

# FREIGHT BILL AUDIT & PAYMENT: IT'S MORE THAN THE MONEY

FBAP SERVICE PROVIDERS USE BIG DATA AND BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE TO DRIVE GLOBAL ENTERPRISE CHANGE.

**P**aying freight bills on time and accurately helps shippers become “shippers of choice,” a designation that makes it easier to secure capacity and move freight reliably.

At the same time, few shippers want to pay more than they owe, or more than similar shippers in their market are paying to move their freight. “They want to know that their freight rate, and assessorial and other costs are in line with the market,” says Jeff Pape, senior vice president, head of global transportation product and marketing with Minneapolis-based U.S. Bank.

Freight bill audit and payment (FBAP) service providers are on the case.

They have the expertise, technology, and processes to investigate a shipper’s bills, compare the rates charged to those for which the shipper contracted, and ferret out mistakes and duplicate bills. Many also can compare a shipper’s rates against its peers and identify steps to boost efficiency.

While the freight bill audit and payment industry has been operating in North America for nearly a century, it continues to adapt and change in order to meet customers’ needs and find hidden value.

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Just as it has transformed most other sectors of the economy, technology is altering the FBAP industry. “While the basics of the industry, such as reducing expenses and providing operational enhancements and decision support, haven’t changed, technology offers new ways to provide those services, especially decision support,” says Tom Zygmunt, manager of marketing, business development and promotion with Cass Information Systems, Inc., a provider of freight bill and other services.

### SOLVING THE PUZZLE

For instance, many service providers offer analytic solutions that allow shippers to identify cost savings, as well as opportunities to speed service and better manage their supply chains.

“We’re seeing the industry change from a settlement service into a data intelligence service,” says Shannon Vaillancourt, president of RateLinx, a provider of intelligent freight audit and payment solutions.

“Customers are more sophisticated and want to leverage the data obtained during the freight audit process to gain insight into their transportation spending and effectiveness, and make better strategic decisions,” he says.

### UNEARTHING VALUABLE INSIGHTS

Many FBAP providers today offer products and services that go beyond traditional freight audit and payment offerings. These often include transportation management solutions and analytical tools that allow customers to better manage their global supply chains.

At the same time, expectations for more timely reporting continue to rise. “Many shippers want their freight payments processed and reported on a daily basis,” says George Kontoravdis, president with Fortigo, a provider of FBAP and other services. Frequently updated data provides more relevant insight to freight spending and enables more informed decisions.

The growth of e-commerce also is changing the FBAP industry. With more consumers buying online, a growing portion of shipments are small parcels. “The increase in small parcel and package shipments creates a substantial amount of data, which must be captured for reporting and mining,” says Allan Miner, president of CT Logistics, a provider of FBAP services. “Final-mile costs and details add significant data and information for reporting and measuring carrier performance.” Freight bill audit and payment service providers can capture and leverage this information.

### SECURING DATA

Data privacy has also become a greater concern. “Customers are much more sensitive about data privacy than they ever have been,” says Harold Friedman, senior vice president, global corporate development with Data2Logistics, a global provider of freight audit and payment services. Shippers are asking if vendors are GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliant and/or have earned certifications from organizations like Privacy Shield or TRUSTe. “These questions are now commonplace,” Friedman says. “A mere year ago, before GDPR came into play, there was far less emphasis on privacy.”

Another shift is the greater emphasis by many shippers on analyzing assessorial charges imposed on, for instance, deliveries made outside a set delivery window, says Nick Fisher, director of sales with AR Traffic Consultants, a provider of transportation management logistics services. While a smaller contributor to overall freight expense than the freight rate itself, these charges can still be substantial, he adds.

### THE GLOBAL PICTURE

Given the maturity of the FBAP market in North America, the greatest potential for industry growth comes from companies and operations in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Central and South

America. And no matter where they’re based, a growing number of shippers are looking for freight bill information that takes a global perspective.

“They need FBAP providers that have offices and experts in various regions around the world and can manage multiple languages and currencies, while also understanding differing government regulations and policies,” says Megan Bishop, director of operations with enVista, a software and solutions firm. She provides an example: In the United States, most shippers can short pay a carrier invoice if there’s a discrepancy between the invoice and delivery information. This practice is less common in Europe.

The structure of the FBAP industry itself also continues to change. Keith Snavelly, senior vice president, global sales, with nVision Global Technology Solutions, Inc., predicts continued consolidation, as well as scattered bankruptcies. Dropping technology costs make it easier for companies to get into the business. However, some have begun offering their services at or below cost to gain business, he says. This will backfire if FBAP providers run into financial trouble because they’re not charging enough to cover their costs.

### PROBING QUESTIONS FOR FBAPs

To be sure, most FBAP providers manage their businesses prudently and operate honestly. Even so, before signing with an FBAP provider, shippers will want to evaluate them. An important part of the FBAP selection process is to obtain the company’s audited financial statements, Zygmunt says. This can provide some assurance it is on solid financial footing. Also ask to see the company’s SOC 1, Type 2 report, Zygmunt adds. This report assesses an organization’s internal controls over a period of time.

Check whether the company has an employee dishonesty bond sufficient to reasonably cover potential losses, Friedman says. Data2Logistics has a \$50 million employee dishonesty bond.



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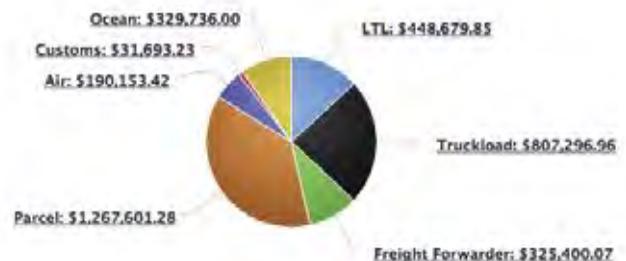
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“We’ve never had to use it, but it’s there to protect our clients and ourselves, in case a dishonest act by an employee causes a loss,” he adds.

Physically visit the freight audit and payment providers’ operations, including those outside North America. “They should be full-service processing centers, with employees who are experts in the region,” Snavelly says. That way, customers can work with people who are in the same time zone and know their language.

Because technology is an increasingly disruptive force in the industry, shippers should look “for a provider focused on reducing transportation costs through automated freight audit and recovery across all transportation modes, business intelligence analytics, and contract optimization solutions,” says Hannah Testani, chief operating officer with Intelligent Audit.

And when evaluating FBAP providers, look at it from a “total value proposition,” says Ross Harris, chief executive officer with A3 Freight Payment. Ask how real and valuable the solutions will be for your business.

