What's more, port workers say seals routinely are not inspected, and the seal numbers... supposedly there to make sure the seal is not cut and replaced... are not recorded on container documents.

"Seals can look perfectly fine, and then you tug on them and they've been cut," says Andrea Stuller, who has checked containers in and out of terminals for 15 years as a Longshore union clerk. She also is an elected union official in Seattle.

Longshore clerks used to walk around containers, touching seals, opening empty containers, checking doors and locks. But the arrival of video technology means clerks now sit in gate houses inspecting through TV monitors. They don't touch the seals at all.

A recent Homeland Security study found that "containers are vulnerable to intrusion during the ocean voyage" by crew members with little identification or vetting.

Industry experts say security is even more lax as containers are trucked from a foreign factory to a foreign port. A truck driver can be bribed to let a container be opened. Or it can be tampered with during a rest stop.

--- HIGH TECH SOLUTIONS ---

Starbucks in March said it would install a system that records when the container is opened. The information is transmitted to a central monitoring station via an encrypted Bluetooth link each time the container passes a reading point, allowing Starbucks to track the progress of containers and know if they've been violated.

While ports themselves are usually fenced and guarded, the stretches between factory and ship are not. "That's the piece of the supply chain that people are worried about."

--- US TESTS THIS YEAR ---

The US government will test equipment for its Secure Freight Initiative later this year that will place a black box inside each container as Starbucks does now.

The SFI test box will record intrusions into containers, temperature, test the atmosphere of containers, and, if the technology is ready, may also be able to be checked 24/7 throughout the transit.

--- TRUCKING INDUSTRY EYES 'BLACK BOX' ---

The day may not be far off when trucking companies begin to use similar technology to monitor trailers 24/7 in real time for intrusions and tampering as a means of preventing cargo theft.

MORE: http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/business/technology/2002965796_containers02.html

SECURITY – LOCKHEED MARTIN BUYS SAVI: Defense contractor Lockheed will buy Savi

Technology, maker of RFID tag and security systems.
MORE: <http://asp.arcweb.com/community/indnews/display.asp?id=7882>

>>> AIR & OCEAN SECTION <<<

TRADE – ONLY 33% OF COMPANIES READY FOR DISRUPTION

--- Be a Hero – Help Your Clients Prepare ---
--- Are You Prepared? ---

"Retail and transport companies that rely heavily on the physical movement of goods are on the first line of fire," says Mark Hillman of AMR Research.

Pandemic influenza like Bird Flu could shut down the flow of goods and services from US businesses to customers. Yet, few companies are prepared for such a major supply chain disruption.

If the global flu epidemic hits, only 33% of the companies surveyed acknowledge they are prepared to keep supply chains moving, says the AMR Research study.

"Let's say China seals off its ports for two weeks because of a huge outbreak," says Hillman. "These companies need to have alternate sources of supply, or build some form of redundancy into inventory levels they can rely on in case supplies dry up for two weeks."

--- SO WHAT? ---

How will you or your clients function if most employees cannot come to work?

Companies should plan how to continue operations if up to 40% of employees are absent. In the event of a pandemic, customers and employees won't commute into offices. They'll work and buy from home. As more people remain home, phones and the Internet will become critical business tools. It will require increased capacity to handle complaints, help desks and product information, and dispatch service personnel.

Cross-Train employees so your can keep your doors open.

--- QUESTION ---

How can you help clients prepare for a slowdown or shutdown in shipments?

This will show you are planning for the possible future to make sure your clients are better served than your competitors' clients.

MORE: <http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.ihtml;jsessionid=ST42FROAAWJZUQSNDBGCKH0CJUMEKJVN?articleID=187002975&subSection=>

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TRADE – IMMIGRANT RALLY MAY LEAD TO TRUCKER UNION: See "Trucking" section

TRADE – HIGH TECH SYSTEMS PROTECT CARGO: See "Security" section

TRADE – FMC TO EXAMINE NVOCC'S CLOSELY: The FMC will be focusing more on NVOCC licensing and bonding. "I feel confident in predicting that, in the future, NVOCCs in particular, but also the shippers that use their services, and the ocean carriers who contract to carry their cargo, will find it increasingly important to be certain that full compliance is achieved in the Commission's licensing and bonding requirements for NVOCCs and freight forwarders," says Federal Maritime Commission Chairman Steven Blust.

