



Paper Transport (PTI) on Multimodal Strategy in Food Chains

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Multimodal Transportation Playbook for Food Shippers

The end-game vision of modern supply chains for most food manufacturers, retailers and distributors usually is focused three priorities. First, a focus on resiliency and agility ensures continued operations despite disruptions. Second, the use of technology and collaboration with supply chain partners ensures visibility and efficiencies, and can have a significant impact on achieving sustainability goals. Lastly, optimizing transportation, warehousing and other logistics-related functions ensures that supply chain costs are effectively managed for a competitive edge.



Jared Stedl

What do these three supply chain priorities for food shippers have in common? Significant opportunities to be achieved through the use of multimodal transportation, according to Jared Stedl, Chief Commercial Officer with Paper Transport (PTI), a multimodal asset-backed transportation and logistics solutions company that provides Dedicated, Over-the-Road, Intermodal, and Brokerage services to the food industry, among others.

“If you’re not effectively incorporating a multimodal approach into your overall supply chain strategy, you’re likely missing out on opportunities for a more resilient, productive, cost-effective supply chain,” says Stedl. “More options can equate to more opportunities.” A multimodal strategy offers a blend of different transport modes, including trucking, rail/intermodal, ocean, and air.

Current Use of Multimodal in Supply Chain Strategy

Some of the largest food brands routinely incorporate effective multimodal into their supply chain strategy. But how much volume of food products and materials currently moves via various modes?

In 2023, domestic truck tonnage shipped totaled 11.18 billion tons of freight – and a significant portion of this involved consumer packaged food goods and agricultural goods. In a typical year, railroads transport more than 1.7 million carloads of food products that include canned goods, fresh produce, frozen foods, dairy products, wine, beer, and sugar, according to the Association of American Railroads. Approximately 59%

of the global food trade is transported by ocean, meaning the majority of food moving across the world moves by ocean vessels and many food chains are global in scope.

Such sophisticated global supply chains equate to the logical need for multimodal options and resources.

Why Multimodal? Creating a Competitive Advantage

Multimodal transportation can be a transformative force in managing your supply chain, according to Stedl. He identifies these as the primary benefits to a multimodal approach in food chain management:

Cost Optimization. Multimodal transportation can generate cost efficiencies in several ways.



Kristina Deprey

“Food shippers can take advantage of lower rates by using a combination of modes, particularly by leveraging the combined intermodal use of rail and truck,” says Kristina Deprey,

Director of Logistics with PTI, who has more than 20 years of experience

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in intermodal, logistics, brokerage, and customer service. “Intermodal transportation often provides cost savings compared to solely relying on one mode of transport, especially for longer distances. It leverages the strengths of each mode to optimize the overall transportation process.”

She explains how PTI can bring cost efficiencies to food shippers: “Unlike other asset-owning IMCs, PTI has the flexibility to utilize both rail-owned boxes and private-owned boxes. Instead of aligning ourselves with one specific railroad, we are able to diversify on both of the major Class 1 railroads on the West Coast, for example.” This means we have different opportunities where we can shorten our actual dray for customers, based on whichever railroad we utilize, so that helps to eliminate miles. The reality is that through our multimodal capabilities, we have multiple options that can make a difference in cost.”

Speed and Predictability. Through multimodal transportation, using a single container throughout the entire process can make it easier and more efficient to transfer between modes of transportation.

“Utilizing intermodal solutions can help food shippers and carriers tap into additional capacity options, especially during peak seasons or capacity constraints,” says Deprey. “Intermodal solutions can be strategically employed during holiday periods when traditional trucking capacity might be strained. This helps ensure a steady flow of freight during peak demand times.”

Enhanced Resilience. Food chains are vulnerable to disruptions caused by unforeseen events. Multimodal offers a diversified network of options, with alternative gateways and solution pathways through ground, rail/intermodal, and ocean routes. This agility enables businesses to navigate

bottlenecks and maintain a seamless flow of goods.



Wes Kornowske

“Our ability to bring intermodal transportation into the equation for our customers reduces reliance on a single mode of transportation,” explains Wes Kornowske, Vice

President of Operations – Truckload and Intermodal, who leads PTI’s truckload and intermodal-drayage teams which is comprised of more than 1,000 team members. “Of course, it’s important to consider food safety in all aspects of the supply chain process. We consistently ensure we are compliant with the Food Modernization Act and we only use equipment with telematics on the refer unit, so we understand what the temperatures are throughout the journey of the load.”

8 Ways to Maximize Your Multimodal Transportation

- 1. Plan ahead:** Consider factors such as time sensitivity, freight volume, and cost of transportation mode. Plan routes, schedules, and contingency plans.
- 2. Use technology:** Use tracking systems and integrated platforms to communicate and get real-time updates on your multimodal moves.
- 3. Build relationships:** Establish trust with your supply chain partners that specialize in multimodal transportation to ensure smooth transitions between modes.
- 4. Understand regulations:** Different modes may have different regulations, so familiarize yourself with them to avoid compliance issues. Lean on your partners, when needed.
- 5. Analyze your supply chain:** Use relevant data to identify weak points in your operations.
- 6. Use dynamic routing:** Leverage data to find the best paths and most cost-effective modes for transportation.
- 7. Scale capacity:** Planning can help you scale capacity to your needs, so you can handle your peak periods effectively.
- 8. Optimize Capacity:** Multimodal transportation systems combine different modes of transport, such trucking, rail/intermodal, ocean/maritime, and air.