Some providers who are trying to avoid commoditization may tout systems that won’t provide much value. “Is it the fuzzy dice hanging from the rearview mirror as opposed to a couple of extra cylinders that will actually get the car down the road faster?” Harris asks.

Vaillancourt identifies several additional questions to ask when evaluating a provider and its software. Ask how data will be standardized and cleansed. To ensure a complete picture of your operations, no data should be removed, and any non-standard data should be fixed.

Check that data is presented within 24 hours and is actionable. “The sooner you see a problem, the easier it is to fix,” Vaillancourt says. You should receive alerts telling you something needs attention, and analytics telling you why it’s happening, he adds.

Finally, ask the provider if they will try to talk you or your company into or

out of taking an action. “The answer to this should be, ‘No. The data will drive all the decisions,’” Vaillancourt says. The FBAP provider shouldn’t have to convince a shipper to do (or not to do) anything, because the data should reveal the solution.

The following providers offer the FBAP services that will help your firm meet the demands of an evolving freight world.

### **A3 FREIGHT PAYMENT CUSTOMIZATION IS KEY**

The team that launched Memphis-based A3 Freight Payment brings the experience and expertise gained through the positions they held at a half-dozen freight payment companies. Their goal was to develop a firm that draws from the industry’s best practices, provides stellar customer service and intuitive systems, and employs a transparent, collaborative approach. Most of A3’s clients incur about \$30 million or more in annual freight costs.

A3 provides the highly customized services often required by large-volume shippers. “For instance, they may have complex general ledger coding requirements, or multiple match files for which they need shipment validation,” Harris says. These characteristics mean the firm may not fit into the business model of some high-volume, highly structured FBAP providers, he adds. Instead, they need a partner that can customize its solutions to meet their specific requirements.

To that end, when A3 begins working with a client, it will ask about its goals and concerns. They’ll determine how the two organizations can work together to maximize the value of A3’s solution. For instance, A3 is working with an automotive supplier that needs its transportation management system (TMS) file sent to the freight pay provider, and then returned within 24 hours, with an

accrual amount for its freight and assessorial charges.

Once the file is returned, the firm books its freight expenses. As the actual invoices arrive, it reconciles them. “While many freight pay firms can get a TMS match file and use it as a validation source, getting an accurate rate for the reconciliation process is more difficult,” says Craig Cameron, vice president of sales and marketing with A3. “Not everybody is able to do it.” A3 can.

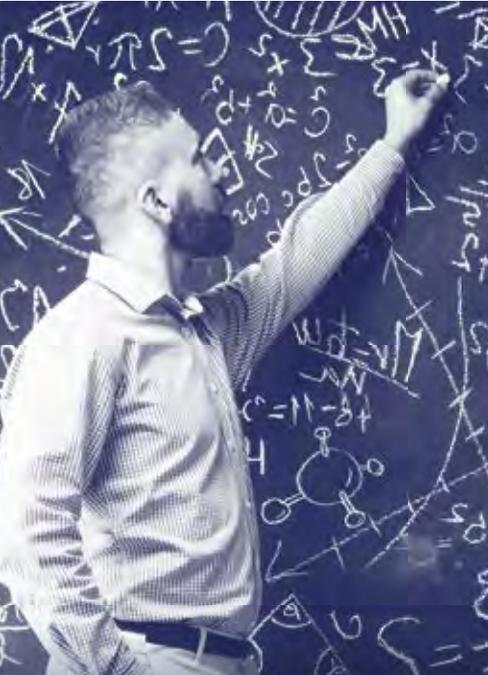
Through its Last Mile program, A3 has begun handling a wider range of transactions, including freight forwarding, as well as ocean and steamship transactions. For instance, A3 has been working with a large appliance manufacturer that partners with companies that handle delivery and installation of its products. “It’s not just a straightforward freight bill audit and payment process,” Cameron says. Along with freight are multiple add-on services. A3’s solution



***“We provide more than just a freight bill audit and payment service.”***

**-Craig Cameron  
VP, Sales and Marketing  
A3 Freight Payment**

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enables the company to analyze the data so it can identify opportunities to operate more efficiently.

Similarly, A3 tailors its reporting and analytic capabilities to each client. For users who need a broad view of the business, A3 can provide high-level, graphical dashboards that are updated in real time. A3's Report app can provide a deeper, more detailed look. Finally, A3's Analyze app, a query builder tool, enables power users to initiate deep dives into their data, conduct massive data extracts and create highly detailed reports that can be used to present to management, negotiate with carriers, or for myriad other uses.

"When our website talks about custom solutions for each client, it's truly reflecting our approach," Harris says.

### **AR TRAFFIC CONSULTANTS UNLOCKING SAVINGS**

Since 1964, New York-based AR Traffic Consultants has provided freight bill payment and audit, shipment tracking, and third-party logistics services, among other solutions. While AR Traffic works with organizations of all sizes, its sweet spot is midsize companies, or those with annual revenues of between about \$50 million and \$500 million.

Many of AR Traffic's software applications are proprietary and designed in-house, giving AR more ability to customize each solution to better fit each client's needs than would be the case with third-party software, Fisher says. "We've committed a significant investment in technology research and development to support our freight pay and audit group, and our consulting and software divisions," he says.

For instance, AR Traffic continues to invest in its freight rate database and engine. When its clients sign carrier contracts, they'll send AR a copy of the



*"We help customers manage assessorial charges, which saves them a substantial amount of money."*

**-Nick Fisher  
Director, Sales  
AR Traffic Consultants**

agreement. AR loads this into its freight engine, along with the carrier's rate base and the negotiated rules for that carrier contract.

Then, when a customer needs to access the correct freight rate for that carrier, AR can access the rates from its database, apply the rules around discounts, floors, and other factors, and calculate what the carrier should be charging them. This "pre-auditing" ensures proper payment and minimizes the likelihood of incorrect charges and

classification errors, Fisher says.

AR Traffic's solutions can code freight bills to the SKU level, enabling companies to accurately allocate freight costs between different products. They also can evaluate parcel bills for service failures, such as late delivery, and account for this within the customer's payments.

AR Traffic also is responding to greater interest by clients that want to access freight rates directly, by enabling them to connect with carriers. "We've opened up our transportation management system to allow our customers to take advantage of that," Fisher says. Some customers prefer this approach, as they no longer need to work with AR Traffic to maintain their rate database.

To be sure, this carries some risk. "You're relying on the carrier to ensure your contract is accurately stored in their computer database," Fisher notes. Carriers' bills don't always reflect the negotiated rate. "You could be paying the carrier more than you should, and you'd never know the difference," Fisher says. Conversely, when AR stores each carrier's rates in its rate engine, it can easily check that its client's bill reflects the contracted rates.

