

Ascend the Summit of Customer Service

The 3 Must-Have Client Support
Features in Freight Payment



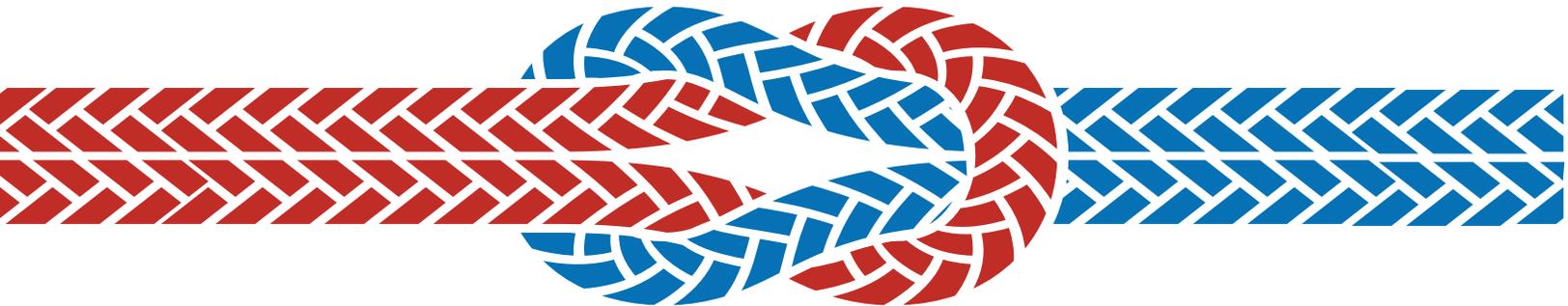


In today's world, transportation management has become a challenging mountain to climb. Many companies outsource freight payment and auditing to save time and money. Meanwhile, shippers stay committed to their partner as a result of the support they receive. If customer service is poor, the amount of audit savings and improved efficiencies becomes irrelevant.

IS CUSTOMER SERVICE A PRIORITY FOR YOUR FREIGHT PAYMENT FIRM?

..... YOUR REPUTATION IS ON THE LINE

The ability to understand and execute client requests is critical to building and maintaining a positive relationship. When it comes to your company, if you own the process, a freight payment firm's customer support can reflect on your own performance and hard-earned reputation. If you've been tasked to support a senior manager's initiative, you simply must receive the assistance necessary to meet and hopefully exceed expectations.



Freight audit and payment is a business of 'managing the minutia'. Invoicing is different between carriers with most freight bills requiring careful attention. Complex GL codes inevitably change and cost allocation requires adjustment. Unique contracts require special handling to assure audit accuracy. Customized reports need to be created to oversee initiatives to reduce freight expense. Without the support of a responsive freight payment firm, these tasks can be overwhelming. When your reputation is on the line, it only makes sense to check your life-line and secure the right customer service for your company.

Customer Service

[kuhs-tuh-mer sur-vis]

noun

1. the series of activities designed to improve the level of customer satisfaction.



..... DEFINING CUSTOMER SERVICE IN FREIGHT PAYMENT

Customer service within the freight payment and audit industry is best defined as the series of activities designed to improve the level of customer satisfaction—that is, the feeling that a service meets, and continues to exceed, customer expectations.

With that baseline definition, superior customer service might be secured through ongoing, singular events that demonstrate and provide the following:

- ✓ *Dedication to the customer while possessing a detailed knowledge and expertise of the service provided;*
- ✓ *Timely, accurate, and efficient responses to projects, issues, or client requests; and*
- ✓ *The willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty, leaving customers fully satisfied with their experience.*

**COUPLING THESE ELEMENTS OF SUPPORT CAN
SET ONE PROVIDER APART FROM THE REST.**

.....**THE THREE CRITICAL FEATURES THAT SUPPORT LONG-TERM SATISFACTION**.....

Most companies understand strong relationships are secured piece by piece, through consistent, reliable, and competent support. Implementing a process to foundationally anchor a relationship is the hard part. SSI believes that three core elements create the footing for stability and superior customer service.

1 **Dedicated Team with Specialized Skillsets**

Twenty years ago a legitimate case could have been established to support a single-point of contact for customer service issues. Electronic billing was rare, auditing was manual, and customers received a pre-determined set of reports.

Today's world is much more complex, requiring a dedicated team of support staff who have specialized knowledge and expertise. Each SSI client, for example, is assigned an Account Manager who has ultimate, bottom-line responsibility for customer satisfaction; a Senior Auditor who manages the day-to-day audit and payment operations; and a Programmer Analyst who provides technical support, develops custom reports, match/merge programming, and makes/tests coding rule changes. SSI gives each client direct access to these team members, insuring a highly trained specialist is assigned projects and tasks with the right skill-set to craft a solution.



***IF A DEDICATED TEAM OF CUSTOMER SERVICE PROFESSIONALS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU,
MAKE SURE YOU SEEK OUT COMPANIES OFFERING THE RIGHT TEAM TO MEET YOUR
NEEDS AND EXCEED YOUR EXPECTATIONS.***

2

Online Task-Tracking System

The ability to track and manage a customer request is usually one of the last things a customer considers when they outsource. However, it quickly becomes a priority when an issue or project arises. Customer service issues are diverse, ranging from GL coding adjustments to custom report requests, and everything in between. It's common that a single request requires expertise and work from different team members before it's completely resolved.

While issue tracking systems are rare in freight audit and payment, they are seen as an absolute necessity in many other business models. Considering the complex nature of our industry, it only makes sense that superior response, documentation, and deliverables would be managed through an integrated issue tracking and resolution tool.

