

CASE STUDY

Hunter Douglas Chooses Paccurate for Dynamic Shipping, and Freight Optimization

A Paccurate Success Story

From “Best Guess” to Dynamic, Optimized Shipping.

COMPANY

Multinational firm Hunter Douglas is well known to designers and consumers worldwide for their innovative use of textiles and custom-built drapery, window blinds, shades, and shutter solutions.

Hunter Douglas designs, manufactures, and custom assembles virtually all its made-to-order window treatments in 15 U.S. facilities and ships from each facility to commercial customers, and drop-ships to residential customers on behalf of designers.



CHALLENGE

Until recently, Hunter Douglas packers used manual measurements and directed box-cutting machines to cut individual boxes before shipping orders, with 20% of boxes ending up oversized. “We don’t have pre-cut boxes,” explains Hunter Douglas Director of Logistics Ankur Garg. “So our problem was human beings trying to decide box sizes and shipment configurations, without really knowing how their decisions and different parameters impacted shipment costs.”

Since the company doesn’t split orders, often sending out up to 20 boxes at a time, complex orders with multiple oversized packages were starting to incur excessive oversize and DIM shipping fees that increased overall transportation cost by as much as 15%.

Meanwhile, more frequent industry-wide increases in freight accessorials from carriers like FedEx compounded the excess shipping costs.

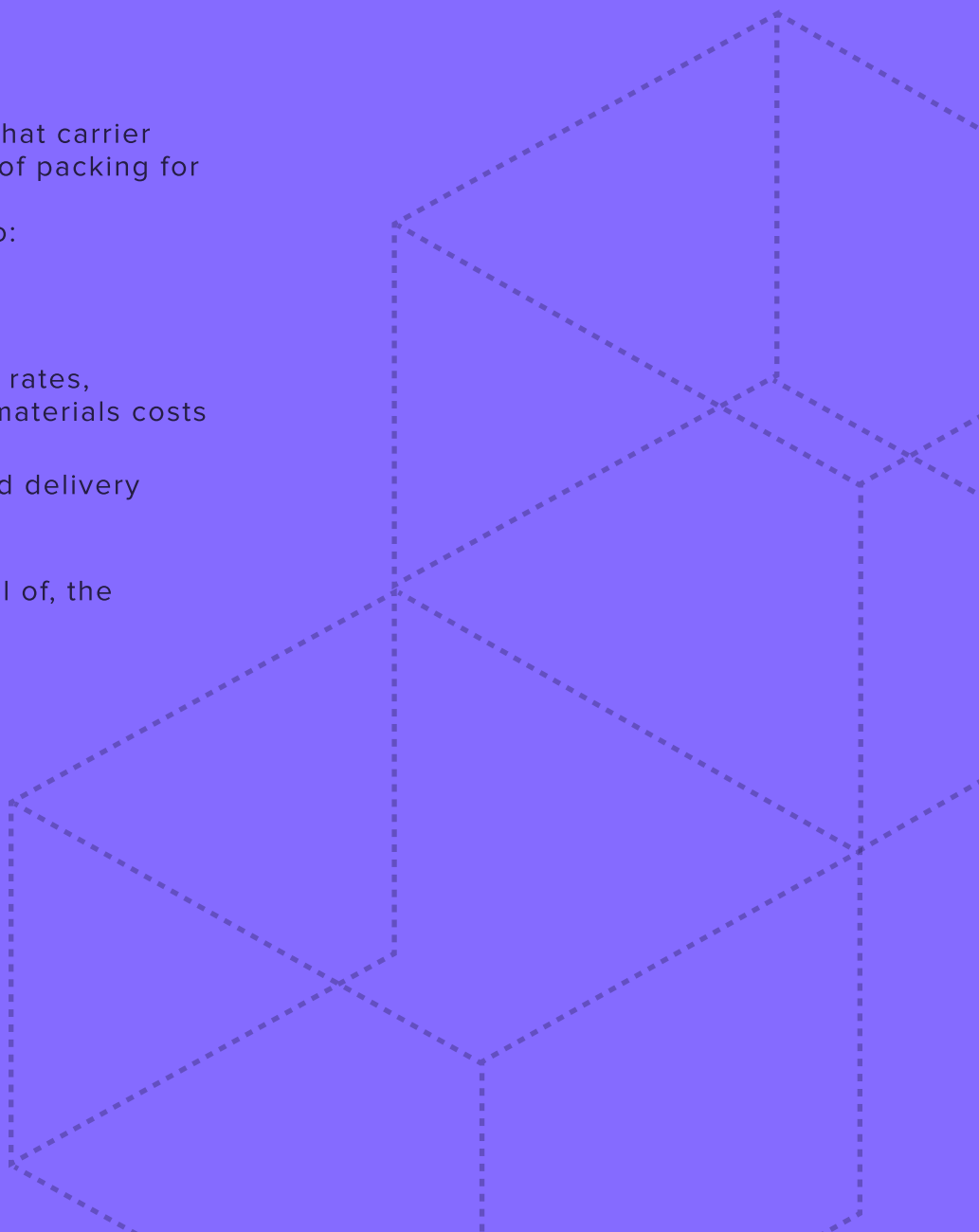
It was time to move to get smarter about packing. “Our leadership wanted to optimize for shipping rates,” says Garg. “We wanted to remove human decision-making and right-size boxes to protect the environment and reduce in-transit product damage.”

