



[DECODING THE DATA]

Using Peak Season Lessons
to Build the Case for
Shipping Software (*and
Operationalize It Year-Round*)



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Download the workbook to get a head start on planning for the next peak.

This bonus workbook streamlines your team's real-time feedback on challenges the company faced during peak shipping season. This in-depth documentation will...

- Maximize effective changes while minimizing altering existing functional processes
- Helps take out the “guess work”
- Eliminates “what was that issue that one day?”
- Helps battle cognitive bias of only remembering the pain (or worst things)



DOWNLOAD THE WORKBOOK >

Need a new shipping strategy? Start with the facts.

E-commerce continues to command a growing share of total retail volume, increasing the demands placed on parcel shipping operations year-round. In fact, U.S. e-commerce sales are on track to reach [\\$1.8 trillion by 2030](#), with online holiday shopping in 2025 seeing an increase of 6.8% year-over-year. Combined with ongoing labor constraints, capacity limitations, rising customer expectations, and peak season surcharges, enterprise retailers, manufacturers, and third-party logistics (3PL) providers are navigating an increasingly complex shipping landscape.

Peak season planning shouldn't start when volumes surge but begin with disciplined execution and documentation throughout the year. While daily fulfillment uptime and operational stability are always priorities, shippers that consistently monitor performance, exceptions, and cost drivers during high-volume periods enable smarter decisions, stronger ROI, and more scalable growth long after peak demand subsides.





If your peak season shipping review process looks like this bulletin board, you **NEED** our workbook!

NEWEST
Instructions for Compliance Documents

TMS INSTRUCTIONS
REV 03/1999

\$\$ SPENT ON SERVICES
31%
23%
16%
5%

JANUARY
SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27 28
29 30 31

LATE

MISSING

MISSING CUSTOMER PROMISE DATES

SHIPPING REVENUE

FRAGILE
HANDLE WITH CARE
DONT FALL NOT PRESSURE
FRAGILE KEEP DRY UPWARD DONT TRAMPLE

FRAGILE
HANDLE WITH CARE
DONT FALL NOT PRESSURE
FRAGILE KEEP DRY UPWARD DONT TRAMPLE

Customer Satisfaction Survey
Week of 45/52

CLASSIFICATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

COMPLEX BUSINESS RULES: A HOUSE BUILT FOR SUCCESS

MISSING
Not enough customer shipping options
Why are we shipping so much next day
We are over carrier capacity!
We need help with shipping!
WRONG ADDRESS AGAIN
We have NO SYSTEM!
Not labeled for hazmat!

ADDRESS CORRECTION FEES
TOTAL \$243,600
this is a problem!

CURRENT SHIPPING COSTS

SHIPPING MEETING
TUESDAY 4PM
CONFERENCE ROOM B

IMPORTANT
You must manually enter third-party billing information as our shipping system cannot import it!

5/15

90% of supply chain leaders experience peak-like conditions year-round!

Retail e-commerce sales are forecasted to grow to **24%** of global retail sales by 2028.²

In 2025, over half (51.9%) of consumers began holiday shopping in October or earlier.³

What are the experts saying?

Peak Season Predictions.

Shipping software is a significant investment. Implementing or replacing a core component of the Enterprise Technology Stack (ESS) requires time, budget, and internal resources from teams like IT, engineering, and operations. To earn buy-in from key decision makers, shippers must make a clear case for how multi-carrier shipping software improves parcel operations today while also supporting long term business and growth objectives.

Relying solely on a traditional Transportation Management System (TMS) or single carrier shipping strategy is no longer sufficient to meet evolving customer delivery expectations. At the same time, shippers face mounting pressure from rising transportation costs, capacity constraints, and ongoing supply chain disruptions that expose the limitations of rigid or fragmented shipping environments.

As you begin building the case for change, here are some facts to keep in mind:

Every year, peak shipping volumes expose gaps in carrier capacity and network resilience. Recent post-peak research shows that nearly **50% of supply chain leaders report their systems couldn't handle unexpected volume spikes**, forcing reactive decisions that increased costs and delivery risk during the busiest weeks of the season.⁴

91% of operations and supply chain leaders say external disruptions are driving significant changes to their supply chain strategies.⁵

Next, let's take a look at what a typical peak season calendar looks like. 