MORE: <http://www.joc.com/20060501/sections/ocean/w25504.asp>

TRADE – EFFECT OF SO-CAL PORTS TRUCKERS STRIKE MONDAY: Hundreds of harbor truck drivers refused to report to work Monday, bringing gate activities at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach almost to a halt. The drivers, mostly Latinos, joined a national protest against immigration reform legislation now before Congress. However, the drivers also took the opportunity to protest low pay and working conditions in the harbor, issues they have

been emphasizing in demonstrations for the past several years.

SEE ALSO – “Trucking” section

MORE: <http://www.joc.com/20060501/sections/logis/w80953.asp>

TRADE – TRUCKING BACK TO NORMAL IN SO-CAL PORTS: Truck traffic at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach returned to normal Tuesday following a massive defection Monday by drivers who participated in demonstrations to oppose immigration legislation now before Congress.

MORE: <http://www.joc.com/20060502/sections/logis/w29111.asp>

TRADE – MACQUARIE MAY BID FOR PATRICK: Macquarie Bank said Friday that it might lead a bid for Patrick, Australia's largest shipping-cargo handler, that would top Toll Holdings' 6.1 billion Australian dollar offer for the company

MORE: <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2006/05/05/business/patrick.php>

AIR – LH-CARGO HIKES SURCHARGE AGAIN: Lufthansa Cargo raised its fuel surcharge to €0.60 (\$0.76) per kg. from €0.55 effective May 15.

AIR – CARGOLUX HIKES SURCHARGE: Cargolux will raise for the second time in two weeks its fuel surcharge to 0.60 euros (76 cents) per kilogram effective May 18.

MORE: http://www.americanshipper.com/SNW_story.asp?news=32284

AIR – IATA: “LOSS FOR AIRLINES THIS YEAR”: The International Air Transport Association (IATA) says surging oil prices, which are driving up costs for carriers, have been partially offset by cost-cutting but its forecasts for the industry's 2006 earnings were under threat. “We are forecasting a loss of \$2.2bn this year with a full year average price of \$57 per barrel for Brent ... this could easily change,” says IATA chief executive Giovanni Bisignani.

MORE: http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=84163&version=1&template_id=48&parent_id=28

AIR – US AIR CARGO TRAFFIC JUMPS: Cargo traffic on US airlines increased 6% in March to 2.357 billion ton miles. The increase in traffic was nearly three times as rapid as the 2.1% growth in February. Growth for the first quarter was 3.2% according to the Air Transport Association.

MORE: http://www.aircargoworld.com/break_news/05022006b.htm

AIR – CATHAY LAUNCHING NEW INDIA SERVICE: In a bid to tap India's growing foreign trade, Cathay Pacific is launching a new cargo freighter service connecting Mumbai and Chennai. Originating from Hong Kong, the new service would connect Mumbai and then fly onward to Chennai before returning to Hong Kong.

MORE: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1511765.cms>

AIR – UNITED TO MERGE AIRPORT & CARGO OPS: United Airlines says it will consolidate its airport operations and cargo divisions into one unit, saying the move will “further streamline United's operations, drive efficiencies and produce additional cost savings.”

MORE: <http://www.startribune.com/535/story/409515.html>

AIR – UNITED CARGO UP: United Airlines reports a 10.9% increase in cargo volume for April. Year to Date United's cargo ton-miles are up by 3.9%.

MORE: http://www.americanshipper.com/SNW_story.asp?news=32282

AIR – NWA PILOTS OK DEAL: Northwest Airlines pilots ratified the Restructuring Tentative Agreement reached with the carrier in March by a 63.4% to 36.6% margin.

MORE: <http://www.atwonline.com/news/story.html?storyID=4955>

MORE: <http://news.airwise.com/story/view/1146699546.html>

AIR – UNITED TO MERGE AIRPORT & CARGO OPS: United Airlines says it will consolidate its airport operations and cargo divisions into one unit, saying the move will “further streamline United's operations, drive efficiencies and produce additional cost savings.”

MORE: <http://www.startribune.com/535/story/409515.html>

AIR – KAL OPTIONS TWO MORE FREIGHTERS: Korean Air has exercised options for two freighter conversion kits from its 2004 order to convert up to 20 747-400 passenger planes into freighters.

MORE: http://www.americanshipper.com/SNW_story.asp?news=32283

AIR - EU-US OPEN SKIES DEAL STALLED:

MORE: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/05/02/business/skies.php>

AIR – MICRO-JETS THIS YEAR

Tiny passenger jets will begin flying later this year which will open up travel and expedited cargo shipping opportunities at small airports.

