

Data integration reduces overhead costs and task duplication

Eliminates the hassles of multiple systems and data silos. "If you could automate this process and stay compliant, why would you not?"



Background

Producers, retailers, shippers and third-party logistics (3PL) providers frequently need to work with multiple software platforms—often two or even three. For example, for every shipment they send, a vendor might need to enter shipment and temperature information into an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, a warehouse management system (WMS) and a transportation management system (TMS). This creates a lot of needless duplication of effort, especially as the number of orders multiplies.

To make matters more complicated, many larger retail accounts now require vendors to track even more information, such as purchase order (PO) numbers, the serial number of the tracking device associated with each shipment and other data. All of these additional fields create even more work—at a time when companies across the industry are facing historic labor constraints.

These complexities and duplications, along with the unnecessary overhead and chances for human error they create, can be significantly reduced with data integration—one of the modules of the Oversight cargo services suite launched in 2022. Available on its own or in combination with any of the other modules, data integration allows you to consolidate in-transit cold chain data into a seamless experience within your existing software platforms.

In this way, shipment updates and alerts from each critical system can be combined into a single intuitive view. Data integration also gives you the option to streamline shipment creation into one system, eliminating incompatible platforms, siloed data streams and the need for multiple log-ins.

Oversight services specialist Blanca Morales recently summed up the benefits of this approach. “When we’re able to consolidate the data streams and eliminate those disparate platforms, we’re effectively giving time back to our vendors and their staff, which they can use to perform other tasks they need to do when they’re shipping product out. They also get an automated service. Data integration saves them time and money.”

Streamline shipment creation and PO entry

After working in the logistics industry herself, Morales knows firsthand what the benefits of data integration can mean, especially to high-volume operations.

“I know from experience what it takes to create something that you’re going to tender to a carrier,” she

said. “There were a lot of questions to answer every time I went into our system to create a load from scratch. What’s the origin and destination? Who’s the carrier? What’s the commodity? There are so many fields.”

By automating and consolidating these processes, data integration can reduce the amount of time required for each shipment by 80% or more. While every shipper’s needs are different, even operations with moderate order volumes can see fast efficiency improvements and cost savings.

“People don’t have a lot of bandwidth in the world we’re living in right now,” Morales said. “If you could automate this process and stay compliant, why would you not? Depending on the number of fields you need to fill out, you could easily save 30 to 60 seconds per entry. In many cases, the cost to integrate can pay for itself in a few short years (depending on size of operation).”

Get your data together and take it on the road



Data integration can be implemented quickly—often in as little as four to six weeks.

“It’s not that challenging to do as long as you’re working with a compatible system,” Morales said. “We provide all the up-front information you’re going to need and help determine which fields you’ll need to send over. Next, you’ll work with our IT and software team to map everything out. Once the initial testing is done, you’ll go from a testing environment into an integrated production environment that you’ll use from then on.”

Although data integration provides significant value on its own, it offers additional advantages when combined with other modules in the Oversight cargo services suite.

“Tracking data that goes into the system can later be used for data analytics in the reports and scorecards module,” Morales said. “That information enables you to make more intelligent business decisions using data that’s already been collected. And the managed services module can create a custom standard operating procedure to help manage your consolidated alerts.”

About Blanca Morales



Blanca is a key account representative for Copeland and newly appointed Oversight services specialist. She spent five years working for a third-party logistics provider before joining Copeland in 2017.