

- order shipped with associated carrier information;
- in-transit de-consolidations, transfers and border crossings; and
- order delivered to customer.

One of the most difficult activities to monitor is the delivery phase. This is particularly true with a common carrier. Progressive service companies today are insisting that the carrier confirm each delivery when it is made. Sometimes this requires a telephone call from the truck driver to customer service. Deconsolidations and transfers at terminals can be tracked by bar-code scanning and electronic data interchange (EDI).

If anything goes astray, the customer service representative must be empowered to act to correct the situation. This is one of the major reasons that the customer service function is placed high in the organization structure. It is also one of the reasons that customer service representatives must be trained in all aspects of the operation, so that they can locate and fix problems when they occur.

## **EXPEDITING ORDERS**

The major objective of customer service is to achieve credibility with customers. A supplier must keep all order fill and delivery promises. A customer should never have to expedite an order. When this happens, something has failed in the customer service program and requires immediate attention. The supplier should always know where the order is and if it will arrive when promised. If a promise is going to be broken, the customer must be notified immediately. Having to expedite orders in today's customer service environment is sufficient reason to change suppliers.