1. Source - McKinsey 2025

2. Source - Forrester 2024

3. Source - Northwestern Spiegel Research Center

4. Source - Deposco 2025

5. Source - pwc 2025

When do we do what? Typical Peak Season Calendar.

This is a typical calendar a retailer may use to prepare for peak season and plan strategic initiatives all the way through peak documentation and review. We recommend using this as a guideline for planning your own strategies and staying organized.

NOTE: This could shift if your peak season doesn't fall during the holidays (example - summer products like pool equipment and swimsuits, spring products like gardening items)



Typical Peak Season Preparation Calendar

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
STRATEGIC PLANNING	Previous Peak Review		█	█									
	Identify Improvement Needs		█	█	█								
EXECUTION	Requirements Gathering and Development					█	█	█					
	Deploy						█	█	█				
VALIDATION	Performance Testing						█	█	█	█	█		
	Compression Tests								█	█			
READINESS	ESS* Technical Audit									█			
	Disaster Management Plans										█	█	
MONITORING + SUPPORT	Code and Configure Freeze										█		
	Start Documentation Process										█	█	█
	Pre-Peak Season Preparation											█	█
POST-PEAK FOLLOW-UP	Review Lesson Learned	█											
	Leverage Successes	█											

*Enterprise Software Stack

Let's talk strategy.

Want to learn more about this timeline or have questions about a specific stage? Contact our shipping experts for some one-on-one peak season coaching.

[CONTACT US >](#)

How do we track peak activities? The Documentation Process.

Before proposing a new solution, you must be able to clearly identify where current processes succeed and where they break down. The most effective way to uncover these gaps is by consistently documenting peak shipping activities and gathering feedback from personnel closest to shipping execution, including fulfillment, IT, and operations teams.

We've worked closely with our top retail, 3PL, and manufacturing customers to optimize their parcel shipping processes. Organizations that succeed long term share one common trait: They understand what happened during peak, why it happened, and what should change before the next demand surge. **Let's take a look at how this information should be collected and assessed.**

1. How to categorize the information recorded.

A. We recommend putting your information into 3 buckets:

KEEP

What went well and should remain part of the process?

IMPROVE

What worked inconsistently and could perform better with adjustments?

REPLACE

What failed under pressure and should not be part of future peak operations?

2. How often to collect this information.

A. Daily collection is strongly recommended during high volume periods. Weekly collection may also be acceptable, but less frequent documentation increases the risk of missed insights.

B. Summarize information on a daily or weekly basis. These observations can be rolled into reports that are reviewed weekly or monthly.

-**Why this is important:** You'll be able to make improvements during the cycle (during peak) and save it (so that you don't lose those improvements OR you'll see when and where things got worse when you look back at peak season as a whole).

3. Decide who is responsible for collecting this information.

- A. Responsibility for collecting this information should be clearly defined.
- B. A manager is recommended but not always a possibility.

IMPORTANT: Make sure those responsible understand what information to capture and how often it should be recorded.

4. Choose areas to focus on (this is what we recommend).

Hardware

Is the automation provided by hardware creating the value it should? Ex:



- **Sorters** functioning at an appropriate speed?
- **Put Wall Capacity**
- **PandA** (Print and Apply) reliability and speed
- **Conveyors** - is package traffic smooth or does it sporadically bottleneck/drop a package?

Software

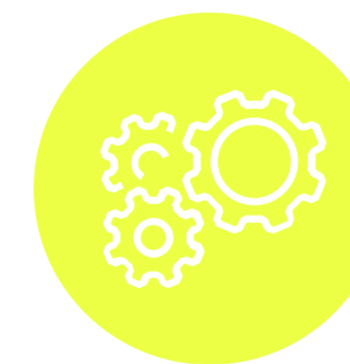
Is the integration of your Enterprise Technology Stack (ESS) functioning as it should?