At SSI we employ a web-based task management system to ensure rapid attention and quality follow-through to every client request. Each case is assigned to the correct SSI person and redirects if the assignee is not available. Periodic updates are required, escalating through SSI management levels to ensure timely action.



Our case management tool tracks and documents progress through to completion. All open and closed cases are retained online, and search tools are available to research all issues along with their resolution.

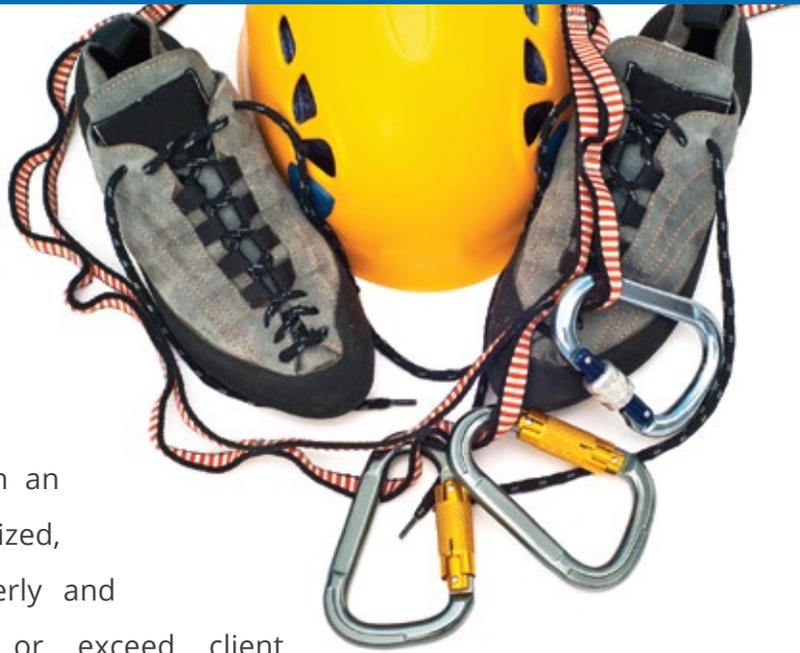
Our online task and case management tool facilitates outstanding customer service and measures internal service level and performance in several ways. First, it reduces an issue to writing, helping to succinctly define the issue and clarify an understanding by all parties of the specific factors to be addressed. Second, the system not only generates automatic reminders to prompt resolution, but automatically escalates the case to higher management levels if it is not addressed in a timely manner.

AGAIN, IF YOU LIKE TO KEEP TRACK OF ISSUES AND RESOLUTION, THIS IS LIKELY AN IMPORTANT FEATURE IN ANY FREIGHT PAYMENT RELATIONSHIP FOR YOUR BUSINESS.



3

**Special Projects
Deliver Special Attention**



Delivering superior customer service means going above and beyond for every client. This doesn't necessarily mean immediate and unorganized knee-jerk responses, but rather defined projects with an executable scope of work. Only an organized, well-thought-out plan of attack can properly and accurately produce results that meet or exceed client expectations.

At SSI, we believe an approach that helps clients understand whether a request or project may negatively impact one of the other freight payment objectives is important. Additionally, identifying the appropriate processes and corresponding management controls required is critical. Management controls are frequently overlooked when customers request special handling, but such controls are essential in a production process like freight audit and payment. Taking the time (and risk) to educate clients on any potential adverse effects to a process change is the essence of a good partnership.

SSI employs a systematic approach by following a "Special Request SOP" when customers request special handling beyond the scope of normal and customary support. All special requests are initiated using our online task management and issue tracking system. We work closely with you to identify objectives, proposed procedures, and general scope of work needed to accommodate such a request. A detailed proposal is then drafted to document all processes and management controls, including any other freight payment objectives that might be adversely impacted by the project. If there is any additional cost to the project, those are itemized to minimize any surprises that could negatively impact the budget. Finally, a detailed project checklist is created to execute the request with accuracy.

***DOES YOUR BUSINESS DESERVE SPECIAL ATTENTION WHEN
IT COMES TO FREIGHT PAYMENT?***

..... A LIFE-LINE OF SUPPORT

Your freight payment and audit provider should embrace a continuous quality improvement program enhanced through consistent, superior customer support. Developing a relationship that evolves into long-term partnerships must be a priority.

A dedicated team of specialists to ensure you're maximizing the benefits and tools provided by the supplier is critical to a great partnership and outstanding service. Your dedicated team must cover all the bases, giving you peace of mind that tasks, projects, and issues are handled properly with competence and the right skillset to remedy any request.

At SSI, we'll find a way to solve your problems, balance your objectives, and ease your pain. We put your custom requests first and feel service still matters. Using our online task management tool, we ensure rapid attention and quality follow-through to every special, or routine, request. Our technique for superior customer support is secured in the principle that if you're treated well, you'll stay with us for years to come. As such, listening is just the beginning. We take great pride in our "can-do" approach to customer inquiries, and our customer retention rate is one of the best in the industry.

You and your firm need outstanding customer service. If you aren't getting that today, then perhaps it's time to partner with a firm who can deliver the attention you deserve. The formula for a great partnership involves special treatment and the right tools to anchor long-term satisfaction.

About SSI

SSI is a global leader in freight payment innovation and transportation cost reduction. Our team of dedicated professionals has a passion for helping companies save money and operate lean. This white paper was authored to educate, hoping the advice and resources found herein will help you down the path of selecting the right freight payment and audit firm for your company.

No one works harder than SSI. For more information about getting started with SSI's Freight Payment and Audit solution or to schedule a live demo, call us (971) 249-5400 or visit our website at: <http://ssui.com/demorequest>