



LEADERS' GUIDE TO FINDING THE RIGHT
**TRANSPORTATION
MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM
(TMS)**



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The Best Logistics Technology Isn't One-Size-Fits-All – Here's How to Choose the Right Platform and Gain Buy-In to Drive TMS Adoption

WHY FINDING THE RIGHT TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TMS) MATTERS

Transportation Management Systems are at the center of every successful logistics operation for any shipper managing more than a handful of loads per week. No matter if you're a mid-size shipper growing your network or an enterprise managing a complex supply chain, a TMS can improve your daily workflows and contribute to overarching company goals. In fact, an estimated [61% of logistics professionals](#) use a TMS today.

Appreciation of the logistics function's importance for all sizes of companies has grown significantly in the past 5 years regarding the supply chain's value to the customer experience and the impact on the bottom line. During this time, **the risk and costs** of doing things “the way they've always been done,” such as running a shipping operation by juggling spreadsheets, relying on email-based workflows, and wasting time on manual processes, have grown exponentially.

“The scope of our work has completely changed. Instead of focusing on manual data inputting, like load tendering and checking carrier tracking information, we now have control over our logistics and are able to be proactive.”

— James Posipanka, Supply Chain Manager, Red Gold, talking about some of the benefits of implementing ShipperGuide TMS.



[READ THE FULL CASE STUDY](#)

A TMS is a game-changer—if it's been properly vetted and internal buy-in gained ahead of time. In other words, simply shoehorning in any legacy TMS isn't the path to success. You need to make sure you're implementing the **right** TMS to truly drive cost efficiency, improve on-time deliveries, and save your team time on everyday tasks. These benefits extend to every part of a company, including profitability and the customer experience. Choosing wisely now ensures long-term savings and efficiency.

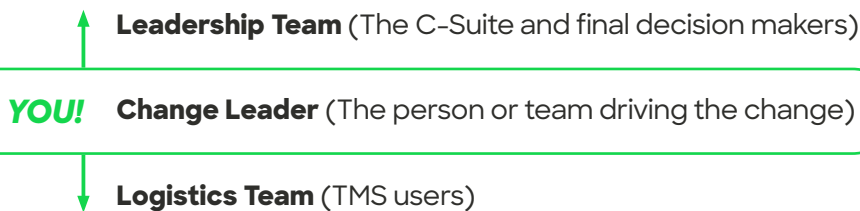


THE BENEFITS OF A TMS: SELLING TO LEADERSHIP AND YOUR TEAM

Despite the clear advantages of a modern Transportation Management System, many companies still struggle to realize its full potential. One major reason? Organizational buy-in. Whether it's the leadership team weighing costs, or the logistics team fearing disruption to their workflows, getting stakeholders aligned on the need for change is one of the biggest hurdles.

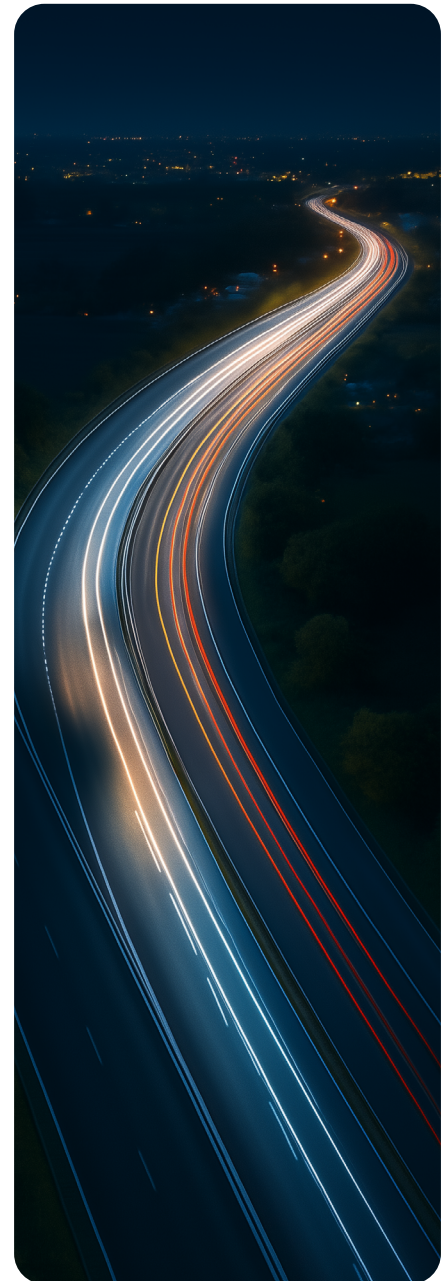
Successful TMS adoption doesn't start with technology—it starts with people. That means understanding what each group values and crafting a compelling case that speaks their language.

