



# Get Picked First

## 9 Tips on Becoming a Shipper of Choice

When freight capacity is tight, shipping carriers can be selective about who they do business with.

Follow our guide of best practices and expectations so your freight shipments don't get left behind.





For more than a decade, the freight shipping industry has been in a capacity crunch, and the past year has only worsened it. This crisis has given carriers the upper hand to choose the shippers they work with and turn down any who don't live up to their standards.

Using their own “shipper of choice” checklist, carriers set the rules while companies scramble to meet them. Any shipper with a less-than-pristine reputation will have a tough time moving their freight.



**This guide will detail what a carrier looks for in a shipping customer and what companies can do during this freight capacity crunch to get on the good list.**

## **Tip 1** Commit to a Mutually Beneficial Shipping Partnership

### **CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: An active history and profitable freight loads**

When rating shippers, carriers consider the history they have with existing customers. The ones with a good shipping reputation who have longevity might rank better than those that are new, or those that come and go. Carriers expect to make a profit, and any shipper who carrier-hops risks getting turned away — especially when capacity is tight. How much business the shipper brings in adds weight, too, and how easy or difficult the load is to move.

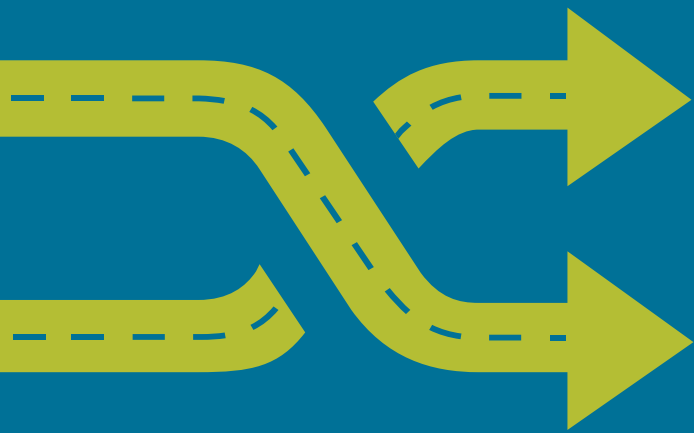
### **SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Share new shipping opportunities**

Try to maintain a consistent portfolio of business with a carrier you like to work with. Whenever possible, build rapport by bringing in new opportunities from your growing business. A quarterly meeting to review performance and discuss new service and options can go a long way.

### **Consider the challenge before making a change**

Being committed to a good carrier-shipper partnership can get you great service, but it might also mean paying higher prices. If you're tempted to carrier-hop, know that changing carriers during this capacity crunch can be costly — and finding ones to move your freight can be a challenge.





## Tip 2 Keep an Open Line of Communication

### **CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: Mutual exchange of shipping information**

A solid communication between you, the driver and the carrier can help build trusting and respectful partnerships. A disconnect can create inefficiencies, higher costs, and refused service.

### **SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Be attentive and conduct two-way check-ins**

Respond to driver's and carrier's questions, requests or complaints quickly and respectfully, and keep the carriers abreast of solutions or updates. When delays happen that are beyond the responsibility of the carrier or driver, be understanding and willing to compromise.

Keep in mind communication goes both ways. In a healthy business relationship, it's important to share your issues and concerns with your carrier. For instance, if a driver is causing delays at the dock, discuss strategies that can help reduce costs instead of raising rates. And if a claim dispute arises, having a trusting relationship and a solid foundation will help keep the discussion on track and respectful.

## Tip 3 Enable Carriers' Decisions With Good Shipping Data

### **CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: Accurate shipping data for better analysis**

Some carriers use algorithms from shipping data to predict a customer's ranking. They might consider a shipper's payment history, make sure their loads are profitable, measure dwell times and compare delivery requirements. All this data can work for or against a business. It puts the onus on the shipper to shed bad behavior and become quality customers and business partners.

### **SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Use high-performing TMS technology**

Technology saves time by automating and streamlining the information exchange. To be favorably considered by carriers, shippers should use a transportation management system (TMS) to provide an efficient and accurate transfer of data, and an electronic billing program to ensure on-time payments.

### **Make sure you've got the details right**

Whether you use the latest technology or a handwritten bill of lading, it's essential to provide accurate details about your freight, including its correct weight and dimensions, the proper classification code, and specific delivery dates to help with route planning.





**Tip 4**

## Pay Freight Shipping Fees on Time and in Full

### **CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: Prompt shipping payments**

Shipping carriers are in the business to make a profit. If you consistently short-pay your invoices or pay late, it's likely your carriers will drop you — and they could be reluctant to give you a second chance.

### **SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Follow protocol for responsible accounting**

Make your payments early or on time. You might even commit to shorter terms so carriers can get paid faster. Setting up an automatic debit program can help you avoid late or missed payments.