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Multimodal: Making A Significant Impact on Sustainability

The food industry is a major contributor to climate change and is already experiencing disruptions due to it. Many food companies have been taking significant steps to reduce their environmental impact by reducing waste; limiting water and energy consumption; and cutting pollution and emissions.

Food companies are looking at many aspects of their business operations through the lens of sustainability, including business continuity, profitability, consumer demand, supply chain activities, transparency, packaging design, and deployment.

Not only does a prioritization on sustainability benefit the environment, but it can increase a company’s profitability in the long run, according to Stedl, who has made sustainability a priority through his 20-year career in logistics and supply chain. He worked at Trillium CNG from July 2012 to February 2015, where he played a key role in expanding the understanding and utilization of compressed natural gas (CNG) as a fueling solution in transportation networks. He also has used his sustainability expertise and passion during his 15-year employment tenure with Schneider National and has carried this over into his leadership role at PTI.

“Achieving significant sustainability goals for food chains can be accomplished effectively through Tier 3 partnerships,” says Stedl.

“We’re encouraged by shippers’ recognition of proven alternative fuels

like RNG and CNG, as highlighted in the NACFE’s ‘Messy Middle’ description,” continues Stedl. “While battery-electric vehicles are increasingly present in transportation, local applications such as Intermodal drayage remain ideal for their shorter run and return-to-base nature. Shippers can collaborate with providers like PTI to adopt RNG as an alternate fuel, leveraging existing technology and infrastructure. Natural gas applications are economically viable today and can effectively replace diesel fuel in longer-range scenarios without sacrificing payload capacity.”

He provides recent successes as to how PTI as a Tier-3 partner is helping food shippers achieve their sustainability goals:

- PTI achieved a significant milestone in 2024, We have achieved over 76 million miles utilizing Compressed/ Renewable Natural Gas (CNG/RNG) vehicles. PTI continues to lead the industry with innovative initiatives

aimed at reducing carbon emissions and promoting environmental stewardship.

- PTI offers an unusual Driver Incentive Program which involves rewarding drivers for efficient driving and fuel conservation. This has led to a savings of nearly 120,000 gallons of annual fuel consumption through best-in-class efficiency in 2024 for PTI.
- PTI is committed to loading every mile via route optimization, backhaul load solicitation, and collaboration with dedicated customers. In fact, PTI has big audacious goal to load 80% of empty dedicated miles in 2024—turning 715,000 gallons of would-be burned empty miles into loaded miles.

To download the *whitepaper Multimodal Transportation Playbook for Food Shippers*, visit FoodShippers.org, click ‘Resources’ and ‘Whitepapers.’



Strengthening Port Deliveries for Southeastern Produce Suppliers

A leading supplier of fresh fruit and vegetables in the Southeast needed a stronger solution to move more loads from the port of Tampa to its customers' distribution centers. This company needed a carrier partner with an abundance of TWIC®-certified drivers and the network to keep their fresh fruit business moving.

That's when PTI was asked to take on a larger slice of their port deliveries.

The problem arose when the business outgrew the provider

Even with its own ships and containers, this freight produce leader relied heavily on carrier relationships to get its products out of port and into distribution. They used a small local carrier to manage transportation from the Port of Tampa to distribution points across Florida.

However, when their business in Florida grew rapidly, and the incumbent carrier couldn't keep up with the increased volume, the fresh produce company struggled to keep products moving quickly enough to meet demand. They needed a carrier that could grow with them and continue to efficiently make the out-and-back runs.

The company's growth was at risk because the incumbent carrier already was at maximum capacity. If a driver couldn't make the run, the incumbent carrier didn't have a contingency plan. This underscored the need for a carrier that could handle the business at hand, adapt to new growth, and overcome any potential service interruptions.

PTI enables the produce company's capacity to grow

The PTI solution was simple. They tapped into their vast network to find both drivers and the capacity needed to move the fresh fruit from the port to distribution centers across Florida. The fruit company owned the refrigerated containers, the port supplied the chassis, and PTI came to the rescue with an ample supply of power units and TWIC®-certified drivers.

PTI is committed to supporting the rapid growth of the port business. As they delivered the first loads, PTI continued training drivers and increasing their population with TWIC® certification. With increased driver availability and the growing number of PTI-owned power units, they were positioned to handle the increase in container volume.

Visit papertransport.com for more information.

CNG/RNG Kenworth™ vehicles are part of PTI's fleet to offer a clean engine option for food customers. New CNG/RNG truck technology will meet upcoming (2027) stringent EPA emission requirements and CARB 2024 Low NOx standards. Such trucks provide diesel-like power and performance, making it appealing for regional and long-haul operations.