In most organizations, three key stakeholder groups play a role in choosing and implementing the right-fit TMS:



SELLING THE BENEFITS TO THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Gaining budget approval and support for a new technology that connects to every part of a company is not simple. Change leaders need to expertly “manage up” in this scenario by emphasizing the benefits of the right TMS, like its ROI and the cost controls it offers. Greater operational efficiency and scalability are other immediate benefits leaders can expect from technology.





THE BENEFITS OF A TMS: SELLING TO LEADERSHIP AND YOUR TEAM

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR THE OPERATIONS TEAM?

Technology's impact on logistics teams is often undersold and is a big reason for many failed TMS implementations. The company benefits include less manual work to perform day-to-day tasks, better supply chain visibility, faster decision-making, and better carrier relationships. However, with any change, users may resist. We'll offer specific ideas to successfully overcome the challenges of selling the benefits of a TMS to leadership and logistics teams.



TOP 3 WAYS A TMS SAVES MONEY



Save Money by Selecting the Best Rates - TMS platforms simplify the rate procurement process by helping you conduct more frequent RFPs with a bigger bench of carriers, as well as provide benchmark rates on spot and RFPs.



Save Money by Optimizing Shipments - A TMS can help you consolidate multiple orders into a single load and select the most cost-effective transportation mode every time.

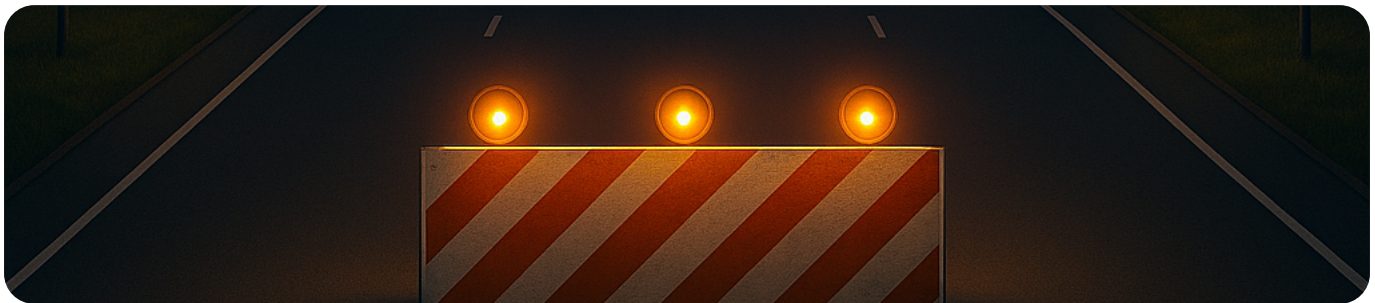


Save Money By Finding and Fixing Inefficiencies - Advanced analytics and AI-powered capabilities in TMSs help you find cost-saving opportunities, implement fixes, and reap the rewards.



OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO TMS ADOPTION

With so many obvious benefits from a TMS, what's holding you back from the right logistics technology? Well, you can't make a unilateral decision. You, as a Change Leader, need buy-in from your leadership team as well as your logistics and operational team to get your search started.



STEP 1: GAINING BUY-IN AND APPROVAL FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Not surprisingly, key company decisions begin and end with the leadership team. So, what do you need to do first to get the green light to start looking for a TMS?

- **Demonstrate the ROI:** This is usually the first step in convincing leadership to make any investment. Highlighting the potential hard and soft cost savings and the costs of a new TMS must be covered at the start. Talk about how your team will be able to make better tactical decisions regarding rate procurement, mode optimization, and finding spot capacity.
- **Highlight the Pain Points:** Leadership often doesn't see or feel the pain points that a TMS can fix. Explaining precisely what a TMS does and how it helps the company is another early step in the process. Tie these pain points into how removing them will support bigger-picture company objectives. For example, a TMS can help shift talent to more strategic work, contribute to sustainability initiatives, and improve relationships with customers. Don't dwell on the day-to-day tactical pain points your team experiences; think about the goals your leadership team has and how a TMS can address those.
- **Don't Overlook Security and Compliance:** Supply chain compliance and data security are on the minds of many companies' leaders, so make sure to review how outdated or a lack of modern technology is putting the company at risk.



OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO TMS ADOPTION

- **Showcase Case Studies**

and Competition: Providing examples of how a TMS has helped other companies, or better yet, your competitors, is a great way to get the attention of leadership and create urgency. Position a TMS as a competitive advantage for your company, not just your

logistics function. Check out research from Gartner or Forrester for data-backed reasons why a TMS provides value if you're not ready to look for specific customer examples.

“Loadsmart’s RFP feature in ShipperGuide cut our entire RFP process with carriers down from multiple weeks of work to a few hours. That was tremendous for us, and we continue to rely on it.”

