

# Arrive & Thrive



How to  
Optimize Your  
Inbound Freight  
Management

# Looking to revive or elevate your inbound freight program?



If you're like the typical business owner, you no doubt spend plenty of time thinking about how to get your freight where it needs to go, on time and on budget. But what about the goods you receive via inbound freight?

In a sense, inbound is equally as important as its outbound counterpart. After all, your company depends on the timely and efficient receipt of materials. A well-run inbound freight management process can help you keep your operations humming. It can also help you cut costs and put you in firmer control of your overall shipping program in the process.

**So how can you do it right?** Read on for tips to put you on the path to inbound success.



## Take advantage of a TMS

One particularly useful feature of a transportation management system (TMS) is the real-time visibility it provides into your entire supply chain. You can use that visibility to analyze your inbound logistics — everything from receiving processes to average shipping costs, carrier performance, lead times and more.

And once you have the TMS data, you can pinpoint inbound weak points and look for ways to fix them. On top of that, the data can also help you set benchmarks and scorecards so you can measure how well your solutions are working and find ways to fine-tune as needed.

# Choose and work with a few preferred carriers

Forging tight relationships with a handful of select carriers opens up opportunities to consolidate the number of shipments that come into your business. And remember: Fewer trucks means less — and potentially more efficient — deliveries. At the least, you'll reduce your dock congestion.

Hand-picking preferred carriers will require research and negotiation if you do it on your own. But the results can pay off if you find ones that offer a combination of favorable rates and superior service. A 3PL can be a huge help with this since they have relationships with a wide range of carriers they've already vetted and negotiated favorable rates with. On top of that, a 3PL can match up one of those carriers to meet your unique needs.



## Consolidate to full truckload (FTL) shipping when possible

Yes, less-than-truckload (LTL) shipping can be convenient, but there are other considerations to weigh. For starters, cutting back the number of LTL shipments can boost your dock efficiency and cut unloading costs. How? With LTL, your cargo shares space on a truck with freight from other shippers, which means it can take longer for a delivery to get unloaded. It also means that you can have multiple carriers stacked up in your delivery area, all waiting for their chance to unload.

In contrast, FTL slims down the number of deliveries coming into your business every day, which can boost your receiving center's efficiency. FTL shipping also has additional benefits. Since your goods are the sole occupant in a vehicle or trailer, there's less potential for damage. And because your freight stays put from start to finish, there's less chance that it can get stolen or accidentally dropped off at the wrong location.





Here's where you create ground rules for your suppliers to follow when making deliveries. Note, however, that the rules need to be detailed and thorough, and you need to be consistent about enforcing them. You also need to get your suppliers to buy in and stay accountable to them.

What should you include? Clearly define your expectations for on-time delivery and delay notifications. Spell out your criteria for proper paperwork. Be specific about your standards for such items as pallet requirements, bill of lading details, package labeling and the like. And keep track of how well each supplier performs so you can let them know how and where they need to improve.



**Set rock-solid processes**

## **Streamline your inbound processes — and find a trusted partner to help**

In sum, there's no single action that'll fix your inbound shipping. Follow these steps, however, and you'll potentially save time, money and headaches in the process.

Another way to boost your inbound efficiency: Work with a 3PL that knows the freight industry. The best 3PLs can work with you to optimize your inbound and outbound shipping practices.

### **Ready to get started?**

Schedule a custom shipping consultation today and let Worldwide Express help you uncover smart solutions for your freight shipping needs. [Visit \*\*wwex.com/consultation\*\* to get started.](https://www.wwex.com/consultation)

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