

CONSTRUCTION IN THE CLOUD

The Dark Side of Shipping and Delivery

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The Dark Side of Shipping and Delivery

Though shipping and delivery challenges might not seem like the most impactful problems a business could face, these pain points are costing contractors every, single time.

By / Jessica Kirby

Contractors know the pain that shipping and delivery challenges can cause for their operations. Tight delivery windows, restrictions on sizes of loads for cranes and trucks, poor communication with drivers, and missing items on trucks all cause havoc on the job site and cause lost time, productivity, and profit each time they occur—and for many contractors, these things occur daily.

Kyle Meuggenburg, shop foreman at Piedmont Sheet Metal in Burnaby, BC, says when the shop experiences shipping delays, it affects more than just customer sentiment.

“We may end up with backlogged products, which means fewer sales overall and lost revenue,” he says. “If products aren't being delivered on time, customers will lose interest and brand trust. With all of the competition in sheet metal these days, it is very important for us to deliver in a timely manner.”

Piedmont has four in-house delivery drivers, which minimizes shipping and delivery issues, but this isn't a fool-proof solution. “When we need to use couriers, that can cause delays and result in lost customers and money,” he adds.

Sometimes the challenges are logistics related or specific to a shop's size and capabilities. Gathering and grouping large orders to be shipped can be a challenge when pieces are scattered throughout the plant, potentially compromising order accuracy.

“It's important to have quality control in place so orders that are inaccurate or incomplete don't slip through,” says Darrin White, shop foreman, Black & McDonald in Scarborough, Ontario, adding that material tagged with incorrect dimensions or piece numbers causes “many headaches” for the shipping team.

Shipping and delivery information must be accurate and specific to maximize productivity and to ensure customer provided directions are clear.

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“We also struggle with finding room to stage large orders,” White says. “We have a small space in which to pack and stage orders, and this is the biggest challenge we face.”

He adds that, in fact, all aspects of shipping are important to ensuring the job’s success. “From the initial bid and acquisition of the job to the final delivery and payment, shipping plays a huge if not the biggest role in a project’s success,” he says.

This winter and early spring, BuildCentrix is releasing a series of upgrades and new features that speak directly to solving contractors’ shipping woes. The separate Shipping Calendar is tied in with the Production Calendar, allowing shippers to see the production status on all items included in the order. This feature will also provide the ability to assign and change the shipping dates and times, as well as update the standard and custom shipping status between Not Started, Ready, Shipping, Partially Shipped, and Delivered.

The new Delivery Windows allow field personnel to choose and set the delivery windows to align with the time they have access to the crane or unloading area on the job site. This feature also allows the shop to set the time materials are expected to arrive on the job site.

Currently, all orders can be assigned to either a single entity truck or loading bay with the Truck/Loading Bay feature, and this allows users to know the location of their materials and plan the most efficient and logical place to stage the order. In a new release of this feature coming early spring, the concepts will be separate so orders can be assigned to a loading bay and to a truck to accommodate larger operations.

The Loading Bays function allow shops to indicate the loading bay at which an order can be found for pick-up or loading an outgoing delivery truck. The Delivery Truck assignment function allows users to input information about the vehicle such as size and capacity to help organize which orders can fit on which vehicles and tracking information, such as make, model, and license plate. The system can now also assign drivers to trucks for specific days with space to record mobile numbers, license accreditation, and notes.

These features mean people at every step of an order’s process can see the what, when, how, and why of every shipping and delivery in real time—addressing real world problems and bringing contractors back to the bright side of doing business. ■



How to choose technology that will **REDUCE** shipping and delivery challenges

By / Jessica Kirby

Construction project logistics depend on and include planning, controlling, and executing materials, resources, and components between fabricators and the job site. It includes coordinating labor, materials, vehicles, and equipment to facilitate a logical, transparent, and efficient process, and disruptions in this area can be extremely costly.

Canadian Federation of Independent Contractors says 89% of small businesses are impacted by supply chain disruptions. Not surprisingly, construction companies are at the top of the list with 98% impacted in some way and 39% significantly impacted when deliveries or shipments are delayed, inaccurate, or incomplete.

For 88% of construction companies, shipping delays result in increased cost of goods and service. Most of these increases amount to around 20%, while 43% of construction companies experience increases of up to 45%.

The ways these businesses are impacted by supply chain disruptions is mirrored in internal shipping and delivery inefficiencies. The top challenges that occur with supply chain disruption also occur when a company can't fulfill its orders because of internal shipping and delivery delays or inefficiencies.

