

Container xChange Forecaster

March 2025



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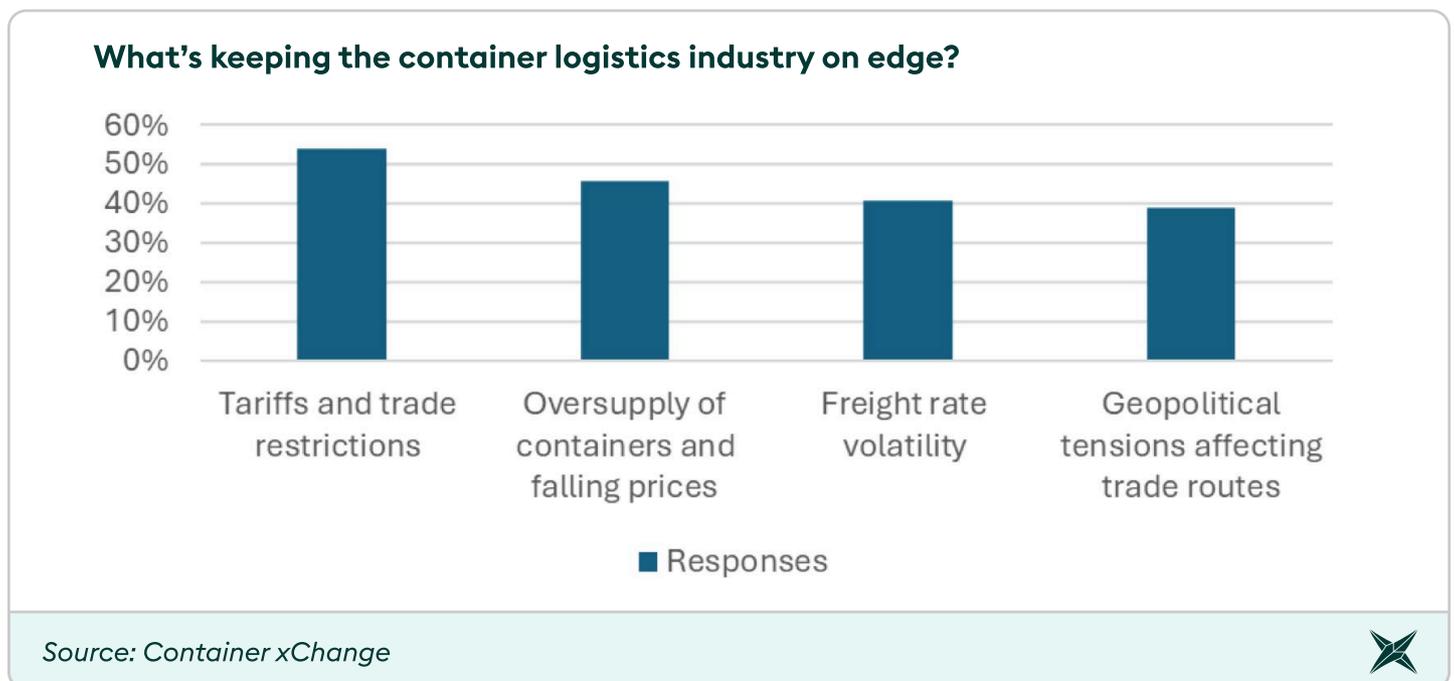
Avoid locking into long term commitments: experts warn container logistics businesses

With escalating tariff wars, freight rate instability, and an impending oversupply of containers that could push prices down, companies are finding it increasingly difficult to make clear decisions. The key challenge? Understanding how these disruptions (both individually and collectively) will impact freight rates, container availability, pricing, and ultimately, their profits.

In response to these market shifts, Container xChange hosted an [interactive webinar & workshop](#), bringing together key industry leaders and container logistics businesses to decode the impact of tariffs, trade disruptions, and emerging opportunities in container shipping. A key takeaway? The sheer volume of challenges causing uncertainty is overwhelming, and understanding the implications of each factor requires both time and strategic intelligence.

In this month's forecaster, we bring to you the key insights that were discussed during our webinar and also exclusive opinions and forecasts about container prices, demand outlook and supply estimates.

Container xChange industry poll conducted during the webinar revealed



Avoid long term commitments

With shifting regulations and unpredictable tariffs, long-term contracts could lock businesses into unfavorable conditions if policies change unexpectedly. Trade dynamics are changing overnight, and companies that commit too early may find themselves at a disadvantage if new routes, suppliers, or cost structures emerge.

On these lines, **Peter Sand, Chief Analyst, Xeneta** shared during the webinar, "Uncertainty is toxic for trade, and businesses today are overwhelmed by shifting regulations, unpredictable tariffs, and constantly changing trade dynamics. The best advice? Stay calm, keep your options open, and avoid locking into long-term commitments without a clear upside. The rules of global trade seem to change overnight, making flexibility and real-time insights more critical than ever. Instead of reacting to trade obstacles, businesses should focus on data-driven decision-making, risk management, and adaptable logistics strategies to navigate an increasingly volatile market."

