



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING:  
A CASE STUDY ON CENTRAL  
FORWARDING AGENCY SDN. BHD.**

**Lim Kar Yeow**

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Master of Business Administration

Dissertation

By

Lim Kar Yeow  
(Matrix No: 45155)

Supervised by:

Dr. Zainal Abidin Mohamed



# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## **PART 1: CASE TEXT**

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>CFA SDN BHD: BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COMPANY BACKGROUND</b>	<b>3</b>
Nature of the Logistic Industry	3
<b>COMPANY STRUCTURE</b>	<b>5</b>
Import Department	6
Export Department	8
Account Department	8
Marketing and Human Resource Departments	9
<b>THE FUTURE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>13</b>
TABLE 1: DETAIL PROCESS CHART OF IMPORT PROCESS OF CFA	13
TABLE 2: Description of Symbols for Table 1	16
TABLE 3: DETAIL PROCESS CHART OF EXPORT PROCESS OF CFA	17
TABLE 4: Description of Symbols for Table 3	19
TABLE 5: DETAIL PROCESS CHART OF BILLING PROCESS OF CFA	20
TABLE 6: Description of Symbols for Table 5	21

## PART 2: CASE ANALYSIS

<b>CASE ANALYSIS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PROBLEM IDENTIFICATIONS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>APPROACH TO ANALYSIS: BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>MISSION STATEMENT</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Threats</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>S.P.A.C.E. ANALYSIS</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>ANALYSIS FINDING</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>PROCESS DEFINITION</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Process Objective</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Process Mapping</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>PROCESS ANALYSIS</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Process Defect Analysis</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Priority Analysis</b>	<b>49</b>
Completeness	51
Timeliness	52
<b>Root cause of the Problems Analysis</b>	<b>53</b>



<b>PROCESS IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>The Reengineers</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>The Company's Scenario</b>	<b>58</b>
Commitment from Top Management	58
Mission and Objective	59
<b>Aligning the People</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>REENGINEERING THE PROCESS</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Information Systems Approach to the Reengineering</b>	<b>64</b>
The Import Process	67
The Export Process	68
The Billing Process	69
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>71</b>



## **LIST OF DIAGRAMS**

Diagram 1(a): Process Mapping of Import Process, CFA	37
Diagram 1(b): Table of Work Processes of Import Process Map	38
Diagram 2(a): Process Mapping of Export Process, CFA	41
Diagram 2(b): Table of Work Processes from Export Process Map	42
Diagram 3(a): Process Mapping of Billing Process, CFA	45
Diagram 3(b): Table of Work Processes for Billing Process Map	46
Diagram 4: Customer Importance/Performance Matrix	50

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Process Defect Analysis of Import Process in CFA	48
Table 2: Process Defect Analysis of Export Process in CFA	48
Table 3: Process Defect Analysis of Billing Process in CFA	49



## **LIST OF APPENDIX**

<b>Newspaper Articles</b>	<b>A1</b>
<b>CFA Import's White Statement Control Sheet</b>	<b>A6</b>
<b>Import Bill of Lading</b>	<b>A7</b>
<b>Import Invoice</b>	<b>A8</b>
<b>Import Delivery Note</b>	<b>A9</b>
<b>Import EDI Declaration Status</b>	<b>A10</b>
<b>Declaration of Goods Imported – Custom No 1 (K 1)</b>	<b>A11</b>
<b>CFA Export's White Statement Control Sheet</b>	<b>A14</b>
<b>Container Movement Order (CMO)</b>	<b>A15</b>
<b>Customer's Shipping Advice</b>	<b>A16</b>
<b>Customer's Shipping Instruction</b>	<b>A17</b>
<b>Export Invoice</b>	<b>A18</b>
<b>Declaration of Goods to be Exported – Custom No 2 (K 2)</b>	<b>A19</b>
<b>Copy of Export Bill of Lading</b>	<b>A20</b>

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# CASE TEXT

# **CFA SDN BHD: BUSINESS PROCESS REENGINEERING**

## **Introduction**

On the Saturday afternoon of August 16, 1997, like most Saturdays, Jimmy was quite busy attending to clients or some visitors meeting him at his office, but today, the meetings ended earlier than normal Saturdays. He looked out from his office's door and saw Yong, the General Manager, was still around at his desk clearing some paper-works. He decided to walk to Yong's desk, and sat right in front of Yong.