Along with auditing freight bills and payments, AR Traffic is helping its customers check assessorial charges, which typically run from 2% to 6% of their overall freight bills. "By helping customers better manage these charges, we help them save a substantial amount of money," Fisher says.

### **CASS INFORMATION SYSTEMS DETECTING EFFICIENCIES**

For more than 60 years, Cass Information Systems, Inc. has provided freight bill audit and payment services for its clients. In addition to its headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri, Cass has offices in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the Netherlands, and



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and Singapore. It works with companies across the globe, helping them save money and operate more efficiently in several ways.

“A primary benefit to our customers is reduced processing expenses,” Zygmont says. Because Cass specializes in processing freight payments, it provides expertise and operational efficiencies that benefit its customers.

On its audit services, Cass typically saves its customers between 1% and 5% of their freight spending. It does this by checking that the carrier is applying the right rate for its type of goods, as well as the correct discounts and assessorial charges, and that the shipper is the party who should be billed for the freight.

In addition, by leveraging the information gained through the payment process, companies typically can cut 10% to 20% from their freight expenses. “With our business analytics tools, a customer can quickly pinpoint areas where freight expenses are on target and where they might be getting out of control,” Zygmont says.

Cass also audits at the package level—a key capability, given the growth in e-commerce and the resulting explosion in package deliveries. It also can check for potential challenges that can arise specifically when shipping packages, Zygmont says. For instance, the major parcel carriers often impose various assessorial charges that need to be checked for validity.

“Freight invoices are complex,” Zygmont says. “Cass understands freight charges, specializes in this type of service, has a solid system for auditing freight bills, and is large enough to continue to invest in technology and processes to provide the latest solutions to its customers,” he adds.

Cass is both a public company and financial holding company. It started as Cass Bank in 1906. In 1956, Cass added freight invoice processing to its roster of services. By about the late 1970s, the freight payment business became the dominant part of the overall company.

Cass uses the bank to make payments for its customers, Zygmont says. Through its bank, Cass also is able to offer trade financing options for its customers.

And as a financial institution, “financial stability and security are at the forefront with Cass,” Zygmont says.

### **CT LOGISTICS CAPTURING INTANGIBLES**

CT Logistics, also known as The Commercial Traffic Company, started 96 years ago as a provider of audit services for rail and canal freight shipments. The company, based in Cleveland, Ohio, was one of the first companies to audit motor freight, parcel, air and international freight bills. “CT Logistics’ core service has always been freight bill audit and payment,” Miner says.

Over the past 96 years, its methods and tools have—not surprisingly—advanced. In the 1980s, CT introduced *FreitRater*®, one of the first computerized solutions for auditing and rating shipments. As both transportation and technology evolve, CT Logistics has continued to invest in *FreitRater*, making it an enterprise-class software solution; available as a licensed TMS system, outsourced to CT, or as a SaaS solution through CT’s cloud-based delivery model.

Today, CT’s suite of solutions also includes Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) for freight invoices and *FreitWeb LCR*, its Least Cost Routing online shipping solution.

In addition to traditional audit, CT Logistics “provides actionable, real-time information and predictive analytics,” Miner says. CT’s sophisticated reporting tools allow clients to easily view graphics, generate pivot tables, and receive reports on a scheduled basis, allowing them to capture and analyze information that can help in decision making. CT Logistics’ *Qlik Business Intelligent Platform*



*“Interactive data visualizations enable clients to more easily identify carrier performance issues and apply corrective actions immediately.”*

**-Allan Miner  
President, CT Logistics**

lets shippers combine numerous data sources so they can easily analyze multiple data sets.

The *Qlik*® reporting system also allows clients to create reports and then drill down into any field or data element. “These interactive data visualizations enable clients to more easily identify carrier performance issues and apply corrective actions immediately,” Miner says. That’s in contrast to some BI solutions that rely on query-based analysis and restrict users to linear explorations within a partial view of their data, he adds.

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“With Qlik, you can develop, extend, and embed visual analytics in your apps, portals, or anywhere,” Miner says. Qlik customized dashboards are set up with a common governance and security framework that applies to all an organization’s employees across the globe.

Because CT uses its inhouse FreightRater® for its FBAP services, one key to an effective partnership is successfully integrating with its clients’ systems, such as their WMS, ERP, AP, or other software applications. To this end, CT Logistics’ software engineers work diligently to ensure “Day-1 functionality” for upstream and downstream data integration and management reporting, Miner says.

CT’s experienced team of logistics professionals also provide value-added consulting and project management for spend analyses, benchmarking, and cost comparisons, among other functions, Miner says.

The savings on a typical FBAP project total between 3% and 7% of total freight spend. That’s not counting the “more intangible, but invaluable savings” that come from visibility to shipping data, as well as the predictive analytics possible because of the data captured, including trends, correlations, and dependencies, Miner says.

### **CTSI-GLOBAL LOGISTICS SUPPORT FROM END TO END**

CTSI-Global works with numerous brands across the globe, processing about \$14 billion in freight invoices each year, says Richard Perry, vice president of business development with the Memphis, Tennessee-based firm. “All are looking for more efficient and effective ways to manage their logistics and business process operations,” he says.

CTSI-Global can help. With its technology, CTSI-Global is able to gather data from customers’ operations and disparate systems across the world. It combines this with knowledge of its carrier network to ensure its customers are working with the best providers in each region and optimizing their load routing. “The result is end-to-end logistics support that can work on your behalf,” Perry says. In addition to its U.S. operations, CTSI-Global has locations in India, Ireland, and Singapore.

As part of its managed services suite of solutions, CTSI-Global can help customers manage their inbound suppliers’

shipments. They can see, for instance, when products leave the vendors and whether a vendor is shipping full orders. “We streamline this and give customers visibility to their inbound freight,” Perry says. With this solution, companies also can implement a charge-back program for vendors that deviate from policies.

Recently, a medical device company spun off from its parent. It relied on the transportation management system offered by CTSI-Global to manage all its shipping activities, from routing shipments to managing documents. “We replaced the entire logistics department, and they didn’t miss a beat,” Perry says.



*“We streamline inbound shipments and give customers visibility to their inbound freight.”*

**-Richard Perry, VP,  
Business Development  
CTSI-Global**

### **DATA2LOGISTICS CONNECTING THE DOTS**

Data2Logistics, based in Fort Myers, Florida, possesses the skills and experience required to effectively work with shippers whose operations span the globe. Its customers include small and medium-sized businesses, as well as about 10% of the Fortune 500. Through its services, Data2Logistics typically recovers 5% to 15% of its customers’ freight spend.