— James Posipanka, Supply Chain Manager, Red Gold



READ THE FULL CASE STUDY

- **Budget and Implementation:** With the interest of leadership sparked, you are better prepared to talk about the harder (and unavoidable) parts of deciding to implement any technology – the cost, and the effort to get it in place.

Of course, your leadership team is only half the battle. Perhaps more critical to the long-term success of a TMS implementation is the buy-in from your operational team (a.k.a. the users).

STEP 2: GAINING BUY-IN AND CHAMPIONS ON YOUR LOGISTICS TEAM

Despite standing to gain the most when the right-fit TMS is in place, fear and resistance to change can be a barrier. A common question many companies need to answer is whether the cost of change is too much when it feels like things seem to be working well enough.

A recent report from Gartner titled: [“How to Overcome Resistance to Logistics Transformation Initiatives”](#) talks about how creating urgency and pressure with your logistics team actually decreases the likelihood of successful transformation by nearly 50%. In contrast, leveraging collective wisdom as a change catalyst increases the likelihood of transformation success by 62%.



OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO TMS ADOPTION

Here are suggestions to win over your team:

- **Invite Their Input Early** - People are more likely to support what they help shape. Engage key users early in the process and make it clear that their perspectives matter. When team members feel heard, they're more likely to champion the change instead of resisting it.
- **Show What's In It for Them** - The fastest way to win over users is by connecting the TMS to their daily pain points. Emphasize how the right system reduces firefighting, minimizes last-minute emergencies, and brings order to the chaos—meaning less stress and more predictability in their day. Even small wins, like going home on time, can make a big impact.



PRO TIP: Have the TMS provider customize the demo to specifically address the pain points mentioned by your team. Share the recording of the demo with the team to build internal advocates before the full rollout.



LEARN HOW SCOTTS MIRACLE-GRO AUTOMATED TENDERING FOR 94% OF ALL DELIVERIES!

- **Reinforce the Bigger Picture** - Be transparent about how the TMS supports broader business goals like cost savings, better customer service, and scalability. Connecting the dots between individual contributions and company outcomes builds shared ownership.
- **Highlight Flexibility and Reliability** - A TMS can enable a flexible work environment through remote visibility, fewer redundant steps, or a reduction in errors. A reliable, easy-to-use platform builds confidence and limits frustration..
- **Set Expectations Around Training and Support** - Reassure users with a clear training plan that includes hands-on sessions, helpful resources, and ongoing support. Make it clear you aren't going to simply dump a new tool on them and walk away without a plan.

3

RED FLAGS WHEN EVALUATING TMS PROVIDERS

1. Vague promises about what their features can do and complicated pricing structures.
2. A small list of references, and none of them in an industry like yours.
3. No clear project plan to lead the implementation, training, or ongoing support.



YOUR ROADMAP TO FINDING **THE RIGHT TMS** FOR YOUR BUSINESS

STEP 3: START LOOKING FOR YOUR RIGHT-FIT TMS

Finding the right TMS is equally as important as gaining buy-in and ensuring a successful implementation.

The roadmap for finding the best TMS for your company should follow these basic steps:

- 1. Identify your shipping operation's needs and goals:** This will include the problems and bottlenecks in your supply chain. What are your TMS must-haves? Check out our [Logistics Technology Self-Assessment](#).
- 2. Look at your options closely:** There are many types of TMS platforms and a variety of features they offer. Aligning your needs with a platform's features is a key step. Remember, a TMS can do too much, so bigger is not always better. Be sure not to pay for features you won't use. Look for our Must-Have TMS Feature Checklist.
- 3. Set a budget:** The range of costs for a TMS is VERY wide. Ultimately, you still need a positive ROI from the investment in shipping technology, so make sure the price makes sense.
- 4. Think of the long term:** A TMS will be a part of your company for a long time. Ensuring it integrates well with other technology you operate (e.g., ERP, WMS, YMS, Dock Scheduling, etc) and its ability to scale and adapt to business changes are non-negotiable, just like features and cost.
- 5. Access user-friendliness:** We offered our ideas for working through adoption issues, but the fewer problems, the better, right? A clear, intuitive user interface is the minimum any company should expect from a modern TMS.
- 6. Gather input:** As we highlighted earlier, choosing and implementing a TMS is a team effort. Seeking different perspectives on possible options needs to be as inclusive as possible.
- 7. Make a decision:** You're ready to start.



LOGISTICS TECHNOLOGY SELF-ASSESSMENT

The first step for every team beginning the process of finding the right TMS for their operation should be a detailed self-assessment. The goal of this assessment is to identify the business problems and process bottlenecks limiting its logistics operations. This exercise makes completing the [Must-Have TMS Feature Checklist](#) easier and the output more actionable. **Here are questions your company should answer:**

What are the persistent business issues present in your shipping operation that a TMS can help?

COST-MANAGEMENT:

- Are you paying above market rates? Do you have the ability to know for sure?
- Are all rates and carrier options accessible to support proper decision-making?