- **Manual data entry** - what pieces of data aren't flowing automatically?
 - Ex: International (AES Direct, filing manually), dangerous goods, unintegrated carrier
- **Capacity** - is the software able to keep up with personnel and automation equipment?
- **Visibility** - Is there sufficient real-time visibility to identify and address errant processes earlier?
 - Due to the volume and timing of peak-related surcharges, carrier service selection can fluctuate significantly from week to week. Is it clearly understood what is causing these shifts and how they affect cost and delivery performance?
 - Tracking: Are carriers consistently meeting their delivery promises? Is that performance being tracked or reviewed in a meaningful way?
 - Spend management: Are shipping costs aligned with expectations as volumes and conditions change? Is it clear where issues originate from and whether software limitations are contributing to the problem?
- **Customer Expectations** - Are these being set properly for fulfillment time plus time-in-transit?

Operations

How is everything else functioning?



- **Are there enough bays for your carriers?**
- **Does small non-corrugated package handling necessitate the use of tri-walls?**
- **Labor** - Is your labor doing something manual that could be automated by a combination of hardware & software, where they could be providing value elsewhere?
- **Is your current carrier selection meeting your company's and customers' needs?**
 - Company's needs:
 - * Are you providing the pick up capacity required?
 - * Does your rate selection for the carriers meet the customer need?
 - Customers' needs:
 - * On-time - fulfilling your promises/their expectations?
 - * Are you providing the right options at the right costs?
 - * Damage - are your packages arriving undamaged?
- **Fulfillment time** - is it adequate or are you finding bottlenecks in the fulfillment process?



Ready to collect data? Download the **workbook.**

This free Assessment Workbook helps teams capture peak shipping insights in real time (with examples of the types of data that matters most). As a bonus, it also includes a built-in savings calculator to help you quantify the potential costs your company could be saving with ProShip multi-carrier shipping software.

DOWNLOAD THE
WORKBOOK >

***NEXT:** Assessing the Risk
and Building the ROI →*

How much money can I save? Calculating Risk and **ROI**.

During peak season, even small inefficiencies can escalate quickly. Parcel capacity, carrier service selection, peak surcharges, execution speed, and fulfillment throughput all play a role in determining whether costs remain controlled or spiral.

If your documentation reveals repeated issues within the **Improve** or **Replace** categories, it is critical to match those operational challenges with financial impact to identify where your current parcel shipping operation may be bleeding money due to your current software solution.

By going through an ROI exercise with your REAL data, you'll be able to uncover some opportunities that may lead to big savings not only during peak periods, but throughout the regular calendar year.



Download our **Assessment Workbook** for a blank ROI calculator worksheet and more!

[DOWNLOAD THE WORKBOOK](#)



Did you know that some enterprise shippers see a shipping software ROI in only **WEEKS** during peak season?

4 Risk and ROI calculation examples.

Let's take a look at how utilizing the right multi-carrier shipping software can boost your savings, eliminate fees and provide a solid ROI in just **MONTHS**. [Download this workbook to dive deeper into ROI categories and example data].

Additional Considerations!

SAVINGS

Freight Spend + Expected Savings

(Annual)

- **10,000** shipments per day
- **\$8.00** average shipment costs
- **264** shipping days per year (This means your shipping spend is **\$21 million per year**)
- **100%** shipments are rate shopped
- **6%** expected savings (using lowest expected savings percentage)

\$1.267 MILLION

in savings from Rate shopping during calendar year (264 days)

Freight Spend + Expected Savings

(During Peak Black Friday to December 24th)

- **30,000** shipments per day
- **\$8.00** average shipment costs (This may go up due to peak surcharges - pay attention!)
- **29** shipping days per year (This means your shipping spend is **\$6.96 million during peak**)
- **100%** shipments are rate shopped
- **6%** expected savings (using lowest expected savings percentage)

\$417,600

in savings from Rate shopping (in 29 days)

FEES

Address Validation Costs that Could be Avoided

(Annual)

- **10,000** shipments per day
- **7%** of shipments receiving address correction fees
- **264** shipping days per year
- **\$12** per address correction fee

\$2.2 MILLION

in address correction fees

Address Validation Costs that Could be Avoided

(During Peak Black Friday to December 24th)

- **10,000** shipments per day
- **7%** of shipments receiving address correction fees (this may go up due to peak surcharges - pay attention!)
- **29** shipping days per year
- **\$12** per address correction fee

\$243,600

in address correction fees

Non-Quantified Savings Areas

- Ability to add and diversify carriers quickly without long lead times
- Increased leverage in carrier negotiations through multi-carrier visibility (Large retailers have saved \$1m+ in negotiations by leveraging ProShip!)
- Centralized business rule control
- Streamlined outbound LTL operations
- Standardized processes across facilities and teams
- Simplified billing reconciliation and audit workflows
- Improved rate shopping accuracy
- Ongoing carrier compliance and automated version updates

NEXT: Putting it all together →

I've got the facts - now what? Putting it all together.