In addition to reining in freight costs, many companies are looking for a single vendor to provide information on a global basis, from a single database, for all their modes of transportation, Friedman says. Data2Logistics can handle the unique requirements that come into play when working with taxes, regulations, and data on a global basis.

For example, when transactions are conducted in a currency other than the U.S. dollar or euro, it will maintain records in the local currency, in euros, and in U.S. dollars to easily support global reporting.

Like many FBAP providers, Friedman has observed growing interest by customers in business analytics. Data2Logistics is well positioned to



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**70%** of enterprises want **business intelligence tools** from their freight auditor.

Sources: Forbes, Analytics Will Revolutionize Supply Chains In 2018; Inbound Logistics, 2018 Top 100 Logistics IT Providers & Market Research Survey; American Shipper, 2016 Transportation Payment Benchmark Study.

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help. In addition to decades of freight auditing experience, it can provide the expertise and technology that can help shippers of all sizes leverage the insight that can be drawn from their shipping data. "This has nothing to do with the processing of bills, except that through our audits we get the data," Friedman says. "We have the resources to help shippers optimize pricing for their transportation shipments."

Data2Inform<sup>SM</sup>, their knowledge management platform, mines shippers' data to gain access to actionable information that can help them identify ways to "ship smarter," Friedman says. It starts by assembling a global view of the organization's logistics spending and operations, including assessorial



***"We have the resources to help shippers optimize transportation pricing."***

**-Harold Friedman  
SVP, Global Corporate  
Development  
Data2Logistics**

and freight charges, to identify cost drivers. Through its analytic capabilities, Data2Inform<sup>SM</sup> can identify opportunities to operate more efficiently by, for instance, shifting service types and/or transportation modes.

As more shippers look for "closed loop systems," Data2Logistics can also help. Friedman describes how this can work: A company initiates an outbound shipment, creating a manifest or bill of lading that's electronically sent to Data2Logistics, which in turn marries this record with the freight information it receives from the carriers. This allows it to allocate freight costs, often down to the SKU level, allowing clients to more accurately price their goods.

In addition to its expertise in freight bill audit, payment, and analytics, Data2Logistics takes seriously its obligation to safeguard customers' private information. It's long been TRUSTe- and Privacy Shield-certified, and also supports the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

### **ENVISTA TRACKING DOWN REFUNDS**

enVista LLC is a provider of global freight bill audit and payment, an expert in systems selection and implementation of labor, transportation, and warehouse management systems, a Microsoft Gold certified partner, and a leader in network strategy and facility design and build, among other services, says Megan Bishop, director of operations. "Through these services, we help optimize supply chain efficiencies," she says. Based in Carmel, Indiana, enVista also operates eight offices around the world.

In addition, enVista "helps clients unify commerce, so they can drive revenue and build customer engagement," Bishop says. It does this through an array of solutions, including order management, point of sale, and store fulfillment

systems, as well as vendor drop-ship and trading partner management.

With its FBAP solution, enVista works with companies of all sizes and from various regions around the world. Its clients come from a cross-section of industries, with many from the retail sector.

While freight bill auditing remains a key capability, enVista's proactive analytics and consulting services enable clients to improve visibility to their freight, increase operational and financial control, and reduce transportation spending.

For instance, enVista's solutions



***"We optimize supply chain efficiencies, drive revenue, and build customer engagement."***

**-Megan Bishop  
Director, Operations  
enVista**

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provided greater visibility into the transportation spending of five divisions of a global engineering company, while also streamlining invoice processing. Among other benefits, the firm cut the number of invoices requiring corrections by more than 40%. Within six months, it reduced the cost of invoice processing by nearly 20%.

While no computer system integration typically is required before enVista can conduct a freight audit, an integration can enhance the service provided. This can be either a one-way or two-way integration. In a one-way integration, enVista captures information from the client through, for instance, a feed from the warehouse management system. By capturing this data directly from the source, the value of the audit and the information contained in the reporting can be both deeper and broader. In a two-way integration, enVista provides the audited data directly back to its customers. Usually, this is done through a link to its customers' ERP solutions.

Through its transportation-focused business intelligence platform, enVista can easily, accurately, and quickly manipulate data to provide proactive analytics and what-if analyses.

For instance, an analysis might reveal a customer is shipping packages using both standard and priority overnight services. However, the priority service provides a difference of just several hours in the delivery time. The standard overnight service is less expensive and still meets the service level agreements. enVista's platform can calculate the amount the client could save by shifting more packages to the standard overnight service.

Working with a specialty coffee retailer, enVista recovered more than \$420,000 in charges resulting from rating errors. On top of this, it calculated the refund owed the company for fuel charges and assessorials, by calculating differences between the amounts charged and the contracted rates. The client also gained greater visibility to all

its charges. "The business intelligence platform has helped us identify many opportunities to benefit our customers," Bishop says.

### **FORTIGO PROVIDING VITAL LINKS**

Among the primary services offered by Fortigo, Inc. are its freight bill audit and payment solution and cloud-based transportation management system, says George Kontoravdis, Ph.D. and president of the Austin, Texas-based firm.

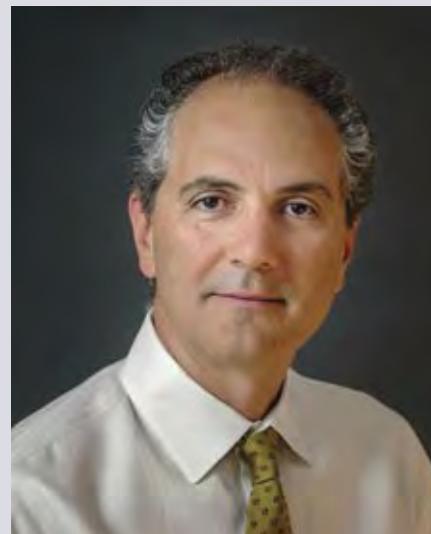
Fortigo's transportation management platform electronically links shippers, carriers, vendors, and other business partners so all can view the same information. The solution is carrier-neutral and can scale to meet the needs of most any enterprise. It enables shippers to track and analyze shipping data, and then leverage this information to cut costs, enhance customer service, and improve decision-making, among other benefits.

Fortigo's freight audit solution automatically reviews freight bills and identifies inaccuracies between the contracted rates and the rates charged to shippers, while simultaneously taking into account service level agreements, volume discounts, and other factors. As a result, Fortigo can prevent inadvertent overpayments.

