

Create a More Productive Supply Chain With Extended Shipment Visibility

Learn how companies are utilizing real-time visibility platforms for greater insights and advanced capabilities to transform their supply chain.



How can freight shipment visibility transform your supply chain?

The value of visibility is so much more than just knowing the location of your freight.

It includes gaining real-time insights to in-transit shipments (on time or late), being able to offer predictive ETAs, and continuous monitoring to mitigate at-risk shipments in their supply chain. The multi-layered levels of visibility help forecast your supply chain from beginning to end and provide projected timetables for a more automated experience.

Visibility creates value for teams, business units, and operations throughout an organization – beyond the transportation department. Here are some examples of the positive effects visibility has across the supply chain.

What challenges are shippers facing today?

The post-covid era has created an array of problems in the global supply chain.

- 90% of goods worldwide are shipped via ocean. Ports congestions, port shutdowns due to Covid, container imbalance and price fluctuations have a big impact on deliveries.
- Truck drivers are retiring at a rate never seen by the industry. In 2022 shortages in Europe have jumped to 40% reaching 71,000 in Romania, 80,000 in both Poland and Germany, and 100,000 in the UK* .
- High inflation and increasing costs are leaving organizations with thin margins.
- Shipments now need to be tracked through every leg of the journey – transitions between ocean, rail, truckload, and LTL make it difficult for shippers to get a complete view

*IRU's annual driver shortage survey



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Consequences of Late Shipments and Poor Visibility

Delays and supply chain disruptions are more common than you think. Late shipments can cause major disruptions for shippers that affect management decisions, ROI, and customer service quality.

High Fees & Penalties (detention and demurrage)	Extended periods of ocean cargo sitting in a port, leads to delayed shipments and proves that product isn't moving. Even worse, ports charge detention fees for containers that sit for too long.
Lower Customer Service Quality	When products and inventory aren't received on time, customers question the shippers ability to execute and move freight. At the very least, customers wish to be notified during delays. Without real-time tracking updates, this isn't possible.
Product & Inventory Stockouts	Stores and loading docks are constantly receiving product to stock shelves and provide for their own customers. Late products mean stock outs, backorders, and unhappy customers that stretch the entire supply chain.
Poor Labor & Time Management	Store and dock managers who are unable to properly schedule arriving shipments means receiving teams have inconsistent workloads – from too many shipments needing unloading/processing to no shipments at all. This often leads to overtime labor and poorly managed receiving dock stations.
Dock Congestion	When loading docks have multiple inbound shipments, processing all the trucks becomes a challenge and disruption for all parties involved. Carriers and their schedule are set back, leading to frustration and lost time for waiting drivers. Too much time lost will cause shippers to be hit with costly detention fees and diminish the relationships between carriers and shippers.

Proactive exception management is everything. The focus of shipper visibility is to allow organizations the ability to be proactive rather than reactive.

Being able to mitigate at-risk shipments before delays, irate customers, lost freight, and product spoilage happen is the goal at hand.



What Are the Capabilities of a Visibility Solution?

Multimodal Visibility

Freight is often transported between multiple modes of transportation. First dispatching on a cargo ship, transitioning to a freight train, before moving onto a truck, where it will find its way to the warehouse/DC. For many, this is where visibility of shipments becomes a challenge.



How can shippers automatically track their freight during all modes of transportation and more importantly, during the transitions from one mode to another?

By utilizing real-time multimodal visibility, shippers can view the location and updated ETA of every one of their shipments simultaneously in real-time. Tracking updates will provide shippers with more predictable deliveries. As a result, they can provide an improved customer service experience and create stronger relationships with their clients.



How is this possible?

During the case of late or delayed shipments (regardless of location or transportation mode), shippers can react quickly to the alerts provided by a real time visibility solution. From there, shippers can relay the information to their customers so that they can take the proper action, lessening the blow of the disruption. Thanks to a visibility solution, the entire supply chain can receive notifications, allowing each stakeholder; from shipper, carrier, and customer to take the proper action and decisions to minimize negative impact.

The resulting actions help smoothly manage operations, save precious time, and prevent unnecessary fees/penalties.

Temperature Monitoring

Not all freight is created equal. Shippers in the food and beverage industry as well as the medical field require specialized freight (refrigeration) to fulfill shipments. Refrigeration is key to prevent spoilage of certain food, medicine, and pharmaceuticals, and ensure product quality



Condition/temperature monitoring provides real time data, tracking, and notifications so shippers can ensure product is secure and meeting regulations.

“The Sanitary Food Transportation Act of 2005 states the FDA must monitor the proper transportation practices to ensure that food transported by motor vehicle or rail is not transported under conditions that may adulterate the food.”

In the rare cases that temperature conditions alter beyond requirements during transport, shippers will receive notifications, allowing them to proactively react to the situation. Shippers can contact the driver and even reach out to customers during these critical moments.

Dock Appointment Scheduling

Loading docks are the epicenter for inbound and outbound freight. For shippers, their entire network and business operations rely on the need for a smooth and well operated DC. Think of a Distribution Center as the heart that pumps the blood to the rest of the body.



