The Business of Commerce in the CNMI

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Here in the CNMI, there is a limited variety of resources, however, that is not a problem when there is commerce. Saipan Marine Corporation handles the commerce and transportation of goods and passengers which is why some people claim it to be one of the most important businesses in the CNMI. Resources that are not available in the CNMI are transported by various ships like container ships, tanker ships, and car carriers. A convenient way of transporting goods because of how small the islands are. Passenger ships like cruise ships or small boats are also a part of commerce. Many people know how important commerce is, but most people probably do not know how it is operated, how it helps other businesses in the CNMI and the difficulty in that line of business where ships transport goods and passengers to the seaports of the CNMI.

The islands of the CNMI that have seaports are Rota, Tinian, and Saipan. This is where the ships dock to load and unload cargo or passengers. The ships that are stationed out beyond the barrier reef have people on them. Those people would sometimes come to the islands by crew boats which are small passenger boats that transport the people from those ships to the island. There are also other passenger boats that transport both locals and tourists to and from Managaha. Container ships that dock at the seaport load and unload containers that get transferred to where they need to go.

Without the business of commerce, the CNMI would probably have little to no cars. Car companies rely on car carriers that deliver motor vehicles from off-island. If Atkins Kroll, for example, puts out an advertisement on the radio about cars being on sale it is most likely due to the shipment of new motor vehicles. So the company would have to make more room in their inventory for the new arrival. Shipment of motor vehicles is vital to car companies in Saipan because the ones provided take people to where they need to go whether it be to school, home, or work.

Take McDonald’s as an example. It is a well-known food chain everywhere. This fast-food restaurant chain gets the supplies it needs like pre-cooked chicken nuggets and burgers as well as the toys and boxes for the Happy Kid’s Meal through shipments. These are transported from the containers on the container ship to the dock and finally to McDonald’s storage by vehicle. The same goes for other businesses, not just restaurants.

The casino, Best Sunshine, that is being built on Saipan by many construction workers, also get their materials from off-island. All the parts that go into making the casino like the window frames for the building and the steel bars for the structure of the building come from the container ships. The tools that are used to build the casino like welding tools, cement, hammers, etc. are also come through shipment. If these shipments are not able to come in, the process of building would be halted. This applies to other businesses that rely on shipment delivery.

Now one of the downsides to this business are events that are uncontrollable. When there are natural disasters, like the previous typhoon Soudelor, ships are not able to come into the seaport to load and unload cargo or passengers. Debris could be floating around causing channel obstruction. In order for the people on the ship and the cargo to be safe, the captain would have to navigate to another area that is safer and away from the storm. The seaport and its operations would have to be shut down. This affects the economy and community severely because of the resources that are limited on the islands.

Commerce is a business that deals with the transportation of goods and passengers. There are different ships for different purposes. Container ships carry cargo that the people of the CNMI need and resources that are unavailable in the CNMI. Passenger boats transport people to and from places. When natural disasters are on the way or have already passed, the slowing down of the economy is to be expected. People that know the importance of commerce should also know the difficulty of working in this type of business and how it helps other businesses.

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