This isn't to say you should pay your invoice without reviewing it — you also want to make a profit and not overpay for your shipment. If you dispute an invoice or have a claim that needs settling, make the payment and let the carrier know your plan to research the issue. You can request a credit if your dispute is validated.

**Tip 5**

## Avoid Last-minute Shipping Changes

### **CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: Efficient and timely shipping schedules**

Truck drivers are mandated by how much time they spend on the road, but a shipper's delivery schedule and dock hours can slow them down. Any last-minute changes from shippers can throw a wrench in their plans. Timing and scheduling issues like these can make carriers reevaluate a shipper's ranking.

### **SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Be dependable and accommodating to truck drivers**

Let your carrier know when the freight will be ready for pickup and coordinate when the recipient will be at the drop-off site. A standard schedule can help with recurring shipments. Also, last-minute changes should be an occasional — not habitual — occurrence.

### **Keep your freight dock accessible**

If it's possible to keep the dock open in the evenings and weekends, that flexibility can help drivers meet their deadlines — and help you be a choice shipper! Just be sure the carrier will waive after-hours accessorial fees if you're staying open for them.

## Tip 6 Minimize Dwell Time at the Loading Dock

### CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: Quick turnaround

For truck drivers and carriers, time is literally money. Dwell time in shipping is considered the most expensive sore spot. The longer a driver waits at a dock for a shipment, the less time they have on the road and the less money they can make. Carriers must explain missed or delayed shipments to their other LTL freight customers.

### SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Be ready for the pickup

Here's how to help keep everything moving on time:



Prepare your cargo and properly mark and label each pallet.



Accurately complete your paperwork and have it handy to give to the driver.



Schedule trained dock employees for the pickup window, and make sure they're at their posts when the truck arrives.



Ready any loading/unloading equipment at the dock before the truck pulls up.



Post directional signs in your lot for the driver.



Plan for enough time between incoming and outgoing trucks to avoid lot congestions.

If any delays spring up or a bottleneck happens, tell the carrier and driver right away.

### Tell carriers what your shipment requires

Identify equipment needs, such as a liftgate, to your carrier when scheduling a pickup. If you don't and the driver can't handle your shipment, the carrier may need to reschedule the pickup and the delivery might be delayed. That's time wasted for the carrier, driver, you and your customer.

## Tip 7 Provide a Driver-friendly Environment

### CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: A professional and courteous climate

Drivers spend long hours on the road. When it's time for a mandated rest, truck parking can be difficult to locate and not always available — even more so this year with public rest areas shuttered during the pandemic. Carriers appreciate when shippers can make drivers' job less stressful and more accommodating.

### SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Be considerate and gracious

Extending hospitality to drivers will make you look good to carriers and might bump you up in their shipper of choice list. Make restrooms and a breakroom available where drivers can complete paperwork, stretch out and revitalize. Free coffee and snacks would be a welcome touch.

### Set aside a quiet place for drivers to rest

If your building is far from designated truck parking, consider giving drivers access to a lighted area in your company lot where they can rest in their sleeper berth. This small offering could save the driver from having to go off route in search of a place — and it could help keep your freight shipments on schedule.

## Tip 8 Properly Secure Pallets for Freight Shipping

### CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: Attention to detail

Freight that's incorrectly packaged and palletized can make loading and unloading difficult. While the truck is in motion, pallets that are stacked unevenly or improperly secured can damage your goods and the goods of other customers' less-than-truckload (LTL) shipments in the cargo space.

### SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Comply with packing guidelines

There are certain recommendations on how to prepare your freight for safe shipping. Following those guides will help you make a good impression on drivers and eliminate frustration at the docks and on the road.



## Tip 9 Use a Third-party Logistics Provider for Strong Carrier Connections

### **CARRIERS' EXPECTATION: Solid backing from a reputable 3PL provider**

Carriers that align with third-party logistics (3PL) providers understand the benefits of being collaborative. They count on them to bring in business from small and mid-sized companies. Plus, well-established 3PLs can provide data to help carriers make better-informed decisions. In turn, carriers are willing to negotiate pricing and service options with 3PLs who pass those benefits onto their customers. It's a three-way-win situation.

### **SHIPPERS' SOLUTION: Partner with Worldwide Express for expert 3PL consulting**

Having a relationship with a leading 3PL provider makes it easier for carriers to work with you. And that's a prime way to get on their shipper of choice list! When you partner with Worldwide Express, you can count on these benefits, and more:



One-to-one guidance from one of our local shipping consultants.



Optimized shipping operations and high-performing technology.



Easy access to our network of more than 85,000 truckload and 75-plus top-tier LTL carriers.



Negotiated pricing from carriers we've vetted to help ensure performance and reliability.



## Become a Shipper of Choice With Help From Worldwide Express

When capacity is tight and carriers have the upper hand, they can walk away from a shipper without so much as a backwards glance. Find the help you need to get on their good list with Worldwide Express.

**Get a consultation today.**



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