Yong looked up at Jimmy and asked, *"Good afternoon, boss. Is there anything you want to discuss with me?"*

*"Nothing in particular. My meetings today just ended earlier than usual, and I saw you are still here in the office, and that is why I have decided to drop-by to chat with you."* Jimmy replied.

*"Yong, are you busy right now, or maybe we could talk on some other days"* Jimmy asked again.

*"No, boss. I am okay today afternoon. My wife has taken care of the children's activities today, and I have told them that this afternoon is my off-day, but however, I have promised to bring them for a movie tonight"* replied Yong. *"Any problems, boss,"* asked Yong.

*"Not really, I am just thinking of the current and future prospect of this company. You know, my father and the late Uncle Goh had built-up this company from scratch, and we have grown to be one of the largest forwarding agent in Port Klang. My father is not in his best health, and he is now semi-retired. He has given me the authority to*



*run this company and I am having a big burden to shoulder these responsibilities”*  
Jimmy was explaining to Yong.

*“Boss, don’t worry so much. There shouldn’t be much problem. You have a lot of capable staffs with you in most of the departments. They have been with this company many years, and they are all very loyal and capable.”* Yong replied.

*“Moreover, you have done a good job for more than five years now. Your father has been semi-retired for more than five years now, and under your management, the financial standing is also still strong. You know, what! Look at this!”* Yong was opening his file to show Jimmy the financial record for CFA. *“Look here, net profit margin last year was at 20.6%, compared to 18.2% at 1995, ROE was 13.7% for last year, compared to 10.7% for 1995. Quick ratio was good at 1.03, better than the industry standards at less than 1. Moreover, our financial leverage is normally low, at 30%. Don’t worry, I believe that we will do well this year too. The present data from Accounts is showing that we are doing better than last year, during the same period,”* Yong added.

*“No. I am not so worried about all this financial performance. I am more interested in how to improve our present operating system, viewing the explosion of IT and also the Internet. I wonder how we could implement IT to improve our customers’ satisfaction and our internal company’s performance, in terms of communication between our own staffs and also customers. Customers have been complaining that it is very difficult to inquire their shipment details when the person-in-charge is not available.”* Jimmy said.

*“Moreover, miscommunication between our staffs from different departments happened quite frequently. This is not good for the company.”* Jimmy added.

## **Company Background**

Central Forwarding Agency Sdn Bhd, or better known as CFA in the Port Klang community, was one of the pioneers amongst the locally owned forwarding agency in Port Klang. CFA was founded in the 1960's by two Chinese partners. A forwarding agency was a firm that acted as an agent for an importer or exporter in dealing with the government agencies pertaining to the rules and requirements of the imports and exports trade, or in some countries they were also known as the Custom's agent. A senior executive, Mr. Phoa, described that CFA had grown from a small Chinese partnership to be one of reputable forwarding agency in Port Klang, over the thirty over years of history. As a result of forward integration, CFA had evolved from a custom's agent in import and export, to also venture into related industry in the logistic area, such as transportation, warehousing and distribution. Presently, CFA had one of the largest warehousing spaces in Port Klang, explained Mr. Phoa. Its transport fleets were all equipped with mobile radio in order to maintain constant communications with transport supervisors at the office

## **Nature of the Logistic Industry**

Yong explained in detail the logistic industry. He started off by saying that competition in this industry, on one hand can be considered as high, but on the other hand was mild in nature, as most of the forwarding agents had a fixed client base. The clients did not normally switch forwarding agent frequently, unless they were really discontented with their agent. The reasons being the rates in the industry were quite standardized, and forwarding agents normally compete in terms of services and

facilities that they had. Appointment of forwarding agent did require a register with the Royal Malaysian Customs, and clients had to re-register with Customs when they switched forwarding agent. Most of the clients did not want to go through the hassle of having to register frequently. Most of the larger forwarding agencies had the advantage as they were able to provide a more complete logistic requirements like transportation fleets, warehousing facilities, and also distribution services.

CFA had their own warehousing facilities, transportation fleets and also the ability to provide distribution services for their clients. Even though they had all the facilities, they were not competing aggressively with their present position in the logistic industry. They did not have a strategic plan, and their usual plan was usually based on the “*wait and see*” method, explained by Yong.

