

- is the transit time quoted reasonable and reliable?
- does the carrier have a track record of delivering goods damage free?
- is the company large or sophisticated enough that it offers computerized tracing to be able to advise of the location of the shipment at any time?
- does the company have a local representative who can look after your needs and troubleshoot for you if necessary?

2. Doors from Interior British Columbia to Washington, California, and Alaska

Having examined transportation costs before exporting, this manufacturer discovered less than truckload rates to be too high. They therefore limit their sales to large quantities (truckload lots) using 1,000 pound pallets for simplicity of loading and unloading. For mainland Western U.S. shipments this firm has found that trucking best meets their needs. In the case of shipments to Alaska, the most economical alternative is to truck the goods to Seattle for container stuffing and marine shipment to customers.

In seeking trucking services the firm make two recommendations. First, **non-unionized/smaller truckers are praised as offering lower rates.** For example, one large unionized tariff bureau carrier charges \$4,300 for a truckload shipment from interior British Columbia to Los Angeles; the same carrier's non-tariff bureau, non-unionized subsidiary charges \$1,900 for the same movement. Secondly, **this company recommends the use of backhaul truckers who would normally be returning to the U.S. empty.** Most carriers do not make it generally known that they have empty backhaul capacity so some probing is necessary. It is also noted that these backhaulers, although preferring full truckloads, will still offer a "decent" rate on a half truckload in order to avoid returning empty.

3. Peat Moss from Alberta to Coastal and Southern States

In some parts of Canada where Canada/U.S. rail links are very convenient, it makes sense to ship this product by rail. However, this Alberta producer avoids rail because of his perception that rail routing from Northern Alberta via Vancouver is circuitous. (Shipping by rail to many of his customers - most of which do not have rail sidings - involves no less than three different railways.) **The firm therefore makes use of fruit and vegetable haulers, who would normally make the return trip to the U.S. empty, for the great majority of their shipments.** This firm is in the fortunate position of being a large exporter offering some 2,500 truckloads per year. Many independent truckers/backhaulers know that they have a lot of freight to offer and seek out truckloads from them after they have unloaded their produce. **In these circumstances this company recommends that if a shipper wants to have regular access to backhaulers that payments be made on time; the independent trucker/backhauler network is large and negative news travels quickly.**