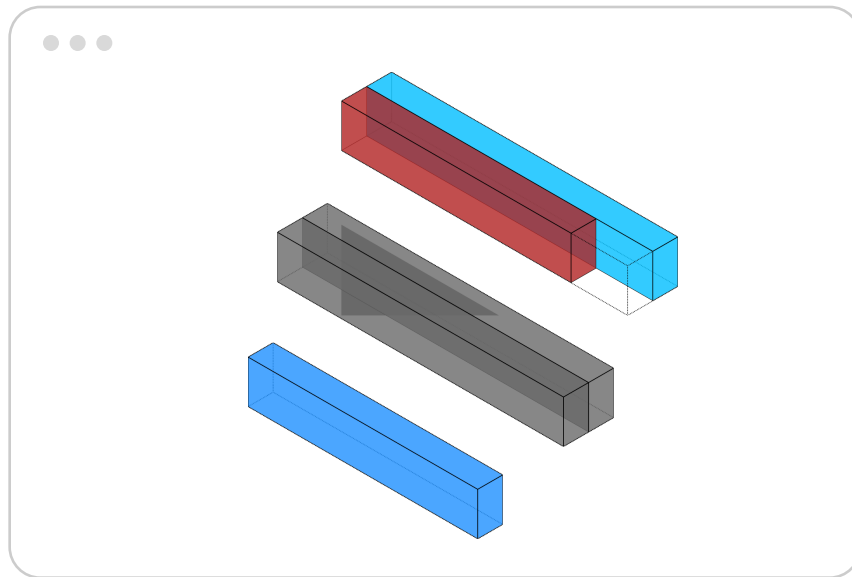
It was time to move towards getting smarter about packing.

Hunter Douglas is living proof that carrier rates incentivize a certain way of packing for each unique shipment.

The company uses Paccurate to:

- Reduce packaging errors
- Dynamically balance shipping rates, accessorials/fees, labor, and materials costs
- Choose the best box sizes and delivery modes
- Gain visibility into, and control of, the packing process





SOLUTION

Garg brought his vision and robust supply chain and finance background to the Paccurate implementation process, working with the Hunter Douglas development and Paccurate teams to connect the order data in their SAP ERP system to their manufacturing system and packing stations.

“Because our product is custom, no two units have the same SKU characteristics,” notes Garg. “We needed to figure out how to translate order data to the information the Paccurate system needs from us.”

“Paccurate set up the system so the packaging operator now receives notifications with the number of units and bin location, and can pull all units and scan the order number,” Garg continues. “Because the units are numbered, Paccurate not only tells the operator which unit sequence goes in which box but also provides a visual showing how to orient products in the box. It’s really sophisticated.”

“

Paccurate not only tells the operator which unit sequence goes in which box but also provides a visual showing how to orient the products in the box. It’s really sophisticated

”

ROI from Paccurate

RESULT

Garg is pleased with the level of automation and optimization Paccurate provides. “Now, all the operator needs to do is tell the box making machine which order he’s packing, and because of Paccurate it knows what size boxes to make. We give our rate tables to analyze, and it optimizes the shipment accordingly. That’s the power of Paccurate,” he says.

“For example,” Garg continues, “Suppose we have a five-box order. FedEx constraints say you can only ship a box that’s 9 feet long using FedEx Ground, or 3 feet long using FedEx Express. Anything beyond that must ship less-than-truckload (LTL). Before Paccurate, if we had five boxes in the order, we’d scan the barcodes from the first box and so on. But if only the last box were oversized, the operator would need to undo everything he just did and process it as an Express shipment. Now that we know box sizes ahead of time, we can print the mode of shipment on the label for that order.”

Meanwhile, in an increasingly erratic freight market with hundreds of supply chain disruptions, Garg notes that Paccurate provides additional benefits to move Hunter Douglas beyond packaging and shipping optimization and into supply chain optimization. “Ocean freight rates are going through the roof,” he explains. “Paccurate can help shippers determine how to put boxes in a truck or a container to maximize the volume of that truck or container.”

“

We give our rate tables to Paccurate to analyze in real time, and it optimizes the shipment accordingly. That’s the power of Paccurate

”

Paccurate is even helping Hunter Douglas improve customer interactions, Garg says. “Now, when customers say, ‘Hey, I need this order expedited,’ or ‘I need to know whether this order shipped Express,’ we can tell them on the front end what their cost will be. Before, we didn’t know.”

Garg is more than impressed with what he calls Paccurate’s extreme customer focus. “Whenever I talk with people in our industry these days, I always make it a point to advertise Paccurate. If Paccurate is looking for someone to invest, I would in a heartbeat. I just can’t say enough about them.”

With Hunter Douglas’ first Paccurate implementation recently completed at their pilot facility, Garg plans to roll out Paccurate to the remaining 14 facilities as soon as possible—now with even more support from his colleagues. “Our shipping and operations people love Paccurate. Now, we just need to roll it out across the enterprise,” he concludes.