Over the years in the business, according to the Royal Malaysian Custom in Port Klang, CFA was the first to use computer for Customs’ declaration, but however, the same computer system was out-dated and yet they were still using them. Many of the import and export information and also other activities were all recorded manually. CFA had always able to comply with the governmental policies in Customs regulations. As the government had introduced EDI for its customs/finance requirement, the CFA’s system was incompatible with it. However, CFA had purchased some stand-alone PCs for EDI declaration, but these were not linked to their main system for accounting purposes. The purpose of EDI was to enable the forwarding agents to submit customs declaration electronically, and also for electronic fund transfer (EFT) for duty payments.

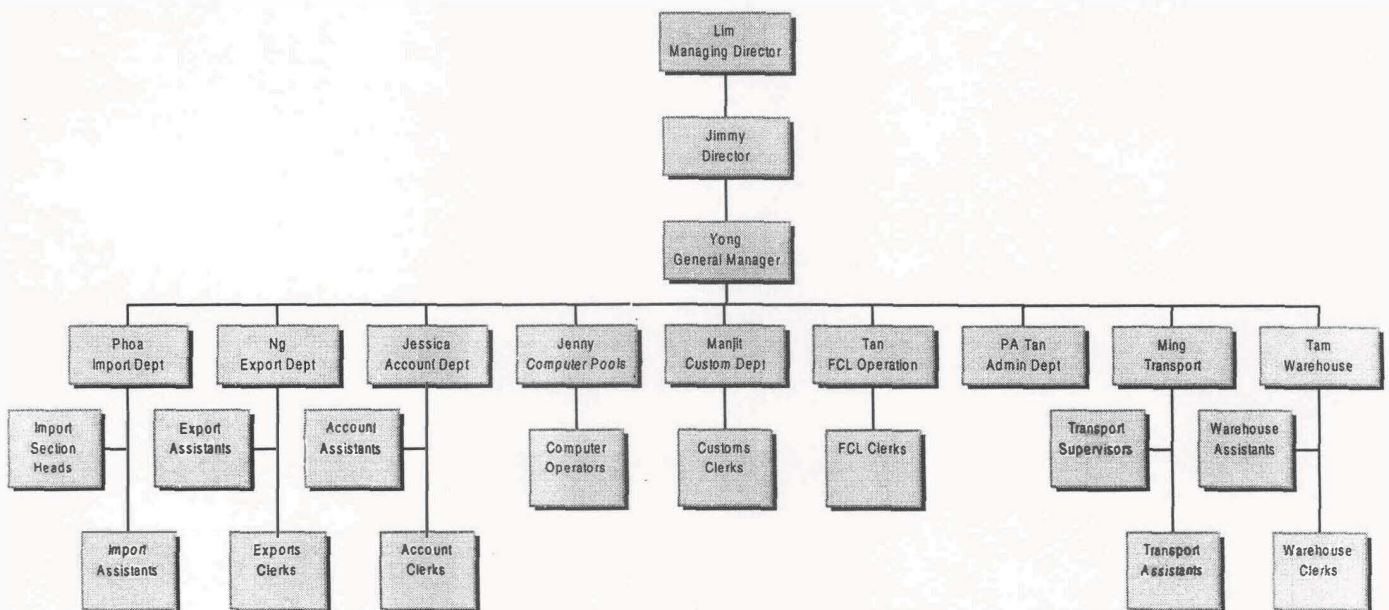
With the opening of a new port at West Port, Pulau Indah, and various new commercial free zones in Port Klang’s 40km radius, there was opportunity for

expansion, and at the same times challenges due to the increase in operating costs by some 30%. The country was industrializing and manufacturing sectors were expanding. Many of the major manufacturers would normally let their logistic requirements to be handled by third party logistic providers. Therefore, the expected demand in the logistic sector would be expected to grow, as the country was able to maintain an average growth of 7 to 8 percent annually.

## Company Structure

CFA had an organization structure as shown in the following chart.

CFA ORGANIZATION CHART



Mr. Lim was still the managing director of CFA, even though he was semi-retired. He had handed-over the operational aspects of the company to his son, Jimmy, and he had limited himself in dealing with only major investments or developments of CFA. Jimmy graduated from England in business administration in the mid 80s. After graduation, he joined CFA soon after he returned from England. Since then, he had been in all the departments to understand the functions of each of the departments. Since 1990, Mr. Lim had slowly passed over the duties to Jimmy, and Jimmy was mostly on his own since 1991, when his father's fell ill. The person that was helping and assisting him the most was Yong.

Yong was with CFA for more than twenty years now. He first joined CFA as an import assistant, and he had worked hard to achieve his present position. He had vast experience from his years with CFA and was very loyal to Mr. Lim and Jimmy, as they had helped him a lot in the past, said one employee Presently, Yong was the general manager, and basically, all the departments in CFA were answerable to Yong.

