

[Expert Exchange] Address Validation— Aim Close to the Customer

By validating an address as close to the customer as possible, there is the highest chance of getting the correct data and the lowest chance of delaying a shipment delivery

It's no secret that if you want to send a parcel to a customer, you need to ensure you have the correct address. If you're in the US, you need the RDI (Residential Delivery Indicator) to ensure that you're selecting the correct services and assessorials as well. Failure to use a correct address can result in:

- Address correction fees
- Delays in delivery
- Parcels returned without delivery

None of those are good for maintaining an expected customer experience. [\[Read: Why does the CX matter? How Much Could a Bad Shipping Experience Really Cost You?\]](#)

Many ask "How do we ensure we have the correct address?" But a better question is "When do you check for a correct address?" The answer is "As close to the customer as possible." Below, I will discuss the **Why** I make this recommendation.

How?

For those that aren't aware, there are many vendors, including some major carriers, which offer address correction APIs. Most [major multi-carrier shipping software platforms](#) include address validation capabilities or are partnered with a best-of-breed address validation software company. This proximity to the shipping software incorrectly leads some executives and managers to think that when an order gets to the point of shipping that is the time to validate the address. I mean it does make some sense, the feature is included as part of most multi-carrier shipping software offerings. However, I am here to tell you that validating the recipient address when it finally reaches the shipping software is the worst time possible.

From a technical standpoint you want to connect your existing enterprise software stack to the address validation API's provided by

your multi-carrier shipping software vendor or independent address validation service provider. If done correctly, address validation becomes an automated part of your order processes. [\[Learn more about adding MCSS to your Software Stack\]](#)

When?

When should you validate that address? Again, this should be done as close to the customer as possible; however this might have different meanings depending on what kind of shipping you are doing.

- If you have an e-commerce site you should be validating the destination address in the shopping cart.
- If you are fulfilling orders that you receive via EDI you should be validating addresses on EDI import.
- If you are taking orders in a call center you should be validating addresses as your call center personnel are entering them.

All of these are near the very beginning of the order journey, meaning they are all as close to the customer as possible.

Why?

Why do you want to validate the address as close to the customer as possible? A few reasons:

- If the address validation software comes back with choices (is that North or South Main Street?) the best person to make that choice is the customer, since it is most likely their own address after all.
- The sooner you determine that an address is not valid, the more time you will have to get the correct address from the customer before delaying the shipment.
- Warehouse personnel should be focused on quality execution, not data correction.

Said another way, by validating an address as close to the customer as possible, there is the highest chance of getting the correct data, the lowest chance of delaying a shipment delivery, and a minimization of the impact on the shipment throughput in the warehouse or store.

Conclusions

Any company that ships to varied addresses should be validating those addresses. Embedding address validation in your enterprise software stack protects your customer experience by minimizing the chance of delivery delays and aids in controlling unexpected shipping costs due to bill backs. [\[Discover: How Shipping Software Cultivates a Positive Customer Experience\]](#)

By applying address validation at the correct points of your order process, correcting any discrepancies becomes less obtrusive and confirms the RDI status of a recipient address. Having data that your logistics team can trust eliminates fulfillment delays maximizing the use of your fulfillment resources.

[\[Keeping Reading: Is Your Address Validation Process Leading to Wasted Shipments?\]](#)

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