In its annual forecast the US Federal Aviation Administration projected sharply higher levels of flights because of a new class of small planes, called very light jets, or micro-jets, with only six to eight seats. The planes fly about two-thirds as fast as an airliner, at higher altitudes, but land easily on short runways found at small airports that have no scheduled airline service.

Certification of the first is expected before July. 100 of the micro-jets should be airborne by the end of 2006 with more than 1,600 forecast to be in service within 5 years. Micro-jets have a range of 1,000 miles, or 1,600 kilometers, and cost between \$1.5-million and \$2.25-million... roughly half the cost of today's business jet.

--- SO WHAT ---

Large and experienced players in the traditional aviation industry like former American Airlines CEO Robert Crandall are creating companies based on micro-jets.

For moving freight, micro-jets will allow faster service from smaller airports closer to manufacturing sites to small airports nearer end-users of expedited goods.

MORE: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/03/01/business/jets.php>

OCEAN – PIRATE ATTACKS UP: Pirate attacks worldwide during the first quarter of 2006 increased 8.9% compared with the same period 2005, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) of the International Chamber of Commerce reports.

MORE: http://www.americanshipper.com/SNW_story.asp?news=32212

OCEAN – ZIM ADDS US-INDIA SERVICE: Zim will begin a new weekly, all-water direct India Express service through the Suez Canal to US East Coast ports beginning 24 May.

MORE: <http://www.joc.com/lede/20060504/sections/ocean/w35740.asp>

OCEAN – EXPANSION PLANS FOR UK PORTS: Hutchison Whampoa, the Hong Kong listed company that owns the ports at Felixstowe and Harwich, recently received conditional approval for developments that will more than double capacity to 7m containers a year. Once the new wharves are operational, Felixstowe and Harwich should together comprise Europe's fourth-biggest container port.

MORE: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2095-2157662,00.html>

>>>>> JUST FOR FUN <<<<<

(These are shared by readers – Please share yours. Thanks. Mike)



WHO KNEW?

A sheet of Bounce fabric softener is apparently magical stuff. All this time you've just been putting Bounce in the dryer! It will chase ants away when you lay a sheet near them. It also repels mice

- A mail carrier says the US Postal service sent out a Message to all letter carriers to put a sheet of Bounce in their uniform Pockets to keep yellow-jackets away. The yellow jackets just veer around you.
- Spread sheets around foundation areas, or in trailers, or cars. It keeps mice from entering your vehicle.
- It takes the odor out of books and photo albums that don't get opened too often.

- It repels mosquitoes. Tie a sheet of Bounce through a belt loop when outdoors during mosquito season.
- Eliminate static electricity from your television (or computer) Screen.
- Since Bounce is designed to help eliminate static cling, wipe your television screen with a used sheet of Bounce to keep dust from resettling.
- Dissolve soap scum from shower doors. Clean with a sheet of Bounce.
- To freshen the air in your home - Place an individual sheet of Bounce in a drawer or hang in the closet.
- Put Bounce sheet in vacuum cleaner.
- Prevent thread from tangling. Run a threaded needle through a Sheet of Bounce before beginning to sew.
- Prevent musty suitcases. Place an individual sheet of Bounce inside empty luggage before storing.
- To freshen the air in your car - Place a sheet of Bounce under the front seat.
- Clean baked-on foods from a cooking pan. Put a sheet in a pan, fill with water, let sit overnight, and sponge clean. The anti-static agent apparently weakens the bond between the food and the pan.
- Eliminate odors in wastebaskets. Place a sheet of Bounce at the bottom of the wastebasket.
- Collect cat hair. Rubbing the area with a sheet of Bounce will magnetically attract all the loose hairs.
- Eliminate static electricity from Venetian blinds. Wipe the blinds with a sheet of Bounce to prevent dust from resettling.
- Wipe up sawdust from drilling or sand papering. A used sheet of Bounce will collect sawdust like a tack cloth.
- Eliminate odors in dirty laundry. Place an individual sheet of Bounce at the bottom of a laundry bag or hamper.
- Deodorize shoes or sneakers. Place a sheet of Bounce in your shoes or sneakers overnight.
- Golfers put a Bounce sheet in their back pocket to keep the bees away.
- Put a Bounce sheet in your sleeping bag and tent before folding and storing them. It will keep them smelling fresh.

If you have curious, interesting, funny or thoughtful items to share in "Just For Fun", Email them to mike.miller@allcovered.net. Thanks.

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Journal of Commerce = http://www.joc.com	Traffic World = http://www.trafficworld.com

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