“The two main departments in a forwarding industry would be the import and export departments. The rest of the departments were somehow related in servicing the requirements of the import and export departments, with the exception of accounts department,” Yong explained.

### **Import Department**

Phoa headed the import department. He had been with CFA for more than twenty-five years, and was also an assistant to Yong. The majority of CFA's business was dealing with imports. The department, being the largest was divided into five sections, and each section gave services only to their respective clients. This structure was setup to



provide better service to the clients by specialization. The sections had no overlapping of responsibilities, and each section would only know its own customers' needs, even though the import process for each of the sections were identical. The setup had sometimes upset some clients when their respective personnel were not around, and no one else was able to assist them. Phoa would be the one that the client would complain to when these events happened. Phoa would then go to the respective section to retrieve manually from the record-book for whatever information that the client wanted. These could sometimes be very time-consuming.

The main function of the import department would be clearing the shipping documents as required by the import regulations from the Royal Malaysian Customs. The clearance was inclusive of paper clearance and also duty payment, if the imported goods were taxable. The client was mainly interested in getting the cargo in time, in order to minimize or eliminate any cargo demurrage or detention charges for delays, and the import duty was paid, and declared accurately based on the tariff code. Inaccurate declaration maybe viewed as evading import duty, and it was an offense. "The major obstacle at this moment was the Customs clearance procedure using EDI, where the clearance could take more than a week to clear a paper. The normal clearance time was four days from the day of submission," according to Phoa.

Once the customs requirement was cleared, the next activity would be requesting the container haulier to move the containers from the port to the warehouse, in order for the client to receive their consignment. This process would normally take two days after the customs clearance.



### **Export Department**

Ng headed the export department. He had been with the company for slightly less than twenty-years. The department was divided into East Malaysia's exports and foreign exports. There were two export assistants with Ng, one each from the two divisions.

The export process was quite similar to the import process, except the export was delivering cargo out to the port and subsequently loaded onto a vessel for exports by sea. The export declaration to Customs was also done through EDI, similar to the import, except the exports normally were not dutiable. The processing time through EDI was faster than imports, where processing time could be done within one day.

For exports, the containers were allowed to be in the port area, without additional charges, seven days prior to shipment date. Therefore, the haulier time for container movement could be better planned, unlike the imports. Normally, the containers had to be in the port first, prior to Custom declaration and approval.

The export activities were expected to grow by 30%, as encouraged by the government for exporters to use Port Klang, instead of Singapore.

### **Account Department**

Jessica was the head for this department. Like most companies, the account department would be looking into the financial well being of the company. The main function of this department in a forwarding agency was to update the advance duty payment by the client, authorization of duty payment prior to the Electronic Fund



Transfer (EFT) process for duty payment to Customs. The other important function would be the billing process for the completed consignment based on the white statement control sheet. This was where the department billed the agency fees and all the charges pertaining to the consignment for the client.

George, a client of the import department had complained to Phoa that the invoice for his consignment by CFA had taken more than fourteen days to bill. George had said to Phoa that he needed the charges incurred for the consignment, in order for his costing and pricing of his new product in the market. George was not alone in these delays in billing, and quite a number of clients had complaint about the delays in billing. The present average billing date was 10 days after completion of the consignment.

The account department at times was insensitive to the client's requirement, and some clients had even said that the account personnel had been rude to the client, and they could care less of customer services, complained one of the customer.

If the trends were to go on, it was bad for the company's image and would have affect financially.

### **Marketing and Human Resource Departments**

There was no specifically a human resource department in CFA, and Ms. Tan was basically looking after the administration department, and including some functions of human resources. "The junior staffs turnover was very high, around 30% over the past few years. The warehouse department was facing shortage of laborers for the bulk cargo production, and situations were forecasted to get worst. Maybe that was because



the country was facing full employment, and staffs were very picky. Our nature of jobs required long hours and pay was not that attractive,” Ms. Tan explained.

The departmental heads were also the marketing personnel for the company. There was no marketing department in CFA, and according to Yong, he was also the *unofficial* marketing manager, and all his managers were his marketers.

## **The Future**

Jimmy was committed to improve the whole operating system of the present company by the turn of this century. He would like the current operating procedures to be redesigned to be more customer-focus, and implement a new information system for the company. He was even thinking of having a web page on the Internet. Jimmy was speaking to Yong again.

