




HOW ATHLETIC BREWING OPTIMIZED LOGISTICS AND CUT COSTS WITH SHIPPERGUIDE TMS AND OPENDOCK

 CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

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ABOUT ATHLETIC BREWING

Athletic Brewing Company was originally founded in 2017 in Stratford, Connecticut, with a mission to positively impact customers' lifestyles while greatly impacting their community and the environment for the better. More than seven years later, Athletic Brewing's mission has been so positively received that they distribute from their Connecticut and California breweries across all 50 states, Canada, the UK, and Europe! Athletic Brewing has quickly become a leading non-alcoholic craft beer brand dedicated to health, fitness, and sustainability with a wide-reaching logistics footprint.



ABOUT KEENAN KUBICKI

Director of Warehouse & Logistics at Athletic Brewing

Keenan has 16 years of experience in customer service and sales, coupled with over 9 years in warehouse and logistics operations. In his current role as Athletic Brewing's Director of Warehouse and Logistics, Keenan leads the company's warehousing and distribution strategies across both domestic and international channels. Under his leadership, Athletic Brewing has expanded its logistics capabilities, improving efficiency and scalability to keep up with the company's rapid growth. Keenan is dedicated to leveraging innovative solutions to ensure top-tier operations across Athletic Brewing's growing customer base.



ABOUT CARLOS HIGUERA

International and Domestic Operations Specialist at Athletic Brewing

Carlos Higuera has over 8 years of experience in logistics and global supply chain management. In his role as International and Domestic Operations Specialist at Athletic Brewing, he oversees the company's export shipments to Canada, the UK, and Europe, as well as domestic shipments out of Connecticut. His expertise in optimizing transportation workflows has been instrumental in enhancing Athletic Brewing's reach and efficiency across international and domestic markets.



CHALLENGE

Athletic Brewing faced logistical complexities and rising costs due to rapid growth. Their manual processes for tracking shipments, managing quotes, and coordinating with carriers made scaling difficult and time-consuming. They relied heavily on email and spreadsheets, lacked real-time analytics, and had limited visibility into carrier performance.



OPPORTUNITY

Athletic Brewing identified the need for a comprehensive Transportation Management System (TMS) to streamline logistics, improve efficiency, and control costs. By selecting ShipperGuide TMS and later adding Opendock, they aimed to centralize shipment management, simplify RFP processes, increase carrier options, and enhance dock scheduling capabilities.



RESULTS

With ShipperGuide TMS, Athletic Brewing expanded its carrier network, improved cost efficiency, and reduced manual workload, achieving savings of 7-8% below average spot rates. They also enhanced scheduling accuracy and customer satisfaction by implementing Opendock, which provided visibility and reduced congestion at dock facilities.

BEFORE LOADSMART

Before partnering with Loadsmart, Athletic Brewing managed logistics operations manually. These processes quickly became overwhelmed as Athletic Brewing experienced rapid growth. According to Keenan Kubicki, Athletic Brewing's Director of Warehouse and Logistics, *"Logistics operations were very, very manual. There was a lot of back and forth with emails to request quotes, sending three quotes for every single shipment to different brokers, and then weighing out the best options."*

In addition to the complexity of managing rates manually, Athletic relied heavily on spreadsheets for tracking carrier performance and other critical data points. This lack of real-time analytics created challenges in ensuring efficiency and identifying cost-saving opportunities.

With a limited network of brokers and carriers, Athletic found it increasingly difficult to scale and meet demand.



"There was a huge need for efficiency and lowering costs through accurate and real-time analytics."

– **Keenan Kubicki** (Director of Warehouse and Logistics, Athletic Brewing)

According to Carlos Higuera, International and Domestic Operations Specialist at Athletic Brewing, *"The process of managing shipments and rate comparisons was exhausting."* The Athletic team knew they needed a Transportation Management System (TMS) to streamline their workflows and decided to start exploring options in the market.

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CHOOSING LOADSMART'S SHIPPERGUIDE TMS

Athletic Brewing's logistics team did quite a bit of shopping around for the right TMS before making their decision. They found that ShipperGuide TMS offered the right combination of technology and people who were open to supporting Athletic Brewing's growth. They also emphasized the importance of being able to maintain control over their shipments, something that ShipperGuide was able to provide. In fact with ShipperGuide, the entire partnership felt like a natural fit.

"ShipperGuide TMS was just the right fit!"

BENEFITS OF SHIPPERGUIDE



BETTER RFP PROCESS

As demand for Athletic Brewing's products grew, they knew they needed to move away from only leveraging the spot market for their freight. Handling multiple contracts was too manual, however, and they needed a process to grow their bench of carriers without wasting the team's time.