You have documented the daily or weekly peak shipping activities, categorized performance into KEEP, IMPROVE, and REPLACE buckets, and identified areas of financial risk and opportunity. Now it's time to fill in the holes.

To the right, we've provided some resources that speak directly to some common challenges you may uncover during peak documentation. On page 11, we've picked some of our most popular resources to supplement your case.



Catching delivery problems too late?

Recommended Blog: [From Reactive to Proactive: How Webhooks Deliver Real-Time Parcel Tracking](#)



Losing money due to poor data?

Recommended Blog: [How Rating Shipments Upstream Can Improve Your Parcel Operations](#)



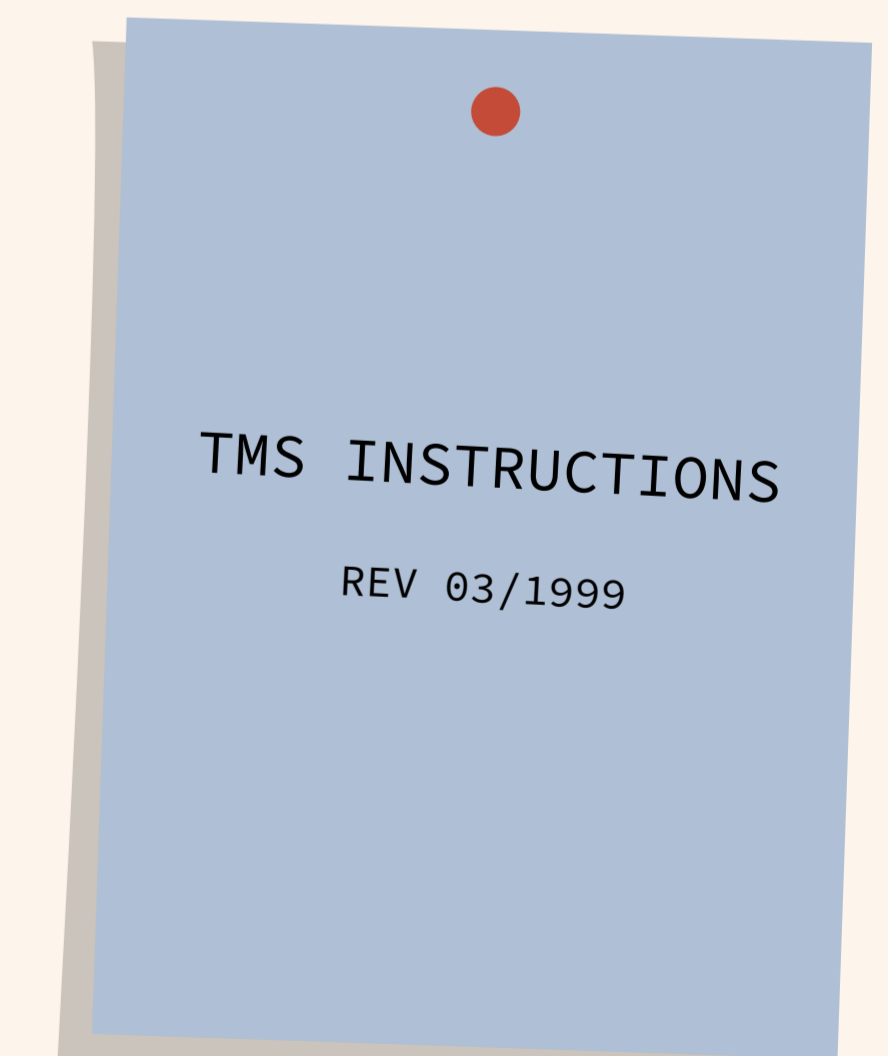
Lacking a robust rate shopping method?

Recommended Asset: [\[Video\] 3 Types of Rate Shopping in 1 Minute](#)



Spending a fortune on Hazmat Compliance?