*“Yong, you have been in this company much longer than me. Tell me honestly. Do you like our present system of doing things? I could see that most of the procedures are all being built up over the years that we have been in business, and some could be obsolete.”*

Jimmy added *“You know, once Ms Tan of Admin had even asked me if it is necessary to print more of some forms, where she said that the import department does not even know the function of the form. She was saying that they just fill in the form as they were told to.”*



Yong replied, *“Boss, this will be a massive exercise if you want to redesign the process and reorganize the whole thing in the company. It will take a long time.”*

Jimmy continued, *“Well, I think it is about time that I do something to improve our process in order to be more customer-focus, and in this MSC / IT era, our documents and data processing are still not fully computerized. Wah, what a pity! I did not practise what I have learnt from business school. Maybe I should polish back my skills and knowledge”*

*“A friend of mine just graduated with MBA, and he was telling me about strategic management and also business process reengineering, or better known as BPR. I think that the ideas are great and I think I would like to implement them for this company. But however, I would like to hear your opinion about this.”* Jimmy said.

*“Boss, you know that I am not as knowledgeable as you in these kind of jazz. What are strategic what, and also the what engineering? Do we need engineering for this? But anyway, say what you like, I would support what ever you do, provided that you give me the right direction.”* Replied Yong.

*“Well, my friend was saying that the BPR is the hottest management buzzwords in the 90s, and BPR generally involves a radical redesigning of business procedures, that the improvement in performance in terms of service, speed, quality and cost will be fantastic. I will get some write-up for you to understand the concept.”* Jimmy said.

Yong nodded his head and said, *“OK, I am eager to see what is the... what again?”*

Jimmy smiled, *“Don't worry, you will get to know BPR. later on. I better try to call my friend now, to see if he could assist me in this project. I would really want to do some thing good for improving the image and quality for this company. Starting with*

*the structure, vision and mission statement and etc. I think this have to be done before the next management meeting in 2 weeks time. ”*

*“Okay, Yong. I think I have taken enough of your time and I have to get to the friend of mine now, and thanks for everything. I really appreciate it.”* Jimmy said to Yong, as he left Yong’s desk.

*“Jimmy, no problem. What ever you do, I will back you up 100%. Let me know when you have something from your friend, and what are your strategic plans later on. Well, have a nice weekend.”* Yong replied to Jimmy, as he walked back to his room.

## **APPENDIX**

**TABLE 1: DETAIL PROCESS CHART OF IMPORT PROCESS OF CFA**

no	STEPS / TASKS / ACTIVITIES	V	NV	TR	CK	D	Time	WHO
1	Customer send in the shipping document, i.e. import invoice, bill of lading and packing list for his consignment.	1						CUST
2	Receive the shipping document.					25	25	ADC
3	Hand-over the shipping document to the Import Section Head			5			5	ADC
4	Check the shipping document for any mistakes or discrepancy.				5		5	ISH
5	Hand-over shipping document to the Import Assistant for further processing			5			5	ISH
6	Import Assistant receives the document and calls the shipping agent for the consignment details.		10				10	IA
7	Picks up the White Statement and types in the import consignment details on a manual typewriter, and also types in the consignment details onto the Integrated Import Document (IID)		30				30	IA
8	Types the payment voucher for the relevant consignment charges for the shipping agent.		5				5	IA
9	Attached B/L together with the payment voucher and place them onto the dispatch tray.		2				2	IA
10	Attached invoice to the White Statement and hand-over to the Import Section Head			3			3	IA
11	Receive the voucher and send to the account department for approval.			10			10	OB
12	Account Officer approves the voucher for payment, and sends back to office boy for preparing cheque.		5				5	AO
13	Send the payment voucher and B/L to Cheque Issuance Officer for issuing of cheque.		5				5	OB
14	Waits for cheque.					10	10	OB
15	Takes the cheque together with the voucher for authorized signatories.			5			5	OB
16	Waits for signatures from authorized personnel.					5	5	OB
17	Attached cheque, B/L and IID together and also attached the voucher to the White Statement.		5				5	OB
18	Proceed to the shipping agent to hand-over the B/L in exchange for a delivery order (D/O) and return back to office.			60			60	OB



