



How to Get More from Your Cold-Chain Transportation

Don't settle for simply moving your frozen food products – explore how to move your ice cream and eat it too!



No matter what you're moving – from ice cream, to poultry, pizza or mixed veggies – growing your business with your transportation partner is just as important as, if not more than, ensuring that your frozen products get delivered when scheduled. Partnering with an innovative carrier/3PL is vital to building your "foundation carrier," and with this carrier as your base, they can learn the intricacies of your business, ensuring that they're well-aligned to your overall supply chain strategies and goals.

There are a handful of do's and don'ts to follow when searching for a transportation partner you can grow with:

1. Do a customer reference check on potential transportation partner; Don't purchase transportation without doing due diligence

A simple reference call to the carrier/3PL's carrier base should yield the good, the bad and the ugly. Most carriers have a few key customers who they utilize for these discussions. Be sure to check with the reference point of contact to verify: how many calls they have been a reference for, how long they have been working with carrier/3PL, the on-boarding process, and anything else they would do differently during the implementation process.

Other things to look out for: what are their sanitation processes and procedures, the age of fleet, the average driver's age and do they lease or own their equipment.

2. Do partner with a provider who offers innovative solutions that lower overall landed costs; Don't purchase transportation solely on price

Price doesn't always equal quality service, and more often than not - buying on price will not support a long-term, effective strategy. If you do have a supply chain strategy, other than being focused on price, your organization is setting yourself up for problems down the road.

Organizations who begin with a plan, (and share the plan with their carrier/3PL), will yield the optimal results to have the right product, in the right place, and at the right time and price. A short-term focus on price may lead to a constant turnover of carrier suppliers and ultimately much more time spent qualifying and onboarding new carriers, adjusting processes, reintroducing pick-up and delivery processes, and tracking shipments. And you may need to send out express shipments at premium costs to fulfill customer orders in the event of a service breakdown...

3. Do clearly define what Key Performance Indicators (KPI) mean most to your business; Don't rely on your transportation service provider's standard KPIs



It goes without saying but your goals may not be the same as the goals of your carrier/3PL. CLEARLY define what the KPIs are being measured to, for example: when measuring on-time delivery performance, does the carrier/3PL measure to the minute, hour or a window of time (90 minutes after original appointment time).

4. Do partner with a provider who is committed to delivering initial and on-going value; Don't partner with a provider who cannot add value after the onboarding

Look beyond the price tag and work to understand the fine print around what value the carrier/3PL is committed to during the first year of the agreement/contract. How soon will you see these results? Do they have examples of benefits other customers have seen? What is their service recovery process?

Additionally, clearly define what your targets will be in year two and three of your deal, and when these targets will be addressed and results made visible. Having a clearly defined path forward -- for year one to three -- prior to agreeing to the contract will help keep both shipper and carrier mutually accountable.

Other aspects to consider that aren't necessarily new trends, but simply areas where many shippers don't take full advantage of is the 3PL's transportation consolidation network. Many of the larger national providers typically offer value-added transportation where multi-customer occupied sites act as a consolidation hub for the 3PL's storage clients. They may already be delivering to your customers so take advantage of the established schedule.

It's also important to keep in mind that excess capacity in the marketplace for the first half of the year has remained readily available but no one can guarantee this capacity will remain through the end of the year. Most larger shippers are wisely negotiating their rates in the off-season due to this, to ensure stable capacity in the latter half of the year.

For more information on Americold's transportation services, please [contact us](#).