PROCESS MANAGEMENT:

- Is there an organization-wide lack of supply chain visibility?
- Does data flow from the shipping function to other parts of the organization freely?

VENDOR MANAGEMENT:

- Can you easily identify low-performing carriers?
- Is it a struggle to find quality carriers?

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

- Are there redundant systems or team members repeating tasks like reentering shipment information?
- Do you have technology in place that is not effective or providing ROI?

What are the persistent business issues present in your shipping operation that a TMS can help?

- Can you quantify the hard and soft cost savings you'll need to achieve with a TMS to provide the necessary ROI to gain buy-in from leadership?
- What internal resistance to adding new technology do you anticipate?
- Are there individuals or departments that will be against new technology?
- What are the objections of each?
 - | Cost? Y N
 - | Time? Y N
 - | Fear of Change? Y N
 - | Is there a "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" mentality? Y N

With this knowledge, Change Leaders are better positioned to begin securing buy-in and vetting tools to move forward.



MUST HAVE TMS FEATURE CHECKLIST

Fine-tuning the functionality of the right-fit TMS is necessary to move the search process forward. Change Leaders should approach this with a two-part checklist.

1. THE BASICS

Can the TMS perform the day-to-day shipment execution you need? Typical “basic TMS” functionality can include the following:

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING & EXECUTION

- Route and mode optimization
- Carrier selection and tendering
- Shipment booking and document generation (BOL, POD, labels)

VISIBILITY & EVENT MANAGEMENT

- Real-time tracking and milestone updates
- Exception alerts and issue management
- Integration with GPS, ELD, or telematics devices

PERFORMANCE & CARRIER MANAGEMENT

- Carrier rate and contract management
- Scorecards and KPI dashboards
- Service level and spend tracking

FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT & AUDIT

- Invoice auditing and reconciliation
- Dispute resolution
- Payment processing support

INTEGRATION & DATA MANAGEMENT

- System integration with ERP, WMS, and carriers
- EDI/API capabilities
- Centralized data access for operations and reporting

WHAT OTHER CORE FUNCTIONS DO YOU RELY ON?

2. NEXT-LEVEL FUNCTIONALITY

These features go beyond operations and support long-term strategy, cost savings, and better decision-making. Check any that apply to your needs:

ADVANCED ANALYTICS & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Dashboards with actionable KPIs
- Root cause analysis tools
- Prescriptive recommendations (AI/ML-driven)

INTELLIGENT PLANNING & OPTIMIZATION

- Dynamic load consolidation and planning
- Auto-add bulk tendering
- Scenario modeling (e.g. cost-to-serve, what-if analysis)
- Network design tools

CONTROL TOWER & END-TO-END VISIBILITY

- Multi-tier, multi-modal visibility
- Exception management with real-time alerts
- Integration with supplier and customer systems

MARKETPLACE & ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION

- Access to load boards and freight marketplaces
- Dock scheduling and yard management integration
- Connections to carrier and fleet systems

CUSTOMER & USER EXPERIENCE

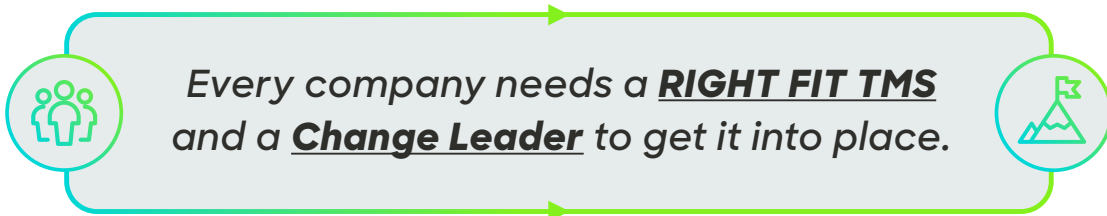
- Self-service portals for booking and tracking
- Partner access management (carriers, suppliers)
- Customizable user roles and interfaces

OTHER ADVANCED CAPABILITIES?



IMPLEMENT YOUR **RIGHT FIT TMS**

A TMS is a necessary tool for every shipping operation, regardless of size. While the capabilities and costs of the best TMS will be company-specific, the risks and costs of the wrong, poorly implemented, or no technology can be serious.



Here's our advice on **what to do next**, depending on where you are in your journey.



1. I'M JUST GETTING STARTED:

Complete your [Logistics Technology Self-Assessment](#).

Use our [Must-Have TMS Feature Checklist](#) to evaluate your options.

Play around with our [free ROI calculator](#) to see how much money you could save with ShipperGuide TMS.



2. I'M READY TO BE A CHANGE LEADER:

Contact Loadsmart to connect with an expert in TMS to see how you can take the first step toward a more intelligent, efficient logistics operation.

CONTACT LOADSMART



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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