



FOURKITES

SUPPLY CHAIN EXECUTIVE'S STRATEGY GUIDE:

Customer Service



INTRODUCTION

Whether they are individual consumers or B2B buyers, customers today have more options for suppliers than ever before, which makes service a key differentiator for becoming a supplier of choice. Customer service teams need to remain agile in order to manage any challenges they encounter, while fulfilling their promises to customers and keeping costs down.

With real-time supply chain visibility, companies have the opportunity to improve customer satisfaction even before their product gets into the hands of the customer.

In this guide, you'll learn how to create a more agile supply chain that delivers superior customer service and ensures customer loyalty.

2023 OUTLOOK FOR AGILE CUSTOMER SERVICE



73% of consumers say that valuing their time is the most important thing a company can do when providing customer service.

"The Future Of Customer Service", Forrester, 2019



33% lower costs-to-serve can be achieved by providing a high-quality customer experience and self-service support tools.

"The True Value of Customer Experiences", Deloitte, 2018

When a customer interacts with a supplier, an efficient supply chain is often the biggest factor to make or break the customer experience. The customer is trusting that their order will be picked up and delivered to their specifications, in the agreed-upon timeline. Failing to execute on that timeline will result in a negative customer experience, a lower likelihood of repeat business and, ultimately, diminished revenue for your organization.

Customer service and product offerings often play an equal role in keeping customers happy. And in the B2B world, where customers are also upstream supply chain partners, superior logistics operations can be part of the product itself. Real-time supply chain visibility mitigates the risk of disappointed customers by providing additional transparency and predictive insight into disruptions, and creates opportunities for differentiated service offerings.

“Customers may buy products, but what they are really buying is the entire experience. And that’s what they are judging a company on.”

YONE DEWBERRY
CHIEF SUPPLY CHAIN OFFICER
LAND O'LAKES



3 WAYS TO MAINTAIN AGILITY AND DELIVER SUPERIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE



ACCESSIBLE, ACCURATE STATUS UPDATES AND ETAS

The most important capability for agile customer service teams is transparent communication with customers about their orders. Historically, once an order is placed, the customer is blind to all status updates on that load unless an employee reaches out to the carrier or supplier for an ETA. This process is administratively burdensome and not nearly as reliable as real-time GPS data, due to the lag time for manual status checks.

Cloud-based supply chain visibility platforms eliminate data silos between the customer and supplier, but more frequent communication isn't *always* a good thing. Giving customers a predicted arrival time is only beneficial if that ETA is accurate. When calculating ETAs in logistics, it's no longer enough to consider only the remaining distance multiplied by average route speed. ETAs must account for the many factors that can impact travel time en route to the destination.

The DynamicETA™ algorithm from FourKites predicts shipment times with a high degree of accuracy, using more than 150 data points associated with a single load, including:

- ▶ Regulated driver hours of service
- ▶ Real-time and historical traffic patterns
- ▶ Dwell, load and unload times



Using FourKites, one top grocery wholesaler achieved 91% accuracy in predicting arrival times within a one-hour window and 97% accuracy predicting arrivals within six hours. This compares to accuracy rates of roughly 45% for day-of arrivals calculated using a traditional top-down estimate of drive time on the projected route, adjusted by the remaining hours of service.



PROACTIVE NOTIFICATIONS

You can't make bad news better by waiting to deliver it. Taking a reactive approach to shipment delays is no longer a viable option when trying to maximize customer satisfaction, so service teams need the ability to proactively communicate and manage delivery exceptions.

To maximize agility and effectively manage disruptions, all parties must be able to communicate in real time. To do so, they need a single, shared source of truth that enables clear opportunities for collaboration.



SUPERIOR SERVICE OFFERINGS

Supply chain visibility enables you to give customers more than just on-time delivery and reliable ETAs. Visibility supports a broader offering of logistics services and more collaborative partnerships. Here are a few examples:

Saving loads

When predictive visibility determines the high probability of the shipment arriving late, a recommendation engine can offer prescriptive advice to guide future steps. That allows time to locate another driver on a load or find an alternative carrier to deliver the goods and meet the agreed-upon delivery time.

Lowering costs

Companies today are experiencing substantial pressure to lower pricing — especially given the swipe-and-tap ease with which customers can comparison shop. To maintain competitive pricing while still reaping profits, companies must rigorously control operating expenses, including those for shipping. Real-time supply chain visibility can help lower operating costs in a number of ways, from reducing detention fees to controlling labor spend.

Differentiated services

The right visibility platform can offer differentiated services depending on the industry and unique needs of the shipper. These services can include temperature tracking, often critical in food and beverage or pharmaceutical shipments; end-to-end purchase order tracking and other solutions designed for retailers and merchandisers; as well as collaborative solutions and sustainability dashboards that can help shippers reduce their carbon footprint.

Delivering on time, on budget and with access to load status throughout the journey, supply chain visibility from FourKites will give you the competitive advantage when it comes to keeping your customers happy.



"Nobody's perfect, especially in transportation. But the worst thing is to be late to the customer and they have to call about it. So in the event we're late we make sure we communicate proactively to our customers. Visibility helps with that."

Chris Plant
Senior Manager Customer Service
Tyson Foods



"We've been able to isolate situations where the tool showed us that we were going to fail and we were able to correct the failure before it actually happens. So the customer never saw it, but it allowed us to save a load."

Brian Stoufer
Senior Director, Transportation
Conagra Brands