ShipperGuide was the answer, enabling Athletic Brewing to expand its carrier and broker network to 30+ providers without adding effort. Now, RFPs are managed through the system on a quarterly basis. This regular RFP cycle allows Athletic Brewing to efficiently handle multiple bids and select the most competitive rates.

"We've found the RFP process to be very smooth, with everything centralized in one spot."



COST SAVINGS

Athletic Brewing has a history of strong relationships with brokers. Even a couple of years ago, their data showed that they were consistently operating at about 4-5% below average spot rates. When their demand increased to the point where they could begin leveraging contracted rates, they began using ShipperGuide's RFP feature with great success.

"The RFP process in ShipperGuide has been great, allowing us to set benchmarks for the rates we'd like to see from our partners. Over time, we've improved further and are now operating at about 7-8% below spot!" said Keenan.

"We have also made it a point to utilize the 'Counter Offer' tool in ShipperGuide."

These RFP improvements, coupled with easily comparable rates in a single view, has helped Athletic Brewing reliably choose the lowest cost provider at the service level they need.



"When we receive bids from multiple partners, having all bids in one place with ShipperGuide allows us to easily select the best rates available in the market."

- **Carlos Higuera** (International and Domestic Operations Specialist at Athletic Brewing)



"I think there's a lot of people moving freight who think that carriers are all charging the same rates, that it's as simple as hitting a button, the truck shows up, and it goes. But believe me, there are tons of opportunities out there to save a lot of money. ShipperGuide can help with that."

– Keenan Kubicki (Director of Warehouse and Logistics, Athletic Brewing)



PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Athletic Brewing's day-to-day process for booking rates primarily involved manual data entry and tracking. "Our procedure was to check the average spot rate for everything we booked at the time of booking. We logged that rate in a sheet, allowing us to track where we were operating in relation to the spot rate over time," said Carlos.

He adds, "Overall, ShipperGuide has really **improved our ability to manage every load from beginning to end** in a very organized and efficient way. With ShipperGuide, we're now able to provide all the shipment details and instructions to our brokers in one spot without the need for overwhelming email chains."



CUSTOMIZED BROKER SCORECARDS

ShipperGuide TMS has built-in analytics to help companies track their carriers' and brokers' performance. Athletic Brewing provides its network of 30 brokers with a performance review based on the analytics derived from the system. They are able to give their brokers indexed benchmark data on their rates compared with other brokers, as well as key performance indicators. These data-driven insights have helped Athletic Brewing secure better rates as well as improved service from their brokers.

"ShipperGuide highlights a lot of opportunities in critical aspects of every business," said Keenan.



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The streamlined logistics processes have virtually eliminated scheduling issues, allowing freight to move quickly and consistently on time. "The improved traceability and punctuality mean that, if partners need updates, information is readily available." In the freight industry, "no news is good news," and the absence of issues speaks volumes about the success of their optimized logistics operations.



ABILITY TO SCALE

"As our business continues to grow, we've built a really solid foundation with our partnership with Loadsmart," said Carlos. "It's allowing us to handle any volume that comes our way. We have a good handle on everything from contracts to spot market rates—everything is super solid on our end and on ShipperGuide's end as well."



ADDING OPENDOCK FOR BETTER DOCK SCHEDULING

After seeing success with ShipperGuide TMS and the strong partnership of the Loadsmart team, Athletic Brewing decided to implement Opendock for better dock scheduling at its facilities. Now, dock appointments are scheduled online by the carrier based on the facility's availability.

“For a long time, we operated on a first-come, first-served basis. As we grew, things started to get a bit hectic. Thankfully, Opendock provides great analytics and reporting features that have helped us reduce dock congestion and even schedule employee work hours, breaks, and lunches more effectively,” said Keenan.

*“We now have visibility on ins and outs, which we can share with external departments to help with their operations. **This visibility gives us peace of mind.** Opendock has been incredibly helpful there.”*

In addition to insights about the warehouse, Athletic Brewing is also taking advantage of the carrier-specific insights provided by the system. They can see which carriers are on time for their appointments and then provide that feedback to them. When making service improvement requests to their brokers, Athletic Brewing enters the conversation armed with metrics on late arrivals, late pickups, and early pickups.

Keenan adds, *“Overall, I think our brokers now see the importance of being on time. If a truck arrives a couple of hours early, they can understand why their drivers might need to wait.*

Opendock has set good boundaries for our brokers and carriers to work within, which has greatly improved efficiencies across the board.”



WE ARE LOADSMART

Loadsmart empowers businesses to move more with less by providing transportation services and technology to reduce freight spend, increase service levels, and improve overall productivity.

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