



Active Routing Guides: The Answer to Better Supply Chain Management

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Supply chain executives must determine not only if they are currently using real-time data, but are able to track the progress of implemented changes once they are made.

More specifically, they need to be able to determine whether or not their company's current routing guide is:

1. In line with their company's shipping practices
2. Being implemented properly by all departments and personnel.

The first step to determining whether or not your company's routing guide is meeting your current needs is by receiving real-time data that is immediately ready for use. If you don't know the status of each and every shipment in your supply chain, you won't be able to tell where your company's dollars are going at any given time, and you won't know which of your company's current shipping practices may be causing you to lose or save valuable shipping dollars.

The easiest way to track your company's progress when it comes to routing guide compliance is by implementing a routing guide that is active rather than static. An active or "live" routing guide is one that will allow you to move away from paper -- that is, one that will allow you to lessen or eliminate the need for paper routing guides and extensive printed reports.

Active routing guides move you into real time so that you can not only receive real-time data that is clean and ready for you to analyze and interpret in the moment, but enforce, implement and monitor changes to your shipping practices right away.

After all, what good is real-time data if it takes you and your personnel hours, days or weeks to review it? You should be able to make sense of your data as soon as you receive it, and with it, quickly implement the decisions and changes that the data may require you to make.

What are some of the other benefits to using an active guide? An active routing guide is one that can be accessed by a click of your mouse rather than by the manual turning of what are usually a cumbersome number of pages. It should allow you to make real cases for improvement by providing you with the ability to work with actual numbers rather than just projections.

An active routing guide should give you the ability to view and track each and every shipment in your supply chain from anywhere in the world at any given moment, allowing you to work with actual numbers all the time.

Another unique benefit to using an active routing guide is that it will allow you to monitor and achieve compliance through real-time data, regular reports, and perhaps most importantly, immediate alerts. When a discrepancy occurs, you will have the ability to ask why it occurred and stop the issue from arising again in the future. Furthermore, you should be able to foresee service disruptions and nip them in the bud, solving problems before they occur.

At a higher level, an active routing guide can show how aggregating volume to one carrier can reduce costs by increasing the business that is given to that carrier. To be more specific, data that reveals delivery

density, the percentage of shipments in metropolitan areas, dense packaging, a high percentage of first attempt delivery, and low damage ratios can be very convincing when it comes to making a case for better carrier rates.

Analysis of this sort of data can also show patterns that reveal chronic carrier issues. These issues may warrant better service. With the data to back up your claims just a click or two away, your chances of obtaining both better rates and better service are improved.

You are probably well aware that carriers have the ability to put forth their own analyses. Are you relying on their data alone to determine what your rates and service levels should be? An active routing guide can help you prove to your carrier that you know more about your company's shipping practices than they do.

If you're concerned about maintaining a positive relationship with your carrier, just remember to let the data do the talking, and to focus more on future goals than on past complaints that will hopefully soon be put to rest.

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