The freight audit software also can match shipments to their original order numbers or purchase orders, minimizing the risk of duplicate invoices. "Our technology optimizes and audits freight logistics to help enterprises reduce costs, improve customer satisfaction, enhance compliance, and increase profitability," Kontoravdis says.

Through the solution, shippers also can automatically submit to their carriers claims for service failure refunds.

The system can produce numerous customizable reports based on



***"Our technology optimizes and audits freight logistics to help enterprises increase profitability."***

**-George Kontoravdis  
President, Fortigo**

user-defined search criteria, such as summaries of spending by time period, mode, charge category, and carrier. Dashboards enable users to quickly identify spending trends. Built-in carrier performance reports highlight deviations from service level agreements, and can bolster clients' abilities to effectively negotiate new contracts. "These reports provide users with the insight that enables them to cut spending in multiple ways," Kontoravdis says.

To begin the auditing process, Fortigo will integrate with its client's financial

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## FREIGHT BILL AUDIT & PAYMENT: IT'S MORE THAN THE MONEY

system. Fortigo's systems easily integrate with most established supply chain software solutions. Additional integrations with the shipping and warehousing systems also may be required. These can enable closed-loop audits, in which purchase order data is matched against freight bills, yielding increased accuracy and functionality.

The typical implementation runs about three months, although this will vary based on the number of carriers, contracts, and other factors specific to each client. Most of Fortigo's clients spend at least \$10 million on transportation annually.

Fortigo also connects with a growing number of carriers. As a result, a shipper that's expanding or redesigning its transportation network can simply input its new strategy into Fortigo. "The company can quickly move from planning to execution," Kontoravdis says.

On a new freight bill audit deployment, companies often save between 5% and 15% of their logistics spending. On an ongoing basis, companies typically save between 1% and 1.5% of their overall logistics expense. "While a small percentage, this can still be a significant dollar amount," Kontoravdis says.

### **INTELLIGENT AUDIT MASTERING COMPLEXITY**

Intelligent Audit is a technology leader in parcel and freight audit, business intelligence, and transportation spend optimization. The firm's proprietary technology, paired with a team of strategic account managers, helps some of the largest and most complex global shippers analyze, benchmark, optimize, and gain critical insights into their global transportation network, and become smarter shippers.

"Intelligent Audit's best-in-class audit and reporting technology allows clients

to leverage their data to reduce costs, enhance real-time visibility, and improve the end-customer experience," says Hannah Testani, chief operating officer.

Intelligent Audit, which is based in Rochelle Park, New Jersey, works with companies from across the globe and across industry verticals. Customers' annual transportation expense can range from less than \$1 million to more than \$3 billion.

Intelligent Audit recently partnered with Triumph Bank to provide fully integrated, bank-backed, freight payment processing. Through this partnership, Intelligent Audit can help its clients streamline accounts payable, optimize working capital, become a shipper of choice, and enhance the security of their supply chains.

Intelligent Audit's solution is cloud-based, minimizing integration requirements. However, Intelligent Audit often works with its customers to access their TMS data and SKU information. This data helps Intelligent Audit provide more valuable insight. It also allows them to create true accruals for customers, showing both the shipments that have been shipped out and not yet invoiced, as well as shipments that have been invoiced and not yet funded.

This information also enables Intelligent Audit to allocate shipment costs to the SKU level. "Shippers can understand their profitability at the most granular level," Testani says. With this additional data, Intelligent Audit can provide its customers with more detail and color on their transportation data, by joining order information such as the PO and load numbers to the carrier invoices.

The reporting capabilities also include trends and historical dashboards that can help shippers identify spikes and anomalies as they occur; relevant KPIs that provide insight to the trade-offs between cost, speed, and performance; and interactive heat maps that pinpoint bottlenecks and problematic or high-cost locations. The system's 700-plus pre-built reports provide real-time reporting

and tracking, time-in-transit analysis, and data on accessorial management, carrier performance, and hub injection analysis, among others.

Intelligent Audit's powerful reporting and analytics functionality helped a large retailer optimize its omnichannel shipping strategy. The retailer's fulfillment network includes both distribution centers and brick-and-mortar stores. The company suspected it had an opportunity to increase store-based fulfillment, but lacked hard data to validate this hypothesis. Manually conducting an analysis



***"Our technology allows clients to leverage data to reduce costs, enhance visibility, and improve the customer experience."***

**-Hannah Testani  
Chief Operating Officer  
Intelligent Audit**



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## FREIGHT BILL AUDIT & PAYMENT: IT'S MORE THAN THE MONEY

would have been too time-consuming.

The retailer leveraged IA's proprietary algorithms to analyze each of its stores. With this insight, the retailer was able to maximize the productivity of its existing infrastructure, identify the ZIP codes in which it made sense to add warehouses or convert existing stores to distribution centers, and optimize the placement of new stores, Testani says.

According to Intelligent Audit's research, their customers save an average of 12% to 18% of their shipping costs. The exact amount will vary with the modes, carriers, and services utilized.

### **nVISION GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS** **ANALYZING DATA**

nVision Global provides global freight invoice audit, payment, and transportation spend management services for customers around the globe through seven full-service processing centers located on three continents, and with employees who are fluent in more than 25 languages.

The company's expertise lies in managing and auditing invoices for all modes and services of transportation, and in any currency and most languages, says Keith Snavelly, senior vice president, global sales with the McDonough, Georgia-based firm. "nVision's niche is multinational corporations of all sizes who need an FBAP provider with global capabilities," he says.

Each year, nVision processes 125 million invoices, totalling more than \$6 billion. Its web-based exception management tools are available in multiple languages and can determine the correction application of each customer's business rules and requirements.

Along with its ability to automate freight audit and payment processes, nVision's state-of-the-art analytical tools

can help customers achieve savings of 10% to 15% of their transportation spending. It does this by enabling accurate and customized allocations of transportation costs, based on weight, SKU numbers, and other factors.

For instance, by using nVision's analytics solution, a customer learned it was making overnight parcel shipments to a company located in its same building, but on a different floor. "The client was inadvertently spending money to send a letter two floors down, when an employee could have walked it there for free," Snavelly says.

Another company used nVision's lane analysis solution to consolidate shipments and identify areas in which it could change transportation modes, while still meeting its service level agreements. In doing so, it captured about \$400,000 in annual savings. "That would have been impossible without the data we capture through the freight audit and payment process," Snavelly says.

nVision, like other FBAP providers, is expanding its traditional suite of services to provide other supply chain solutions, such as transportation management services. Because it has already captured

the volume of information available on most invoices, nVision can use its analytical tools to identify ways customers can lower the costs and increase the effectiveness of their supply chain management functions.

