

11 Considerations when choosing your U.S.-Canada Logistics Provider

Innovation and Customs Expertise are among Top Considerations in choosing a U.S./Canada Logistics Provider

A U.S. business needs to plan carefully when selecting a logistics partner for its Canadian shipping needs. Purolator International recently published a new white paper, “11 Considerations when choosing your U.S.-Canada Logistics Provider,” that can serve as a guide for businesses faced with this important decision.

1. Choose an Innovator

Today's logistics providers offer service options that were unthinkable as recently as a few years ago. Innovative logistics providers are taking advantage of technology-empowered insight and more strategic thinking to customize solutions to meet customers' specific needs.

2. Personalization is Essential

How can a logistics provider possibly help your business meet its objectives, if it doesn't take the time to understand what you specifically need? Although it sounds like an obvious course of action, many logistics providers will offer a logistics plan without really understanding a customer's business model, special demands, or customer preferences. Instead, a business should have a high degree of confidence that its logistics partner fully understands its priorities, and can help attain those goals.

3. Technology is a Must!

Technology has certainly revolutionized the logistics industry, and providers are able to offer faster, less expensive, more reliable and more sustainable solutions than ever before. However, not all logistics providers are the same when it comes to offering technology-driven solutions. 2014 research by Capgemini technology consultant found only 55 percent of logistics providers' customers are satisfied with their current provider's capabilities.

4. Single-Source Solution Provider

Businesses are increasingly turning to providers that can provide a “one-stop shopping” solution. A comprehensive solution can include critical functions such as inventory/warehouse management, fulfillment, transportation and returns management – all managed under one roof! By entrusting all processes to a single provider, a business can be assured of a higher degree of efficiency and accountability, visibility into overall operations, and better capability to serve their customers.

5. The service you need

Take care to ensure that a logistics provider offers the precise services your business needs. Don't settle! No longer must a business adapt to meet a service provider's inflexible schedule, or accept that a certain service simply isn't available. Instead, it truly is a customer-driven world in which logistics providers can meet a wide range of customer needs. Why pay for overnight delivery, for



Many factors
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example, if a shipment doesn't need to arrive at its destination for several days? A smart logistics provider will work backwards, and develop a solution based on a customer's need.

6. Choose a Provider with Canadian Expertise

According to the U.S. Commerce Department, "doing business in Canada is not the same as doing business in the United States. Canadian demographics, bilingual labeling requirements, customs requirements and the country's unique tax structure are among the many considerations. U.S. businesses are advised to choose partners with a strong understanding of the Canadian market. This is especially true with logistics, since any mistakes can result in shipments held at the border, or perhaps even worse, dissatisfied Canadian customers.

7. Canadian Customs Expertise is Critical

The U.S./Canada border clearance process is another critically important aspect of doing business in Canada that many U.S. businesses underestimate. A qualified logistics provider will ensure that shipments are compliant with all Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) paperwork requirements and compliance mandates, and that all duties and fees are paid. But a truly experienced logistics provider can take advantage of opportunities to facilitate the clearance process and manage costs.

8. Choose a Trusted Trader

Both the United States and Canadian governments offer "trusted trader" programs, whereby qualified businesses can obtain important benefits including expedited clearance. A business should ensure that its logistics partner is a recognized trusted trade partner, since participation means recognition as a reputable member of the trade community.

9. Commitment to Customer Service

Customer service is emerging as a crucial component of overall logistics provider performance. And while there are many ways for a provider to deliver customer service, "the personal touch" is still most valued. A "best in class" logistics provider will assign dedicated staff to each account in order to ensure accountability and comprehensive management. With internal personnel tasked with day-to-day management of a particular account, a provider can ensure seamless movement of a shipment through the entire logistics process, and that any glitches will be quickly addressed.

10. Experience Matters

It used to be that deciding on a logistics provider was primarily driven by cost, with everything else taking a back seat. Not so anymore. Instead the logistics provider has become the logistics partner, with a seat at the table and a bird's eye view into a business's overall strategy and processes. Which is why it is so important to bring on board a logistics partner with a proven track record of success and positive feedback.

11. Don't Forget about Returns

An often-overlooked aspect of a logistics provider's role is its ability to manage product returns. Returns management has emerged as an important customer service issue, and care must be taken to develop a strategy that meets a business's specific needs, and is also highly convenient and accommodating to customers.

To learn more about these and other supply chain innovations, visit www.purolatorinternational.com/whitepapers to download Purolator International's white paper: *11 Considerations when choosing your U.S.-Canada Logistics Provider*.

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