Recommended Blog: [Unexpected Holiday Hazmat Surprises: A Guide for Supply Chain Pros](#)



"But we already have a TMS - we just need to make a couple improvements"

Recommended Blog: [Does a TMS Alone Make the Grade for Parcel Shipping?](#)







Not sure where label inefficiencies are hiding?

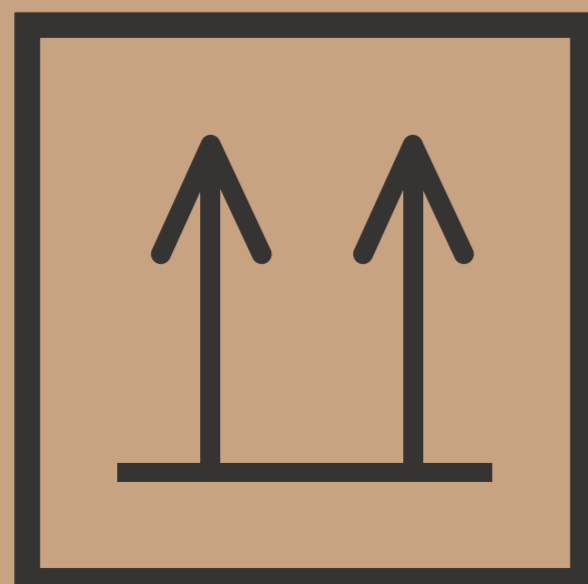
Recommended Blog: [The True Cost of a Label: How Automation and Shipping Systems Unlock Fulfillment ROI](#)



Featured Asset: Industry Brochures

Download the retail, 3PL, manufacturing or healthcare brochure to learn about industry-specific ProShip features and meet ProShip customers.

-  [View ProShip x Retail Brochure](#)
-  [View ProShip x 3PL Brochure](#)
-  [View ProShip x Manufacturing Brochure](#)
-  [View ProShip x Healthcare Brochure](#)



All you need now is buy-in.

Initiating Executive Alignment.

Now that you've gathered the data and built a clear case for shipping software, the next step is aligning stakeholders around the decisions that matter. Each executive evaluates value through a different lens, so it's important that you're able to address their specific priorities and concerns while clearly tying shipping improvements to business outcomes. Here are some key points that matter to each leadership role:



CEO

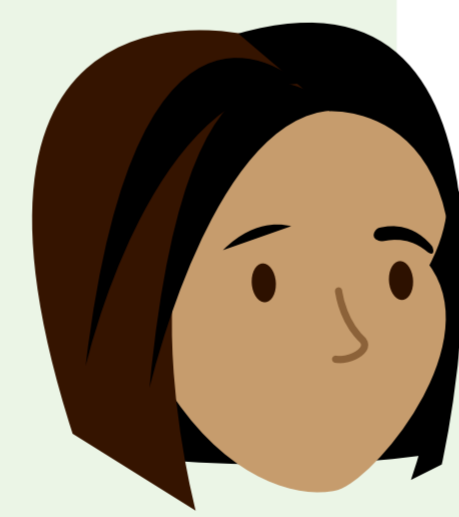


We need to meet our profitability goals!

When focused on margin and growth, shipping represents a meaningful opportunity. High shipping costs and fees quietly erode profit, while inaccurate or missed delivery commitments put both revenue and customer trust at risk.

- Reduces shipping costs while protecting delivery performance
- Delivers measurable ROI through cost control and execution improvement
- Provides a scalable foundation and eliminates the need to purchase a new platform
- Enables international expansion to grow customer base and revenue

VP of E-COMMERCE

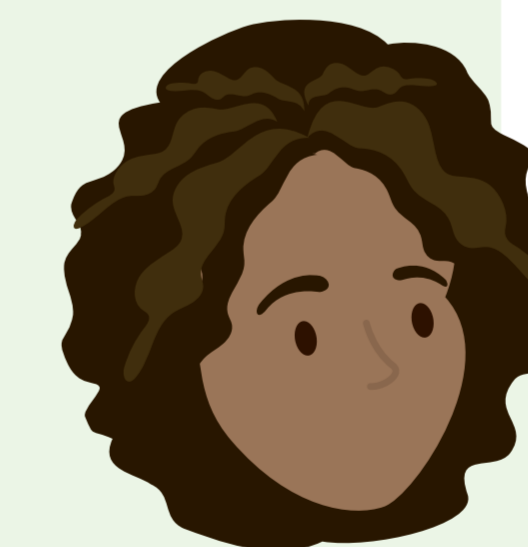


How does this shipping project benefit my department and our aggressive KPI goals?

