

Exploratory Unmoderated Testing

Shipping Cost Questions

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to participate in our research.

We are looking to obtain feedback on some potential new questions for a Census Bureau survey. We plan to use your feedback to improve the survey questions and make sure they make sense to respondents like you. We are not testing you– we only want to evaluate the questions.

Today, we will have you answer these questions, then you will be asked some questions to get your feedback. Please answer these questions to the best of your ability.

*These questions are for Commodity Flow Survey respondents and pertain to questions about your contract carriers or in-house fleets, as well as the **cost of shipping** your commodities and how easily you can get that data.*

*When we refer to cost of shipping, this refers to how much you spend getting a shipment from point A to point B, and **not the value** of the shipment.*

Background Questions

- What is your position or role within the company?

Please answer the following questions as they pertain to this location:

ADDRESS FILL: _____

Fleets and Carriers

Carriers Used:

- Thinking about how your shipments leave this location, what type of carrier(s) do you use?
Exclude customer pickups.
 - ☐ We only use in-house (our own trucks) for shipping> *Jump to In-House, skip For Hire*
 - ☐ We only use for-hire carriers for shipping > *Jump to For Hire, skip In-House.*
 - ☐ We use a mix of in-house and for-hire carriers for shipping > *jump to For Hire & In-House*

For-Hire Carrier Questions

You indicated [from Item X contract carrier is used].

- Does a broker/3PL arrange transportation?
- What type of for-hire carriers do you use?
 - o Contract carrier(s) > [Jump to 'Contract Carriers'](#)*
 - o Common carrier(s)*
 - o Mix of contract & common carrier(s) > [Jump to 'Contract Carriers'](#)*
- Are certain types of shipments handled by different carriers because of some particular characteristic of the shipment? (For example, if includes bulk items then X carrier is used).

Contract Carriers:

- How many contract carriers do you use?
 - o We use one contract carrier*
 - o We primarily use one contract carrier, but occasionally bring in another if needed*
 - o We use multiple contract carriers*
 - How many? _____
 - o [If yes] Is this/Are these contract(a) exclusive?*
 - Yes/No
- About how long is a typical contract with your contract carrier(s)?
 - o Write in _____ (Please specify unit of time (e.g., month, year))*
 - o Don't know*
- Which of the following are included in a typical contract? Select all that apply.
*[Note to researcher, answer used as fill in question below]
 - o Number of trucks on the contract*
 - o Number of assigned drivers on contract*
 - o Geographic coverage (long-haul, regional, etc.)*
 - o Permitted commodities to be hauled*
 - o Allowable wait time for pickup*
 - o Other*
 - Please describe: _____
 - o Don't know*
- How easy or difficult would this contract data be to provide?
 - o Very easy*
 - o Somewhat easy*
 - o Somewhat difficult*
 - o Very difficult*
- What is the cost structure of a typical contract?
 - o Unlimited hauls and miles (conditional on the terms outlined above, e.g., [FILL].)*
 - o Fixed fee*
 - o Variable amount*

- What determines the amount? (For example, tons, miles, etc.) Please describe

- ☐ Other
 - Please describe: -----
- ☐ Don't know

In-House

- You indicated [from Item X **in-house** carrier is used]. How large is the fleet at this location?
 - ☐ Write-in -----
 - ☐ Don't know
- How easy or difficult would it be to provide the number of vehicles in your fleet by vehicle type
 - ☐ Very easy
 - ☐ Somewhat easy
 - ☐ Somewhat difficult
 - ☐ Very difficult
- Please provide an estimate of typical fleet maintenance expenses per year:
 - ☐ Write-in \$-----
 - ☐ Don't know
 - How easy or difficult was it to provide this information?
 - Very easy
 - Somewhat easy
 - Somewhat difficult
 - Very difficult
 - ☐ [IF somewhat or very difficult]: Please explain what made providing the data difficult. Write-in -----
- Which set of information would be easier to provide- Questions about the number of vehicles in your fleet by vehicle type, OR questions about maintenance expenses?
 - ☐ Fleet by vehicle type easier to report
 - ☐ Maintenance expenses easier to report
 - ☐ Equally easy to report
 - ☐ Neither is easy to report
- How easy or difficult would it be to report the cost of fuel for a given timeframe?
 - ☐ Very easy
 - ☐ Somewhat easy
 - ☐ Somewhat difficult
 - ☐ Very difficult
 - ☐ Dependent on timeline
- To report cost of fuel, what timeframe would be easiest to provide?
 - ☐ By week
 - ☐ By month

