



Your Guide to SMB Shipping Success

Managing your company's shipping logistics can be confusing. But for small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs), the shipping process can get even more complicated.

While you may only ship a small but steady stream of packages most of the year, like many SMBs, you'll likely experience times of higher volume. And if your business starts to grow, so will your shipping needs! But what happens when your business needs more resources than you have on staff?

Read on as we outline some of the top struggles for SMB shippers and give you tips for navigating the highs and lows of the shipping process — and every challenge in between.



Materials

You take the utmost care in selecting raw materials for your products. But are you taking that same care when selecting your shipping materials?

If your shipment isn't packaged properly, it could be more susceptible to damage in-transit. Not only does the right packaging help prevent damage, but it can also help control your shipping costs — so make sure you're choosing purposeful packaging!

Tips for selecting the right shipping materials:



Buy New Packaging

While you may be tempted to cut costs by reusing materials, your shipment will be less susceptible to damage if you use new, heavy duty or corrugated cardboard boxes.



Use Carrier-specific Packaging

For small package goods, try to use packaging provided by the carrier. Whether you ship through USPS, FedEx or UPS®, the carrier has packaging made specifically for each service type.



Wrap Your Freight

Poorly wrapped pallets are another common cause of loss or damage in transit. Two to three complete wraps around each pallet should secure your load and ensure a smooth delivery.



Avoid String and Paper Overwrap

Avoid packaging your products with anything that could get stuck in the carrier's sorting machines or conveyer belts. Not only could this damage your package, but you could also be charged with an additional fee!



Consider Your Goods

Depending what you ship, some products — such as fragile or perishable items — require specific packaging to stay safe in transit. Make sure to do your research before buying shipping materials!

Between managing your product's inbound shipments, selecting the right packaging materials for your product and actually getting your goods on the truck, things can get complicated fast! That's where a third-party logistics (3PL) company can help — they can assist in managing all the important details of your supply chain to ensure your fulfilled packages get out on time. **Find out if partnering with a 3PL is the right move for your business.**

Cost

One of the biggest pain points for SMB shippers is the cost of transporting their goods from point A to point B. Could you be saving money on your business shipping?

Access to affordable shipping rates is one of the most important factors of any shipping logistics strategy. In order to potentially lower your shipping costs, it's important to first understand how shipping rates are actually calculated. Rates are typically determined by four main factors:

1 Service Type

In general, the faster you need your shipment delivered, the higher your shipping cost will be. You will also pay extra for specialty services like refrigerated freight or hazmat shipping.

2 Package Measurements

Carriers have different restrictions on shipment dimensions and weight, however, large and heavy packages will typically cost more than small, light shipments. Enter the correct weight and dimensions when booking your shipment to ensure your quote is accurate.

3 Destination

Your shipping rate will also depend on the distance between the shipper and receiver addresses. The farther your shipment has to travel, the higher your rate will be.

4 Shipping Volume

Many carriers offer volume-based negotiated rates for those with high shipping volumes. While many SMBs can't access these high-volume discounts, you can still enjoy this benefit by partnering with a 3PL.



Could a 3PL help you save?

If you struggle to find affordable rates for your business shipping, it may be time to consider a 3PL. A 3PL can leverage the combined shipping volume of their customers to obtain the most competitive small package and freight shipping rates — and can then pass those savings on to SMB customers like you! This helps you receive lower rates for your business shipping, while still providing you with easy access to a full range of top, national, regional and local carriers.

Other Helpful Tips For Cutting Shipping Costs

Be Aware of Shipping Fees

By understanding and planning for extra services that could result in accessorial fees, you can avoid unexpected charges on your final bill.

[Learn how to avoid five of the most common freight shipping fees.](#)

Choose the Right Service Type

With so many options, it's important to make sure you're not paying for services you don't need! Learn more about your [freight](#) and [small package](#) shipping options — and which service type is right for your business.

Invest in Insurance

Since carrier limits of liability often do not cover the full value of your shipment, it might be worth considering shipping insurance. [Learn more about the difference between limits of liability and insurance.](#)

Time

Let's face it: keeping up with your business shipping can be challenging. And while managing your own shipping logistics gives you the benefit of greater control, this control can come at a steep price — your time.

For most SMBs, every second counts. That's why efficiency is such a crucial part of any SMB's shipping strategy. Are you wasting unnecessary time on your business shipping? Consider some of these time-saving tips for SMB shippers:



Utilize E-commerce Integrations

There are countless online tools and resources to help integrate your shipping with your e-commerce website. Integrations can simplify previously time-consuming tasks by automatically printing shipping labels after an order has been placed, keeping track of your inventory, and much more.



Schedule Carrier Pickups

While it may save you some cash, making regular trips to the nearest dropbox or post office can be time consuming. By scheduling your packages for daily pickup, you can save yourself some time and enjoy the predictability of a consistent shipping schedule.



Consider Your Fulfillment Window

To increase your efficiency, designate a time of day to manage and fulfill all orders at once — and establish a “cut-off time” for orders that are placed too late to ship out the same day. Not only will this save you time, but by clearly communicating this fulfillment window, you can keep your customers informed and improve their overall experience.

Don't have the time to dedicate to managing your shipping logistics? A 3PL could be the perfect solution for your business! By partnering with a 3PL, you get access to a number of time-saving benefits:

Proactive Support

By working with a 3PL, you get access to a whole team of shipping experts who are standing by to help with any of your shipping needs.

Industry Expertise

3PLs stay informed on industry best practices so you don't have to. That means you can rest easy knowing your logistics are being handled by professionals.

Streamlined Billing

By implementing a strong reference number system and taking advantage of customizable invoices, you can easily cost allocate your shipments when it comes time to do your monthly billing.