In addition, nVision's Global Supply Chain Services division can work with its customers to use data generated by the audits to improve rate negotiations for any mode of transportation. "These savings are significant, and on top of the 10% to 15% savings identified in the audit," Snavelly says.

### **ORCA** **REVEALING THE BIG PICTURE**

At first glance, whales may seem to have little to do with freight bills. However, the name of Toronto-based Orca Intelligence reflects its founders' desire "to be a big fish in a small sea rather than just another player in the supply chain industry," says co-founder Marco Grossi. "This is a niche market, and we feel very confident that with the right technology and focus on client



***"Customers uncover opportunities to reduce costs or reconfigure their supply chains to be more efficient."***

**-Marco Grossi (right), Co-Founder, Orca (pictured with co-founder and brother Matt Grossi)**

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### Lost Savings

See how much you're losing using a non-preferred carrier based on your routing guide. Identify rules you're not following, costing you money.

## FREIGHT BILL AUDIT & PAYMENT: IT'S MORE THAN THE MONEY

experience, we can become one of the bigger players.”

Orca's solution manages a supply chain invoice, starting from the moment a purchase order is dropped into a client's ERP or WMS system, and all the way through each process that leads to payment. As this occurs, Orca leverages artificial intelligence, machine learning, and business intelligence to collect and clean the data it's capturing, so it can populate custom-made dashboards available through the system. This helps supply chain professionals analyze their shipping data and make more effective business decisions.

After graduating university, Grossi and his brother, Matt, also an Orca co-founder, joined the family business, 3PL Links. Grossi held various roles in operations and sales, while Matt led the finance and IT team. In 2014, the two decided to outsource the company's freight auditing function. Unhappy with the options available, they launched Orca in 2016. Business, whether measured by revenue, clients, or amount audited, has tripled or quadrupled each year since then, Grossi says. Orca's clients span various industries, with most having at least \$20 million in freight spend.

Orca also built its own middleware software that can recognize data from just about any ERP, TMS, or WMS. This software identifies the data's meaning and pushes it into the Orca system so shippers can see and analyze it. “It's seamless, and there's no time needed for integration. We wanted a scalable product right from the start,” Grossi says.

Because Orca collects information as it audits freight bills, clients have asked it to provide reporting that highlights not just their supply chain function, but also their broader operations. “We become their business reporting channel,” Grossi says. For instance, the Orca system can offer SKU-level analysis, such as how much an organization is paying to ship a case of pens to every office in North America.

Through Orca's interactive dashboards, a user can click a drop-down box and see, for instance, the activities at each of its warehouses or distribution centers, as well as the amounts each carrier is charging.

The Orca system recognizes expense patterns, compares costs of alternative carriers, and sums up total potential savings or optimized costs. “Customers uncover opportunities to reduce costs or reconfigure their supply chains to be more efficient,” Grossi says.

The company works with North America's largest shippers and 3PLs to “give them the accurate and clean data that every organization needs to confidently make decisions that impact their bottom line,” Grossi says. “We always aim for customers to recoup their investment in Orca within a year.”

With innovation and customer experience as their cornerstone values, the Grossi brothers are setting themselves up to be the leaders in their respective space and push the boundaries and capabilities of all North American logistics and supply chain departments.

### **RATELINX UNCOVERING LONG-TERM VALUE**

RateLinx's Intelligent Invoice Management solution provides actionable freight data, with no IT integration work required by the client company, says Shannon Vaillancourt, president with the Madison, Wisconsin-based firm. RateLinx works with companies of all sizes and from all industries. The common denominator? “They want to leverage their transportation data strategically,” he says.

In real time, the RateLinx solution cleanses and standardizes four datasets—shipment, track and trace,

invoice, and order and item data. This information forms the foundation of a “3D” approach to data.

The first “D” is Diagnose. RateLinx, working with the customer, leverages the data to diagnose any challenges it's facing. The next “D” is Develop. The clean, actionable data provided by the RateLinx system enables the organization to develop a solid freight invoice strategy. The final “D” is Deploy. The company's freight invoice strategy is implemented, measured, and monitored to ensure it provides long-term value.

Because RateLinx can tap into its customers' data feeds without requiring



***“Companies want to leverage their transportation data strategically.”***

**-Shannon Vaillancourt  
President, RateLinx**

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integration work, companies don't need to call on their internal IT departments, which often are already stretched thin. This keeps costs down and allows companies to quickly leverage the value captured in their data. Often, this happens within about 30 days, Vaillancourt says.

The initial phase of data cleansing typically reveals savings of at least 5% of transportation spending, Vaillancourt says. In addition, longer-term, strategic changes, such as more effective freight rate negotiations, can unlock additional savings that average about 20%.

RateLinx offers detailed reports from which customers can export data to Excel, as well as pie charts with multiple drill-down levels that show Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). One popular KPI focuses on lost savings, such as the dollars spent by the company when it deviates from routing guides. Another KPI, Potential Savings, measures the cost of each routing rule that a company has in place, while the Shipment Status KPI measures and predicts the on-time arrival of shipments.

### FINDING A SOLUTION

RateLinx worked with one customer that was struggling to pay its carriers on time. To the customer, it appeared as if dozens of issues were preventing it from paying the freight bills. For instance, the bills would sometimes match the shipment tender, and other times they wouldn't. The customer occasionally received invoices for which it lacked a freight rate. "They didn't know where to begin," Vaillancourt says.

Vaillancourt and his team started by using RateLinx's PayLinx system to diagnose the problem. In addition to several typical invoice issues that were quickly resolved, they uncovered an unexpected problem. Some of the company's locations were using an out-of-date routing guide. As a result, they were tendering freight to a carrier that no longer had rates in place. Armed with this insight, the customer was able

to quickly contact their locations and have them start using the latest routing guide. "This allowed our customer to save about \$800,000 per week," Vaillancourt says.

## TRANS AUDIT INFORMATION- RICH APPROACH, HIGH-ROI SERVICE

While many freight bill audit and payment services focus on pre-payment audits, Trans Audit, the world's largest global freight and parcel post-audit specialist, takes a different approach.

Trans Audit uncovers and recuperates hidden value and funds in paid transportation bills. "We focus solely on a true global, multimodal post-payment audit," says Vikki L. Van Vliet, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "Trans Audit's post-payment audit unobtrusively operates after freight audit and payment companies and internal audits. We identify and recover both overbilling and overpayment errors, and provide a secondary level of insurance, especially as carrier billing and human errors are commonplace."