But what happens when a DC isn't prepared to process inbound freight they have lost track of?

Things get tricky. Truck drivers will often sit for hours waiting their turn to unload inventory at the DC. The few hours alone cost some organizations thousands of dollars just to pay the driver for idling time. Warehouse manager and receiving staff also become bombarded with manual labor, often requiring overtime work. In contrast, a lack of inbound/outbound freight means unplanned quiet hours where little to no work is performed. During this time, receiving staff may have lower work performance and negative morale.

The solution is Dock Appointment Schedule software, which helps let drivers and carriers book appointments for shipment processing which is then approved by the dock manager. This cohesively communicates a schedule to all parties involved.





Advanced Ocean Visibility

9/10 goods in the world travel via ocean freight at one point or another. Ocean is a key component of global trade and economy.



Fees and port congestion are large disruptions plaguing shippers. Recent times have seen major ports face congestion when outbound containers cannot be dispatched (often to a limited number of trucks).

This means ships are unable to unload containers at ports, causing ocean carriers and their freight to standby outside the port for days, even weeks at a time. The constant congestion within ports leaves port management no choice but to penalize organizations whose containers sit for too long, also known as a demurrage fee. But shippers aren't out of trouble yet. Since most containers are rented from carriers, shippers must return the leased-out containers in a certain amount of time. Failure to do so results in a detention fee.



This is why understanding the relationships and insights associated with ocean trade is a necessity for shippers worldwide.

Ocean visibility software helps shippers gain insights into real-time ocean visibility and container sailing schedules. These predictive analytics provide shippers with improved supply chain scheduling. During the cases where shipments or late, ocean visibility software notifies the parties involved allowing them to mitigate impact and prevent fees from occurring beforehand.

TMS Integration

Visibility platforms that integrate with Shipper TMS help provide critical data such as ETAs, proactive monitoring, carrier reporting, and more. Better data means improved business and decision making. By leveraging an end-to-end platform through the power of the cloud, shippers instantly increase the number of capabilities available for their staff. With a quick time-to-value, users have access to enhanced workflow automation and more to help drive supply chain agility, creating an advantage over the competition.

How a real-time visibility solution can help



Case Study: Reduce Production Delays

Descartes first case study looks at a global automotive manufacturer managing 330 suppliers and 800 full truck inbound deliveries daily from across North America experienced huge supply chain impacts due to winter storms. They estimated the company's lack of visibility resulted in losing production of thousands of vehicles.

Challenge: Manual Microsoft Excel-based tracking across their key carriers was inefficient and caused production issues. A single delivery that is 4 hours late can idle thousands of workers

Solution: With Descartes MacroPoint, the company moved to manage-by-exception tracking, and was able to be proactive rather than reactive when faced with late deliveries, minimizing production downtime.

Results:

- **A 65% reduction in time spent tracking the fleet**
- **Production re-works were greatly reduced with earlier visibility to potential delays**





Case Study: Improve Inbound Inventory Control

Another case study was done on a national retailer with 5000 retail locations had 115 carriers managing inbound deliveries to their 14 DCs and stores, with a transportation team managing approximately 60,000 loads. They needed help balancing their inventory and service levels.

Challenge: EDI and manual based tracking did not provide an accurate view of their inbound deliveries. Data was sometimes 3 days old, and very incomplete. Hurricanes in 2017 highlighted the issues.

Solution: Our real-time visibility solution enabled the retailer to manage by exception and better control inbound inventory, while providing pro-active customer service that increases satisfaction.

Results:

- **Improved on 98.6% in-stock service levels**
- **Decreased labor on freight tracking by focusing on shipments with issues, e.g. missed pick-up**

Why Access to Carrier Visibility Networks Matter

The relationship between shippers and carriers extends far beyond load tendering. Shippers are looking for a variety of performance characteristics and when it comes to selecting a carrier to process their loads. Descartes MacroPoint offers full scale visibility for shippers to enable logistics and management teams to analyze, predict, and communicate the status of any shipment in real time. Shippers can gain access to our extensive features to reliably deal with supply chain disruptions and challenges.

1. Real Time Intermodal Visibility
2. Ocean Visibility
3. Dock Appointment Scheduling
4. Temperature Monitoring/Tracking
5. TMS Integration

Our visibility network is a single point of access to all tracking modes and logistics data sources. Automate processes, reduce manual communication, and maximize your resources.

About Descartes Systems Group

Descartes (Nasdaq:DSGX) (TSX:DSG) is the global leader in providing on-demand, software-as-a-service solutions focused on improving the productivity, performance and security of logistics-intensive businesses. Customers use our modular, software-as-a-service solutions to route, schedule, track and measure delivery resources; plan, allocate and execute shipments; rate, audit and pay transportation invoices; access global trade data; file customs and security documents for imports and exports; and complete numerous other logistics processes by participating in the world's largest, collaborative multimodal logistics community. Our headquarters are in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada and we have offices and partners around the world.

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