

A background image showing a laptop on a desk. The laptop screen displays a dashboard with a pie chart on the left and a bar chart on the right. A hand is visible on the right side of the laptop, typing on the keyboard. The entire image has a light blue and green gradient overlay.

10 Ways to Future-Proof Your Business



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You **can** ship stronger, smarter, and with agility—all you need is a plan. A plan that takes you from wherever your supply chain stands right now, to a ‘sky’s-the-limit’ operation.

In this eBook we’ll break down 10 ways you can do just that. From strategies you can implement today to goals you can set for tomorrow and beyond.

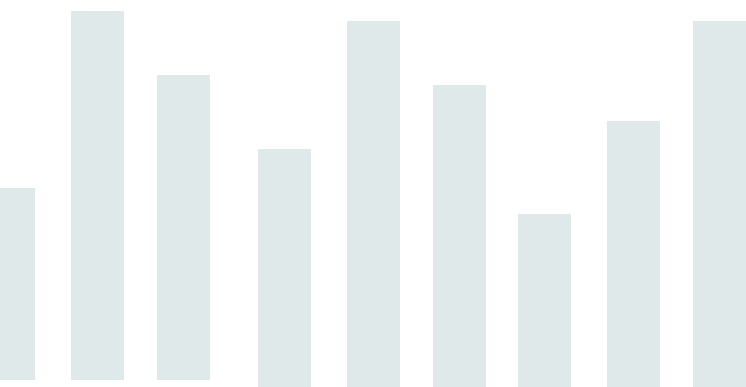
1. Know where you stand
2. Set smart goals
3. Ditch the better discounts mindset
4. Expand your carrier mix
5. Choose the right service types
6. Put your customers first
7. Be creative with distribution
8. Build positive carrier relationships
9. Balance technology and expertise
10. Use shipping data to your advantage



Read on to learn more about each...

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#1 Know Where You Stand



Visibility into your shipping operations and carrier contracts is essential to smart prioritization and planning. **But if you don't know what's happening with your data, you can't see where the bottlenecks are or how to fix them.** And it's impossible to find those pipelines inside static tables. For example:

- Where are you spending the most?
- How are costs trending over time?
- Are you hitting your min tier discounts?
- Are your customers happy?

Start by analyzing your shipping profile to understand areas of opportunity. Then you'll know where you stand and what goals you can set.

#2 Set Smart Goals

Don't know where to start? Here are some ideas:

- Establish supply chain KPIs (ex. inventory accuracy, lead time, delivery time)
- Revisit free shipping policies
- Decrease cost per package by 10%
- Decrease delivery time by 1 day
- Add a 3PL to your network
- Enhance customer tracking capabilities
- Analyze box sizes and reduce unnecessary packaging



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#3 Ditch The Better Discounts Mindset



Shippers used to think, “if I improve my discounts, I will save more money,” but it’s far more complicated now. Carriers aren’t as lenient as they used to be. And some people don’t even qualify for their services due to increased capacity and efficiency standards.

The shipping industry operates like the real estate market. Buyers = Shippers; Sellers = Carriers. It fluctuates between the two based on market conditions.

And right now, **it’s a carrier’s market.**

Carriers want a specific type of shipper, and if you don’t fit into their efficiency model (i.e., you’re not shipping perfectly shaped boxes with a network that fits within their distribution constraints)—they don’t want it.

What does that mean? It means carriers are less likely to give out discounts, and services have additional limitations. You need to go beyond a “better discounts” only mindset and think about the win-win situation for both of you. Which packages do they want more of? Which packages are costing you the most? Is there any overlap? Dig into your data and get creative.

#4 Expand Your Carrier Mix

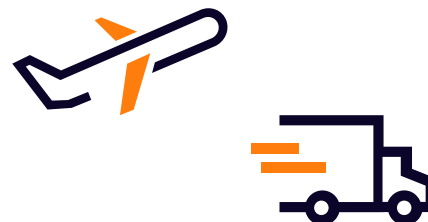
Add some regional carriers to make up for national carrier gaps.

Regional carriers can add flexibility, faster delivery times, cost reduction, and a less complicated network. **It no longer makes sense to ship with one carrier**—you need a smart carrier mix.