E-commerce leaders are accountable for conversion rates, order profitability, and meeting increasingly narrow delivery expectations. Shipping performance plays a direct role in whether customers complete checkout, return for future purchases, or abandon the experience altogether.

- Supports competitive shipping options at checkout without sacrificing margin
- Improves conversion and customer loyalty with consistent on-time delivery
- Enables accurate delivery promises tied to real fulfillment and transit conditions
- Creates flexibility to expand two-day and next-day options as customer demand evolves

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER



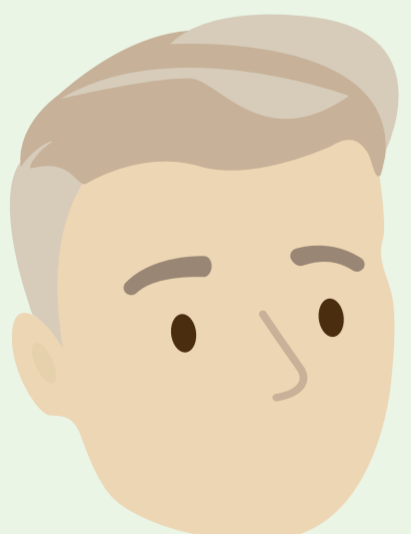
This is a huge undertaking - I don't know if we have the resources for this scale of an IT project (especially with peak season coming up).

Maintaining stable, scalable systems while minimizing operational risk during periods of peak demand is a must. Fragmented platforms, fragile integrations, and unreliable support continuously strain the IT department and increase the likelihood of downtime, performance bottlenecks, and reactive firefighting when volume is highest.

- Software integrates seamlessly into our existing enterprise technology stack
- Scales reliably to support automation and volume growth
- Executes updates and business rules without disrupting operations
- Reduces support burden through proven reliability and dedicated expertise



CHIEF SUPPLY CHAIN OFFICER



Improvements can be made, but implementing a brand new solution is cost prohibitive.

Cost concerns are valid, but shipping presents meaningful opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce avoidable spending. A modern shipping solution can strengthen compliance, speed, and reliability while delivering measurable ROI across parcel operations.

- Consistently selects the lowest cost shipping option through centralized, automated rate shopping
- Maintains carrier compliance to reduce chargebacks and penalties
- Generates accurate, carrier compliant labels, manifests, and documentation in milliseconds

VP of CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



My customer service team is already receiving complaints regarding late shipments - I'm worried that pursuing a new solution right now will have a negative effect on our Customer Retention Rate.

Shipping plays a critical role in the overall customer experience. Late deliveries, broken delivery promises, and limited visibility quickly erode trust and increase the risk of customer churn after even a small number of negative experiences.

- Features like advanced carrier rate shopping allows shippers to set accurate delivery promises and consistently execute on them
- Provides customers with real-time shipment tracking automatically, reducing service inquiries and easing pressure on customer service teams

NEXT: Talk to ProShip about optimizing your parcel shipping strategy



Ready to take the next step? Talk strategy with **ProShip**.

You've gathered the facts on your current shipping process. Now it's time to turn insight into action. Schedule a discovery call with our Shipping Experts to see how ProShip can improve how your data and findings are used to support a stronger, more reliable parcel shipping strategy for the next peak season and beyond.

**Contact us
to schedule**



(800) 353-7774



sales@proshipinc.com



About ProShip, Inc.

ProShip's suite of leading multi-carrier shipping software solutions empower businesses of all sizes to simplify parcel and LTL workflows, automate shipping tasks, and take complete control of their shipping strategy. As a premier logistics technology provider exclusively dedicated to shipping software solutions, ProShip is committed to delivering powerful shipping software today and into the future. **Trusted by leading brands, ProShip is the last shipping software you'll ever need. Visit www.proshipinc.com to learn more.**

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