19	Collects the D/O and hand-over to the Import Section Head.		5				5	OB
20	Receives D/O and fill in the import tariff code on the invoice, and hand-over the invoice, D/O and White Statement to the Computer Pool.		5				5	ISH
21	Receives the White Statement and number the statement with a controlled number. Enter the data from the shipping document for EDI/SMK declaration.		30				30	CP
22	Prints out a draft copy of declaration and hand-over to the Import Section Head.		10				10	CP
23	Checks for declaration's accuracy and hand-over to the computer pool				5		5	ISH
24	Transmit the consignment to EDI/SMK for import declaration. Record down onto the White Statement for time etc.		30				30	CP
25	Checks for transmission status. If not OK then wait					30	30	EDI
26	Status OK, prints out Custom form K1 and attached all documents together. Hand-over to Import Section Head and also record down in White Statement.		10				10	CP
27	Prepare letter for advising customer for the advance payment for shipping charges and duty payable. Fax letter to customer.		10				10	ISH
28	Compile all the documents in the following order: SET A : K1, Invoice, Packing List, D/O SET B : White Statement (3 copies) B1 : 1 copy + SET A to Custom Dept B2 : 1 copy to FCL Operation Dept B3 : 1 copy to Account Dept.		10				10	ISH
29	Records in Import Register logbook.		5				5	ISH
30	Distribute all sets of documents into the respective trays.			5			5	ISH
31	Custom boys receive SET A from tray					60	60	CB
32	Travels to WISMA KASTAM to submit SET A for import clearance.			30			30	CB
33	Checks for Import Paper clearance. If not cleared, then WAIT					2880	2880	MK
34	If cleared, pick up the SET A and return document back to office for computer pool.			30			30	CB
35	Prepares for Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) for duty payment.		30				30	CP
36	Prints out a copy of EFT and hand-over to account department for payment approval.		15				15	CP
37	Checks for payment/advance received from customer.				30		30	AO
38	If OK, approve for duty payment and hand-over approval to computer pool.		5				5	AO



39	Transmit instruction to bank to initiate EFT for duty payment to Royal Malaysian Custom.		5				5	CP
40	Wait for EDI's respond.					300	300	EDI
41	Status OK, print out acknowledgment and attached with SET A, and place into the Custom tray.		10				10	CP
42	Receives SET A and travels to WISMA KASTAM to submit for printing receipt.			30			30	CB
43	Wait for KASTAM to print duty receipt on K1 and endorsement on K1 and D/O by Kastam Officer.					240	240	MK
44	If OK, then hand-over the endorsed SET A to FCL Operation boy.			10			10	CB
45	FCL Operation boy prepares consignment note.		10				10	FB
46	Travels to get shipping agent to prepare Container Movement Order (CMO)			30			30	FB
47	Received endorsed SET A from Custom boy, and attached the document to the CMO. Then goes to the Port.			20			20	FB
48	Submit CMO with Set A to the Port in return for a Port's gate pass.					60	60	FB
49	Attached a copy of K1 to the gate pass and CMO and go to the Haulier's office to submit request for getting the containers to the customer's place.			10			10	FB
50	Waits for Haulier to move the consignment as per the CMO					2880	2880	HL
51	Customer receives the consignment.	30					30	CUST
52	Place the original document of SET A in tray in Operation FCL department					2880	2880	FB
53	Go to the port to check for any incidental charges pertaining to the import consignment, e.g. storage charges				30		30	FB
54	Attached bills, if any, to SET A, and return the SET A to Account Department for billing to customer.		30				30	FB
55	Receive SET A from FCL boys		5				5	AO
	<b>Total Steps</b>	2	24	14	4	11	55	
	<b>Total Time Taken</b>	30	287	253	70	9370	10010	





**TABLE 2: Description of Symbols for Table 1**

Symbols	DESCRIPTIONS
V	Value added activities to the customer
NV	Non-value added activities to the customers
T	Transport: movement of people, material, document, transmission of information
I	Inspection: checking for quality or accuracy or sign-off
D	Delay
Time	Total duration of activities in minutes
WHO	Person responsible for the activities
ADC	Administration Clerk
IA	Import Assistant
CP	Computer Pool (Computer Operators)
OB	Office Boy (internal distribution of documents)
DB	Dispatch Boy (external: distribution of documents to customers)
CB	Customs Boy (CFA personnel dealing with Customs matters)
FB	FCL Operation Boy (personnel dealing with Containers Hauliers)
AO	Accounts Officer
ISH	Import Section Head
MK	Kastam DiRaja Malaysia (Royal Malaysian Customs)
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange (M) Sdn Bhd
HL	Containers Haulier
CUST	Customer