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#5 Choose The Right Service



Are you using the right service type for your business needs?

It's the little things that add up. Ex. If you're shipping two doors down - don't ship over overnight - ship it ground in less than a day.

When choosing your carrier services and what's best for your business, look at the carrier's reliability, costs, shipping destinations, reputation, tracking capabilities & delivery times.

#6 Put Your Customers First

Your customer experience is everything.

Rising expectations of free and two-day shipping are creating high-pressure situations for shippers—can you meet those expectations?

- How quickly do customers expect their products to arrive?
- Do the products require special requirements?
- What's best: free shipping or lower prices? (offer free shipping where it makes sense, i.e., the zero price effect)

Start pivoting now to be an earlier adopter—and customers will recognize that! Plus, you stay ahead of the competition and industry evolutions.

Overnight shipping, for example, is closer than you think. And Amazon? They could come in as a national carrier **tomorrow**.



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#7

Be Creative With Distribution

Example: If most of your client base is in DC, but your fulfillment center is in LA, you may want to consider a DC move. If that's not an option, opt for opening an additional center closer to your client base.

Think like Amazon. How do they reach so many customers quickly? They have a massive network of distributors, making it easy to get products out. Did you know that you can use Amazon warehouses to enhance your network and do the same thing?

Important note: be mindful of your current agreements with UPS and FedEx. Depending on how much inventory you shift to Amazon, you risk dropping down a tier with your current services.

Start by asking yourself some vital questions:

- Should I form a partnership with Amazon?
- Where can I open a new distribution/fulfillment center or use 3PLs to increase my network?
- What locations and services best match my shipping needs?

#8 Build Positive Carrier Relationships



Look at your carrier as an ally to your business, not an enemy.

Like any service provider, carriers have a reputation to uphold. And you can work together to remove stress from your operations with their support. Ask your carrier for help with getting your products out faster, switching to a service that better matches your needs, or even suggestions on their end to enhance your efficiency.

Use the relationship to your advantage.

Start approaching your reps with a common goal “We want to do xyz. How do we do this? How can we move forward together?” They can also offer operational efficiency on their end—it’s a win-win for everyone.

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#9 Balance Technology & Expertise



The sweet spot of shipping success is leveraging the data you already have with logistics intelligence tools and professional expertise.

Most of the time, people don't have true visibility into their data. It's been a PDF and spreadsheets world - i.e., excel hell (Ever had your excel sheet freeze up?)

Using Excel, it's impossible to obtain the vital shipping visibility you need across all your carriers. You need to see in real-time how your shipping profile is performing (and what you should do about it) across key supply chain metrics like shipping charges by service type, package count, transit time, average cost, and more.

Upgrade your operations with the right tools and technology that make it easy to ingest and normalize your data.

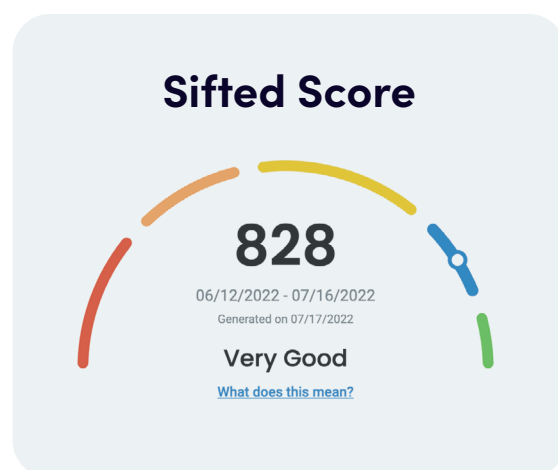
#10 Use Shipping Data to Your Advantage

Complete visibility across your shipping operations is the upper hand your business needs.

With Sifted's logistics intelligence tools, you gain total control over your supply chain and the capability to mold your future + a clear score of your shipping health.

The Sifted Score is like a credit score for your shipping profile. The higher you score (the closer you are to the green), the better your shipping health.

Clear data allows you to see the unnecessary fees and inefficiencies and use that to your advantage.





Improve Today to Build a Better Tomorrow

Take your shipping business to the next level with Sifted Logistics Intelligence. Secure your future with the right balance of technology and tools.

Sign up for a free demo today.