With analysts in six U.S. offices, as well as Europe, Singapore, and China, Trans Audit has been in operation for more than 40 years and employs experts in all modes of transportation.

Its clients are large-scale shippers that utilize all transport modes internationally and domestically. Trans Audit operates purely on a contingency, or benefit-sharing basis, whereby Trans Audit earns a percentage of the recoveries it ascertains.

Trans Audit identifies and recovers errors in freight rates, accessorial, distance, discounts, currency conversions, classifications, fuel, and more. It also uncovers payments to wrong parties, multiple payments, and

## To-Do List: Choosing an FBAP Provider

- Look at the company's total value proposition to ensure its solutions have real value for your supply chain.
- Obtain the company's audited financial statements to make sure it's on solid financial footing.
- Ask to see the company's SOC 1, Type 2 report, which assesses an organization's internal controls over a period of time.
- Check whether the company has an employee dishonesty bond sufficient to cover potential losses.
- Visit the provider's operations to make sure they're full-service processing centers.
- Make sure the provider offers automated freight audit and recovery across all transportation modes.
- Verify the company standardizes data. Any non-standard data should be fixed, and no data should be removed.
- Check that data is presented within 24 hours and is actionable.
- Make sure all actions recommended by the provider are driven by data.

incorrect payment ownership—that is, bills or portions of bills that clients paid even though they were not responsible for them.

"We audit for payment accuracy and ownership, as well as tariff and contract compliance to ensure that all clients' invoices are billed and paid correctly," Kristy Bishop, Director Sales & Marketing, says. Trans Audit also performs a logistical trend analysis to identify recurrent anomalies, confirm that accessorial charges make sense, and clients actually received the benefit of the services billed.



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The timeframe for which overbillings and overpayments can be recovered varies based on error type and transportation mode. For overpayment errors, Trans Audit typically analyzes up to five years in arrears; while for overbilling errors, the time limits range from six months to three years in arrears, depending on the mode utilized.

Via TransPortal™, Trans Audit's online claims analytics system, clients have visibility to filed, open, and paid claims, as well as claims by mode, carrier, and error type, among other key metrics. Clients use this valuable information to take corrective action and make process improvements.

Chad W. Kennedy, IV, President of Trans Audit, states, "A truly consultative post audit should also provide clients with intellectual and process improvement insight. Trans Audit works cooperatively and collaboratively with its clients' carriers to ensure an expeditious and amicable review and recovery process."

Trans Audit's proven post-audit implementation process typically takes weeks rather than months. Trans Audit directly and independently obtains data from pre-audit companies, carriers, 3PLs, or 4PLs its clients employ, as well as from clients' ERP, TMS, or other systems.

Trans Audit's dedicated carrier relations department submits, coordinates, and resolves claims collaboratively with all carriers, with little or no client involvement.

As a result, clients find the implementation process, as well as ongoing support, to be efficient and non-resource intensive.

Kennedy says, "The post audit should deliver more than just monetary benefits; it should also provide continuous improvement and insight into a company's payment processes and supplier relations. Our ultimate objective is to deliver a non-intrusive, client-focused, information rich, high-ROI service."

### **TRAX DERIVING ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS**

In 2018, Trax Technologies and Veraction merged. Their customers are seeing the benefits. The mission of the combined company, which kept the Trax name, is Total Transportation Spend Management or TTSM, says Samir Shah, chief strategy officer. To that end, it's invested heavily in its technology platform. Trax, based in Scottsdale, Arizona, works with shippers of all sizes and across all modes.

One result of Trax's technology investment is the TTSM Rate Manager, which has been commercially available since April 2019. Trax developed Rate Manager because it observed many companies struggling to manage freight rates across their enterprises, says Steve Beda, executive vice president. Many other systems could only handle one or two modes of transport and were not global solutions.

After all, developing a rate management solution for all modes of transportation across the globe is a daunting undertaking. The system must account for different rate definitions, multiple currencies, and numerous other variables. Trax's goal "was to provide a single source of truth, for all modes, all carriers, and in all regions of the world," Beda says. Rate Manager does that.

Rate Manager also is "agnostic." That is, it can synchronize rates and other information across multiple platforms, such as warehouse management and transportation management systems, as well as other FABP providers if required, Beda adds.

Trax has invested heavily in its Total Transportation Spend Management platform, which supports its freight audit capability. "We're leveraging best-of-breed, cloud-enabled technologies to provide scalability," Shah says. With this

capability, the system can easily handle spikes in companies' operations.

Another key feature of the TTSM is its extensibility, or ability to push and pull information to and from other systems. "We enable that knowledge transfer," Shah says.

The TTSM also drives automation. "We're removing manual processes and making it simpler and easier for enterprises to create workflows that deliver business outcomes," Shah says.

Within TTSM, Trax continues to advance its analytics suite so it can provide not just descriptions of actions that have already occurred, but prescriptive insight for the future. "It's like looking at your data in high definition," Beda says. Through the analytic tools, shippers



***"We leverage best-of-breed, cloud-enabled technologies to provide scalability."***

**-Samir Shah  
Chief Strategy Officer  
Trax**

can interpret data, model scenarios, and evaluate courses of action. "We help shippers use the data to improve their transportation spend and overall logistics execution," he adds.

For instance, Trax leveraged its business intelligence platform to provide an international retailer greater visibility to its transportation costs. The retailers uncovered and eliminated a number of inefficiencies, cutting its transportation costs by 8%.

And by analyzing inventory costs against the expense of expedited air freight at the SKU level, it cut inventory carrying costs by 3%—and that's net of increased transportation costs from boosting its use of expedited shipping.

Trax currently processes more than \$12 billion in invoices each year, across all modes of transportation and all regions of the world, for both parcel and non-parcel shipments.

The investments Trax has made in its technology offerings reflect the company's commitment to meeting clients' needs for freight audit tools, analysis, and insight, over both the short- and long-term. "We're thinking not only about today and tomorrow but about what's going to happen in the future," Shah says. "We're well positioned to look into the future and be a trusted advisor and solution provider for our customers."

## **U.S. BANK BUILDING BANKABLE SOLUTIONS**

Through U.S. Bank Freight Payment, shippers and carriers can manage freight payments and audits across all

transportation modes with a single solution. "Our primary focus is helping our clients streamline their payment and audit functions, and we do that by taking paper out of the process," says Jeff Pape, senior vice president, head of global transportation product and marketing with U.S. Bank.

In a fast-paced, changing market, customers need simple, efficient payments, he adds. Because U.S. Bank's solution automatically completes a pre-payment audit of invoices, it can eliminate payment errors and ensure contract rate compliance. Based in Minneapolis, U.S. Bank is the fifth largest bank in the United States.

