

CHECKLIST

How to Select Shipping Carriers, for Ecommerce



Identify Product Categories

The same shipping solution may not work for every product that you sell, so identify product categories that have similar shipping and fulfillment requirements. Organize categories so that you have a few shipping types.



Is Special Handling Required?

For each product shipping type, determine if the products require special handling like installation or assemble. Does your business want to arrange for those services? If you answer yes, you should consider white glove shipping services.



Are Your Products Large or Very Heavy?

Are the products you sell and ship heavier than about 150 pounds? Are they larger than about 165 inches in combined girth and length? If you answer yes, you may need to look into LTL freight services.



Is the Package Small and Heavy?

Do the products you're thinking of weight more than about six pounds but fit into a box that is 12-inches by 12-inches by 5 ½ inches or smaller? If you have small but relatively heavy products, you should consider flat rate shipping services like the ones the United States Postal Service or FedEx offer.



Are You in a Hurry?

Does the product you are shipping need to be delivered quickly? Is it something that might perish, like food, or is it something that the shopper just needs in a real hurry? Also is our customer located near your warehouse? And is your customer and your warehouse in an area that UberRush or similar services cover? If you answer yes, you may want to consider expedited services from a parcel carrier or a messenger service. Do remember that a "hurry" can mean different things to different people. If two days is good enough a reasonably good ground service might do.



Parcel Services Work Most of the Time

If you have gotten this far in the checklist, and you have not "considered" one of the other types of service providers, you will probably want to select a parcel carrier. This might be a large, well-known brand like UPS, FedEx, or the USPS or it may be a regional carrier like OnTrac in the Western United States.



Compare Prices for the Best Value

Identify your most popular package sizes and weights. Know which areas you ship to most, and compare prices for shipping your most popular packages to your most popular destinations. You want to develop shipping rules that will generally having you shipping via the most cost effective method, without necessarily having to compare every rate every time.