Technology



If you don't have the proper shipping technology, it can lead to increased costs and inefficiencies for your business. But for many SMBs, committing to an integrated shipping system may be too big of an investment.

Having access to comprehensive shipping technology can make all the difference for your business shipping. Even if you can't justify the expense of a customized solution, most 3PLs have their own proprietary transportation management system (TMS) that is typically free for customers to use.

A good TMS helps you seamlessly and efficiently manage your company's transportation processes from one online platform. With a TMS you can:

Instantly Compare Costs and Delivery Options

A TMS eliminates the need for time-consuming rate checking, giving you access to a large and carefully vetted network of small package and freight carriers — all from the same easy-to-use platform.

Prepare Documentation

Quickly prepare documentation, such as bills of lading (BOLs), customs paperwork and packing lists with the help of a TMS.

Create and Review Shipping Reports

With at-the-ready reports, you'll be able to gauge your business performance and identify opportunities to maximize your margins.

Integrate with Your E-commerce Website

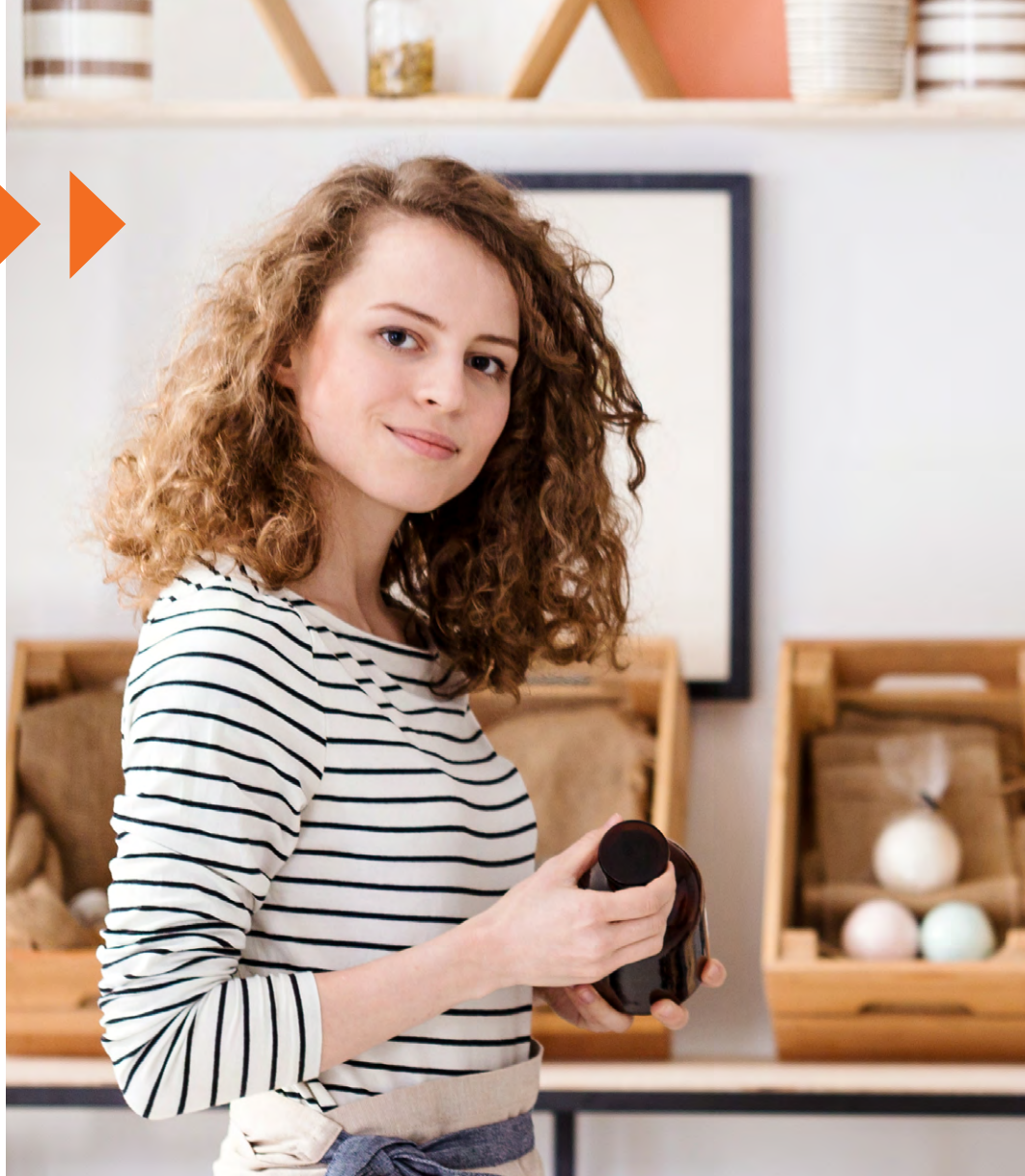
A good TMS offers valuable e-commerce integrations to streamline your shipping and create a better user experience for your customers.

These helpful online tools can make all the difference in your shipping efficiency — and your company's bottom line. If you don't have easy access to a shipping automation tool, consider the cost benefits of partnering with a 3PL.

With SpeedShip® — the proprietary TMS from Worldwide Express — you can do more, faster. Instantly compare costs and delivery speeds, add insurance coverage, track shipments and much more with our easy-to-use online platform.

[Learn more about our SpeedShip technology.](#)





Worldwide Express:

Your Key to SMB
Shipping Success

We've made it our mission to provide SMBs with the same scale and savings that are afforded to larger enterprise businesses. From local support, to industry-leading carrier relationships and a one-stop, easy-to-use technology platform, we help SMBs like yours ship smarter every day.

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