Also through the system, both shippers and carriers can view funds received and disbursed. Prepayment audits let carriers know they're going to receive payment for the full amount of services they provided, while shippers can be

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confident their contractual business rules and terms were met. "Both parties have a shared interest in making sure that they're making the right payment at the right time," Pape says.

U.S. Bank Freight Payment also provides benchmarking data that can help companies compare their processes to peer organizations or best-in-class groups. Through this analysis, they often can realize additional savings.

For instance, Pape and his team discovered a customer's assessorial charges were 15% higher than its peer group. Further research showed the customer was being charged detention because its trucks were actually arriving before their scheduled times at the dock. Using this knowledge, the company adjusted its routes and schedules to minimize detention charges. "That's where the science and the analytics come into play," Pape says. Most customers save

***"Our primary focus is helping clients streamline their payment and audit functions."***

**-Jeff Pape, SVP, Head, Global Transportation Product and Marketing, U.S. Bank**



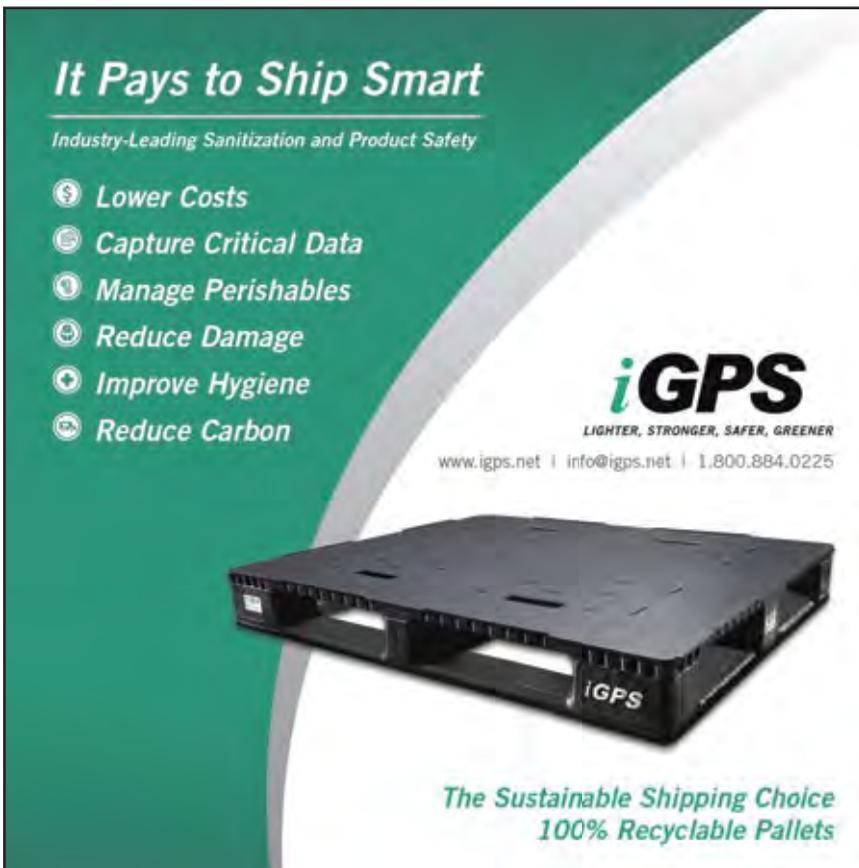
between 2% and 4% of their total freight spend by catching these errors, he adds.

U.S. Bank also offers a trade finance solution that helps both shippers and carriers maximize their working capital.

Say a carrier wants to receive payment sooner than the terms of its contract with a shipper currently stipulates. U.S. Bank can make the payment as soon as the invoice is approved, and then work with the shipper to ultimately collect the funds owed. Conversely, for shippers looking to extend days payable outstanding and use some of their working capital, U.S. Bank can provide extended terms. "As a bank, we can facilitate and move money to meet customers' needs and provide flexibility," Pape says.

U.S. Bank deploys a hands-on approach that provides it with a deep understanding of its clients' processes and priorities. It can interface with its clients in numerous ways, including paper, EDI file transfers, and APIs. As a result, it's able to minimize disruptions to its clients' processes, Pape says.

And as a regulated financial institution, U.S. Bank takes data and payment security seriously. "We're regulated and held to a standard that's much higher than our nonbank competitors," Pape says. U.S. Bank has robust and mature processes for data security and business and disaster recovery. Each of its processes are vetted and tested quarterly. It's one of fewer than 10 companies in the United States that have tier-four data centers—the highest level possible. "It even goes beyond the standard we're held to by regulators," Pape says.



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## FREIGHT BILL AUDIT & PAYMENT: IT'S MORE THAN THE MONEY

### **iGPS POOLING RESOURCES**

Just as FBAP services help ensure accurate freight bills, the pallet pooling company iGPS helps ensure products, and particularly grocery items, move to their desired destinations on time and intact.

"We're a plastic pallet pooling company," says Jeff Liebesman, chief executive officer with the Orlando, Florida-based firm. "We provide on-time, every-time quality pallets to our customer base."

iGPS offers the only rental pallet that's earned the NSF's Food Equipment Certification. "iGPS pallets can easily be cleaned, won't absorb fluids that can lead to contamination, and never require treatment with toxic pesticides or

fungicides," Liebesman says. Formerly the National Sanitation Foundation, NSF is a non-profit organization that certifies food service equipment.

Not surprisingly, iGPS focuses on the grocery supply chain and the manufacturers that supply it. Its pallets transport their products to grocery retailers. Once the grocer no longer needs the pallets, iGPS arranges for their recovery and return. "We remove the hassle of pallet management from the manufacturer and retailer," Liebesman says. "Neither needs to spend resources moving empty pallets."

To add to their sustainability, plastic pallets typically weigh less than wood pallets. That means shippers often can squeeze one or two more pallet loads onto a trailer than they can when using wood pallets. "Our plastic pallets are an exemplar of the circular economy," Liebesman says.

### **SUPPLY CHAIN BOOST**

Shippers are taking action to become "shippers of choice" in order to move freight quickly and reliably. One step toward this goal is paying their bills on time and accurately.

Freight bill audit and payment service providers help on this front. And that's just for starters.

They also make sure shippers don't pay more than they owe, or more than similar shippers in their market.

With the expertise, technology, and processes to help global enterprises not just ensure billing accuracy, freight payment providers bring more value than money. As partners, they collect insights and pinpoint actions for shippers to clear a path toward a more efficient supply chain. ■



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