

# TRADE OBSERVER

*The official CustomsBridge monthly update*

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Birth Certificate

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Photo from Luke Besley, Unsplash



# SETTING AN IDEA IN MOTION

**Ideas spark every second everywhere. How to filter between the good ones and the bad ones, how to make sure you are not the only one to think it's great, what are the steps toward making it real?**

At CustomsBridge, it all started three months ago with a simple idea : **"What if we could use new technologies to improve customs crossing?"** Out of this very broad question, the first step has been to ensure there was a problem to solve, and that it could be solved with technologies.

A long series of phone calls then started, sometimes followed by physical meetings where we have mainly been asking questions, and listening.

What are the people working in customs department doing all day? What does their typical working day looks like? How do they feel about it? Do they think something is not right? Why is this taking so much time? Why do you feel stress? You get it, the goal was to become those persons. Understand how they feel, what makes them tick, what are the bottlenecks they face. The key: *Listening*

You can then quite feel if there is something to be done, a burden to solve or not. If not, don't persist. Making "Nice" things can work, but chances of success are even lower.

You must then analyse the market, see if there is room for you, aim for the market fit, refine your idea again and again, challenge it before the maximum possible number of people. Don't be afraid to talk about it. No one is going to steal it, and it will bring you valuable inputs and contacts. For CustomsBridge, it has been done in Canada.

You can then call again your first contacts, explain them what you intend to do. if they are receptive, it's time to start building it!

If not, try again!

## WHAT TO EXPECT

This is the very first issue of the Trade Observer, a bilingual monthly paper issued by CustomsBridge focusing on:

- Our company and how it is evolving
- Entrepreneurial challenges
- Technological progress in the customs and the supply chain sectors
- Regulatory updates

It is aimed to be shared across the investors of CustomsBridge, partners, clients and all interested parties.

## CANADA BUSINESS TRIP FEEDBACK

CustomsBridge has been present in November at WesleyClover boot camp. 50+ workshops on topics such as governance, marketing, communication, investment strategies, market fit... helped us refine and shape our value proposition:

**"We classify your products for no-hassle border crossing"**

## A GROWING TEAM



**Loïc Poisot**

Business Developer, Engineer  
Joined Sept 2019



**Hamza Saouli**

Data Scientist  
Joined Oct 2019

## ACHIEVEMENTS

We have not been at rest since the Mid-September when we started working on the CustomsBridge idea. As explained before, we went through all the necessary steps to challenge and refine the idea, until we knew we had something:

**Classify products crossing customs with certainty in a few seconds and in compliance with regulations.**

You will find on the right side a list of the events we attended over the last months where we shared our ideas, asked for feedback, made contacts.

The last one especially, the 15th European customs conference from ODASCE was the perfect event to meet experts from the area.

We have also been busy selecting mentors to help us succeed, stay focused and avoid the common pitfalls:

- *Jean Sliwa* is a retired senior executive of the French customs administration and author of several books in this area. We will appreciate his in-depth knowledge and contacts in the customs field.

- *Philippe Duflos* is a former executive of international transport and logistics groups, currently in active retirement. During his time there, he has met many clients from different sectors and has a broad understanding of all the issues they face in their supply chain.

On the technical side, we have also made some progress: even though the User Interface is not defined yet we already started on the Artificial Intelligence engine which will be the core of our solution but also our biggest challenge. We started collecting data from different sources such as EBTI and TARIC. We've also started to clean, process and translate this data.

## ROADMAP

In the next days, the first thing we will be focusing on will be putting in place a project management methodology. We will go agile with Scrum and already started creating work packages, estimating them, and putting in place a plan. We hope to have a first internal working prototype in April, in order to share it with partners in June.

As the topic is really challenging on the Artificial Intelligence side, we will also explore the possibility to build a research team in partnership with different universities. Due to the origin of the founders and geographic position of Alacrité, we will get in touch with universities in Algeria, Lille, Canada and western Switzerland.

The plan for early 2020 will be to focus on the product, go technical, deliver what we promised.

Stay tuned for the next issue, and happy end of year celebrations.

• Key events •

**4 Oct, Paris**  
2nd meeting AI & Supply Chain

**23 Oct, Lille**  
4th HumAIIn conference: AI & Retail

**28 Oct- 22 Nov, Canada**  
WesleyClover boot camp

**27-28 Nov, Lille**  
15th European customs conference ODASCE