Tariffs are reshaping trade routes & supply chains

The U.S. tariffs on Chinese imports and shipbuilding fees are already forcing supply chain realignment strategies, leading to increased cargo re-routing efforts and long-term demand shifts.

"The uncertainty around tariffs is creating ripple effects across the entire container logistics ecosystem. We're already seeing enhanced efforts to reroute cargo through alternative markets like the Middle East, Indian Subcontinent, and Southeast Asia."

— *Amanda Marr, CEO of Hysun Containers*

The group agreed that as businesses look for alternatives, demand for containers is rising in Southeast Asia and Latin America, where new Non-Vessel Operating Common Carrier (NVOCC) services are being established.

"Smaller and more agile players have an opportunity to gain market share as trade routes diversify", suggested Andrea Monti, CEO, Sogese

Freight rates & capacity under pressure

The impact of tariffs on freight rates remains a major industry concern. Experts predict that tariffs will primarily be passed on to end consumers, contributing to inflation, while short-term rate volatility and capacity fluctuations could create additional instability in the market.

"Long-term contract rates for trade lanes from China and the Far East to the U.S. East and West Coasts have been declining for the past four months. While rates remain significantly higher than pre-Red Sea crisis levels, we're seeing a clear trend—shippers and forwarders are signing contracts at lower levels compared to the peak in Q3 last year." Shared Peter Sand during the webinar.



On the container xChange platform, while average prices for 40 ft high cube cargo worthy containers have increased in Europe, Central and Southeast Asia, LatAm west and Southern Africa; these prices have generally declined across North America, Middle East & ISC, Northeast Asia, and East Africa (see chart below for a detailed view)

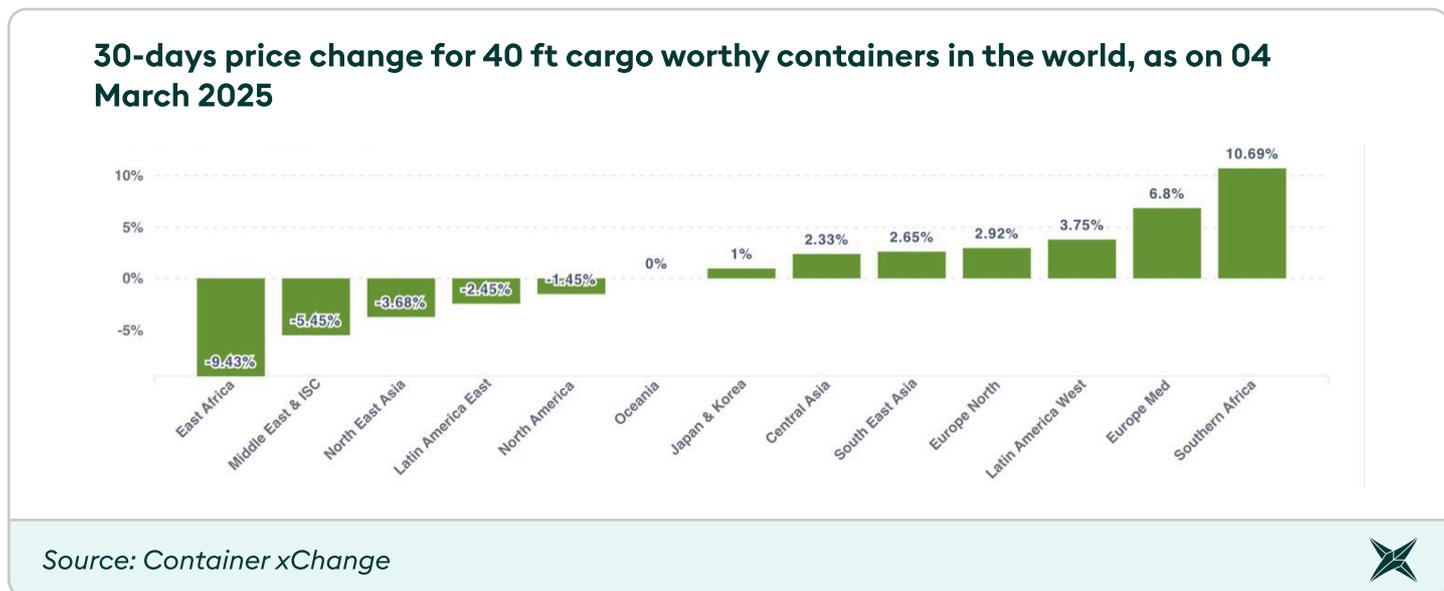


Figure 1: 30-days price change for 40 ft cargo worthy containers in the world, as on 04 March 2025

The U.S. Trade Representative's proposal to impose port entry fees of up to \$1.5 million on Chinese-built vessels is set to impact major global carriers, as at least 20% of the top six carriers' active fleets are built in China, with 40% of their order books tied to Chinese shipyards. This move is expected to disrupt global shipping operations and increase costs for carriers operating in U.S. waters.

