

WHITE PAPER

Five Key Supply Chain and Transportation Considerations for Paper Selection



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You know making the right paper sourcing decision is not just about selecting the product, but also finding a good fit with the company behind it. Choosing quality paper can save your operation time and money. In addition, there are other factors, such as supply chain and transportation considerations, that may impact your sourcing strategy. What's the point of sourcing quality paper if you can't count on it being delivered on time, or if what you need is out of stock? A supply chain breakdown with your manufacturer affects your productivity, profitability, and reputation with your customers.

In the following report, Boise Paper, the leading manufacturer of America's top selling copy paper, outlines five key factors that contribute to a successful supply chain. Understanding and weighing these factors as you review potential paper suppliers will help you make better, more strategic decisions.

1. Multiple and Broad Points of Contact

Too often, your only contact with a manufacturer is a sales representative or account manager. Although they may be highly capable of providing information and directing internal resources, they can't deliver the depth of insight to address all of your company's needs.

Engaged and responsive manufacturers will provide a broader set of touchpoints at various levels to match your company's operation. With a complete picture of your business needs from multiple perspectives, a manufacturer can provide targeted insights and expert guidance – perhaps even identifying solutions to issues of which you're not fully aware.

For instance, you should be able to resolve order and delivery matters with a supply chain representative that understands the nuances and challenges of your particular business. In addition to sales and customer service representatives, manufacturers should have supply chain and business representatives on hand that can work with you on effective sourcing strategies and processes, so issues are more quickly resolved when they arise. You will only get this value from working with a manufacturer that offers an integrated supply chain approach.



2. Established, Customized Forecasting Models

The open lines of communication that result from supply chain integration also lead to better forecasting, ensuring issues such as stock-outs or planned mill outages don't impact your inventory. Accurate forecasting helps the manufacturer anticipate your needs, fulfill your orders on time, and keep your business running as usual regardless of outside factors.

Most forecasting models are based on historical purchase and order data, but models informed by customer insights vastly improve the accuracy of a supplier’s forecast. Knowing that special projects or upcoming events call for certain products allows a manufacturer to stay ahead of your needs.

3. Automated Ordering, Tracking, and Processing

These days, there’s no excuse for a manufacturer that doesn’t have a robust automation system in place to ensure your needs are met swiftly and accurately. Automation technology helps manufacturers identify patterns to your orders. They analyze the data to find efficiencies that make purchasing easier and, in most cases, more cost-effective. For instance, they may recommend an alternative product you hadn’t considered previously, but is actually better suited to meet your needs.

Automation technology not only improves efficiency for your orders – leaving you with more time for other tasks – but also provides insights that uncover potential issues, giving you and the manufacturer time to find solutions or alternatives. For example, when Boise Paper receives an order, their proprietary system automatically checks on inventory and shipping dates, and the order flows directly to the warehouse for fulfilment. If the system detects an issue, the order is flagged and directed to a human analyst to take action. In some cases, the issue could be as simple as a single out-of-stock SKU. Regardless, the issue is placed in the hands of a real person who is able to review and resolve it.

It’s not enough for a manufacturer to simply provide online ordering. The real value comes when they are leveraging technology to mediate issues and provide insights that lead to better purchasing decisions.

4. Company-Operated Transportation Management

Many manufacturers consider it out of their hands once an order is processed for delivery, but for you and your company, delivery is perhaps the most important part of the entire process. Unreliable transportation negates the efficiencies achieved with forecasting and automation, and can put your company in a bind when time is of the essence.

That’s why it’s so important to ensure that the manufacturer you select has a robust transportation management system to continually vet carriers for service, price and best fit.

On-time delivery, safety record, efficiency, and reliability are all important factors to consider when it comes to procuring and managing transportation services.

A Smarter Way to Deliver Paper

The SmartWay Partnership is a collaboration between the EPA, freight shippers, carriers, logistics companies and other stakeholders, to voluntarily improve fuel efficiency and reduce environmental impacts from freight transport.

Participating companies benchmark their current freight operations, identify technologies and strategies to reduce their carbon emissions, track emissions reductions and project future improvement.

Boise Paper looks for SmartWay carriers for their shipments. As a SmartWay partner, Boise Paper is committed to corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices, as well as reducing our carbon footprint.

Damaged goods are of no use to your company, and inaccurate delivery at the wrong time or address creates unnecessary and time consuming headaches.

5. Vast Regional Footprint

It's simple, the less distance an order has to travel, the less potential for issues. Look for a manufacturer with a network of multiple distribution centers strategically based across the country to limit the distance for transportation, and provide shorter delivery times.



This is particularly crucial when circumstances such as inclement weather or the need for a rush delivery come into play. Paper shipped from foreign manufacturers relies on third-party distributors, which may be based in completely different regions of the country. As those distributors economize and package orders, your delivery could be delayed due to the distance, weather, or the number of additional stops it has to go through.

Proximity to a distribution center can make the difference between a smooth, predictable delivery and the stress of delays – or even worse – lost orders.

Conclusion

Paper is one of the most utilized office products in today's workplaces. Delayed deliveries and inaccurate orders can impact your company's operations, and create additional stress for you and your colleagues. When sourcing paper, it's essential to ensure the manufacturer you choose will deliver the level of customer service needed to minimize these issues and keep your business running smoothly.

Look for a manufacturer that provides:

1. Multiple and broad points of contacts
2. Established, customized forecasting models
3. Automated ordering, tracking, and processing
4. Company-operated transportation management
5. Vast regional footprint

The best manufacturers have staff who are dedicated to supporting the needs of supply chain and procurement professionals, while also employing the latest in tracking and logistics technology, to mitigate issues and drive smarter business decision making. Combined, these tools help ensure your company's present and future needs are met.