- o By quarter*
 - o By year*
 - o Any timeframe*
 - o The data is difficult to provide regardless of timeframe*
- Please provide an estimate of fleet driver staffing expenses per year:
 - o Write-in \$_____*
 - o Don't know*
 - How easy or difficult was it to provide this information?
 - *Very easy*
 - *Somewhat easy*
 - *Somewhat difficult*
 - *Very difficult*

o [IF somewhat or very difficult]: Please explain what made providing the data difficult. Write-in _____

Optional Free Text

- Feel free to elaborate on any of these questions related to contract carriers or in-house shipping.
 - o Write-in _____*

Cost of Shipping

These next questions are about cost of shipping, which refers to how much you spend getting a shipment from point A to point B, and **not the value** of the shipment.

- How easy or difficult would it be for you to provide shipping cost data for a given 2-week period for all shipments from this location?

Include costs of for-hire & in-house carriers

 - o Very easy*
 - o Somewhat easy*
 - o Somewhat difficult*
 - o Very difficult*
 - *[IF somewhat or very difficult]: Please explain what made providing the data difficult. Write-in _____*
- What timeframe would be easiest for you to provide shipping cost data, for all shipments from this facility?
 - o By week*
 - o By month*
 - o By quarter*
 - o By year*
 - o Any timeframe*
 - o The data is difficult to provide regardless of timeframe*

- Would you need to contact another department to get shipping cost data?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - **[IF YES]:** What is the job title/role of the individual you would need to reach out to?
 - **[IF YES]:** What department are they in?

- What factors impact the shipping cost for one shipment? *Check all that apply.*
 - truckload vs. less-than-truckload service
 - destination
 - distance
 - shipment weight
 - fuel cost / fuel surcharge
 - special handling – fragile, perishable, hazardous, oversize/overweight, etc.
 - Other _____
 - Don't know

- ☐ How easy or difficult is it to provide this data?
 - ☐ Very easy
 - ☐ Somewhat easy
 - ☐ Somewhat difficult
 - ☐ Very difficult
 - **[IF somewhat or very difficult]:** Please explain what made providing the data difficult. *Write-in* _____

- Once a shipment has left your location, would you know in advance, or be notified if the shipment is moved from a truck to another mode of transportation, such as rail, air or water?
 - ☐ I am always notified
 - ☐ I am sometimes notified
 - ☐ I am rarely notified
 - ☐ I am never notified

o Optional Free text

Feel free to elaborate. [Open text field]

- How is shipping cost information maintained across your company?

Note: Single units will not receive this question.

- o Maintained at each location separately*
- o Maintained at the company level only (the data from each location is combined)*
- o Available at location level and company level*
- o The data is not consistently maintained at either level*
- o Don't know*

- How is shipping cost information maintained within your company? *Select all that apply.*

- o In database(s)*
 - *[IF a database:] Is this shipping cost information stored in one database or multiple databases?*
 - *One database*
 - *Multiple databases*
- o Stored as physical files*
- o Shipping information is not consistently maintained*
- o Don't know*

Our goal is to learn whether shipping cost data is tracked, and how easy it is to report. What comments do you have about the survey questions? Are there other steps you would need to take to get this data? Do you have any other comments or suggestions for us?

[Open text field]

Thank you for your participation!