Higher costs: Unavailability of trucks, drivers, space, and reliable scheduling—especially in a fast-tracked environment—add to overall company expenses, productivity losses, and reduced customer confidence.

How Tech Can Help: Look at ways to centralize processes and connect departments with live, real-time updates to the shipping and delivery schedule.

Lack of visibility: Multi-staged processes running under separate software systems and on a disconnected schedule is one of the most disruptive elements of the supply chain.

How Tech Can Help: Businesses that can see their order at every stage are better equipped to plan deliveries and schedule other equipment to align with shipping as required.

Poor collaboration and communication: When various departments responsible for an order are disconnected or rely on manual texts, calls, or emails to share information, the possibility for user error is high.

How Tech Can Help: Consider communication systems that prioritize collaboration by providing a central, mutually accessible platform for communication.

Research conducted by the construction software industry says technology is a moving factor behind the success of the transportation and logistics industry, and the use of advanced technology can increase revenue by up to three times, double instances of on-time deliveries, and improve company productivity by 80%.

Learn more about how BuildCentrix can optimize your shipping and delivery process. Visit buildcentrix.com to learn more and schedule a free demo today. ■

Sneak Peak: A new look for the Work Order main page

What started out many years ago as a simple listing of all work orders has morphed into a very large and complex Work Order listing page with tons of must-have information for different stakeholders. During its evolution, we've tried to keep the Work Order page organized and manageable as we've added new features and new data.

In adding the expanded features for shipping and delivery, we came to the conclusion we've hit a saturation point where there is simply too much information and functionality to put on a single page view.

To solve the problem and build for the future, we are rolling out a re-designed Work Order main page, simplifying the landing page and introducing tabs for specific workflows such as Production, Shipping, and Fulfillment. Each tab is designed to show all the relevant information and functionality people working in those areas need to see while continuing to provide access to all work order details. The architecture of the new Work Order pages will also make it much faster and easier to use on tablets and mobile phones.

Over February and March, we'll be rolling out the new version to select clients to get feedback and make any additional improvements. If you'd like to be involved in testing the new version before it is released to everyone, please email support@buildcentrix.com ■

Order #	Ordered Date	Shipping Date	Start	End	Option	Address	Vehicle	Loading Zone	Shipping Status		
228858	Feb 21, 2024	Feb 27, 2024			Send to Job Site		None Selected	None Selected	Not started		
228857	Feb 21, 2024	Feb 27, 2024			Send to Job Site		None Selected	None Selected	Not started		
228856	Feb 20, 2024	Feb 26, 2024			Send to Job Site		None Selected	None Selected	Not started		
228855	Feb 18, 2024	Feb 24, 2024			Send to Job Site		None Selected	None Selected	Not started		
228854	Feb 16, 2024	Feb 22, 2024	06:00 AM	08:00 AM	Send to Job Site	zzz, 2310 NE Colu...	123	Loading Bay #2	Shipped/Pick...		✓
228853	Feb 16, 2024	Feb 22, 2024			Pick up at Vendor		None Selected	None Selected	Not started		
228852	Feb 16, 2024	Feb 28, 2024			Send to Job Site		None Selected	None Selected	Not started		✓
228851	Feb 16, 2024	Feb 28, 2024			Ship to Address		None Selected	None Selected	Not started		✓
228850	Feb 15, 2024	Feb 29, 2024			Send to Job Site		None Selected	None Selected	Not started		

Did you know? The advantage of using Projects for online take-offs

Building 3D take-offs, or online assemblies in what we call “free-style mode”, has been available on BuildCentrix for over a year now. Recently, we added the ability to upload blueprints to the view so users can easily create 3D take-offs right on top of their drawings. But what happens when you have a large blueprint that will require many work orders using the same blueprint? How do you keep track of the work you've already done and the remaining work that needs to be completed?

Projects are a relatively new addition to the BCX 3D Assembly Builder. If you have a blueprint that will require more than one work order to complete, you can simply create a Project in the BCX Assembly Builder, set the drawing scale, and then start taking off sections. Once they submit a section for fabrication, users can go back to that project and create another assembly. All previous assemblies will be marked in red on the blueprint. This makes it easy to see what has been completed and what work remains.

If you haven't tried the BCX 3D Assembly Builder, talk to your site administrator or contact support@buildcentrix.com to start using it today. ■

