Leveraging Collaborative Logistics for Increased Visibility

Q: How can value chain partners cooperate to create and share efficiencies?

A: Significant efficiencies can be realized across the supply chain when all stakeholders (enterprise, vendors, carriers) can collaborate in real time through a standardized logistics execution platform. This type of interaction is also known as collaborative logistics.

The cornerstone of collaborative logistics is timely visibility. Data about orders, inventory, transportation, and spend need to all funnel into a common denominator big data repository and be readily accessible. A Web-native execution platform lends itself to the collaborative logistics execution model as it is meant to operate on the edge of the enterprise. Considered high tech for its complicated logistics algorithms in the back end, and low tech for ease of use on the front end, this type of solution empowers any stakeholder in the supply chain. As you start collaborating with a carrier agnostic system here is what you can expect:

- Visibility into transportation orders, purchase orders, shipments, exceptions, invoices, and spend
- Real-time monitoring
- Real-time reporting. No waiting for reports or data to be input
- Live. If it is happening, you know about it
- Everyone in the supply chain is collaborating around the same data

The benefits of a collaborative shipping strategy include:

- Increased visibility and collaboration
- Reduced transportation spend
- Better capacity utilization with better rates
- Improved trade compliance
- Streamlined carrier base — leading to better rates
- Shipper accountability
- Vendor accountability and compliance reporting
- Vendor charge-backs

Q: When choosing a transportation shipping management platform to enhance cooperation along the supply chain, what should shippers consider?

A: A transportation management system should be easy to use, but powerful enough to handle the wealth of data that is processed when making efficient and cost effective shipping decisions. Select a cloud-based platform that is accessible through a web browser instead of one that requires software to be loaded on premise.

A Web-based solution ensures that everyone in the supply chain with a login and password can collaborate. Users save time by performing functions through the system that today are handled manually via phone, fax, and email. This new way of operating through a TMS standardizes company processes, reinforces practices and rules across the organization and across the entire supply chain, and provides great savings. Today's cloud-based technology can help supply chain managers streamline their processes and save significant time, costs, and resources.

Look for these features while considering moving towards an online TMS solution:

- Load tendering capability
- Global visibility into shipping status
- PO issue tracking and reporting
- Carrier portal and vendor portal
- Ready PO data
- Load planner dashboard
- Exception management and alerts
- Mobile ready

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