"The U.S. Trade Representative's proposal will have a far-reaching impact, as every top six carrier in the world has at least 20% of its active fleet built in China—and 40% of its order book tied to Chinese shipyards. This isn't just a hit to individual carriers; it's a challenge to globalization and free competition. Now, more than ever, businesses must base their decisions on real insights, not speculation." Shared **Peter Sand, Chief Analyst, Xeneta.**

Meanwhile, ongoing Red Sea disruptions continue to keep the container logistics businesses guessing for capacity and rates development.

If the red sea passage proves safe again (and carriers need high certainty here to reshuffle their networks), we can expect a domino effect, with one carrier's return prompting others to follow suit rapidly.

"The opening of red sea will lead to a drop in container prices and freight rates and a massive surge in container availability, putting pressure on NVOCC operators in that region." Shared Roeloffs.

Oversupply of containers: A double-edged sword

A Container xChange poll found that 46% of industry professionals are concerned about oversupply, with container prices expected to decline as capacity outpaces demand.

"As supply continues to rise while cargo demand softens, downward pressure on prices is becoming a major challenge. Freight rate instability could further increase financial risks for smaller operators. However, shifting trade patterns are also creating new container leasing opportunities, particularly in Southeast Asia and Latin America, where demand is rising amid evolving global supply chains." **shared Christian Roeloffs, Co-Founder & CEO, Container xChange.**

"If the U.S. engages in another tariff war with the EU, we can expect an immediate impact on Transatlantic trade, with demand falling in both directions and freight rates likely dropping. However, China-Europe trade should see minimal knock-on effects, as the product mix differs significantly between these routes. Meanwhile, the Far East-to-U.S. East and West Coast trade lanes have already been on a downward trend since October 2024, signalling broader shifts in global shipping demand", **inferred Peter Sand, Chief Analyst, Xeneta.**

The role of trust & verified networks

With traditional supply chains facing heightened volatility, building trusted partnerships with a more diversified supplier mix has become more critical than ever.

"The industry is moving away from purely transactional relationships. The focus is now on deeper due diligence, understanding financial stability, and ensuring operational resilience," said Andrea.

Businesses are increasingly leveraging digital tools and performance-tracked networks to verify partner credibility and assess market conditions in real time.

"In uncertain times, making data-driven decisions is non-negotiable. Companies that monitor container performance, partner reliability, and shifting trade flows will be the ones to stay ahead," added Roeloffs.

Key strategies to prepare for high tides

Industry leaders emphasized four key strategies for businesses to remain resilient:

- Stay flexible – Avoid long-term commitments unless the upside is significant.
- Strengthen partner verification – Work with reliable, performance-tracked logistics providers.
- Monitor supply chain shifts closely – Geopolitical events, tariffs, and alliance reshuffles will dictate trade flows.
- Leverage digital platforms – Use data analytics to assess container availability and market trends in real time.



"The companies that will thrive in 2025 are those that prioritize partner diversification, adaptability, trust, and data-backed decision-making." shared Roeloffs.

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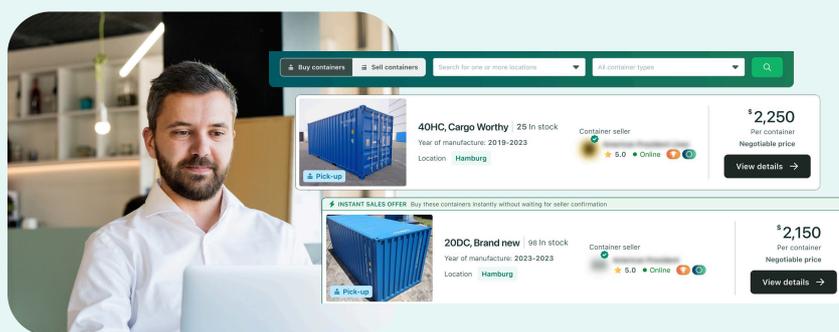
As trade disruptions continue in real time, businesses must remain agile, build trusted partnerships, and adopt a data-driven approach. Container xChange is taking a major step in this direction by opening access to its Container Network—for free!

- Discover thousands of verified container businesses worldwide
- Connect, build relationships, and expand your trusted network
- Access key market insights to stay ahead of shifting trade patterns

Join now and start building your trusted network today!

About Container xChange

With a mission to simplify the logistics of global trade, Container xChange is a leading digital marketplace for container trading and leasing, revolutionizing the container logistics industry. Container xChange connects a global network of container traders, leasing companies, shipping companies, freight forwarders, and container owners and users. The platform provides comprehensive solutions for container leasing, trading, and management, leveraging real-time data and advanced analytics to streamline operations associated with moving containers globally. With a focus on enhancing efficiency and transparency, Container xChange helps businesses navigate the complexities of the global supply chain, reduce costs, and optimize container utilization. Committed to driving innovation and sustainability in container logistics, Container xChange empowers industry stakeholders to adapt and thrive in a rapidly evolving and volatile container shipping market.



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