

# HOW OLYMPIC STEEL DITCHED SPREADSHEETS FOR SHIPPERGUIDE & SAVED \$260K IN ONE YEAR

## CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**CLIENT:** Olympic Steel

**INDUSTRY:** Metals Service Center & Manufacturing

**SOLUTION:** Loadsmart (*ShipperGuide & Opendock*)

#### KEY RESULTS:

Over **\$260,000 saved** in transportation spend at a single division within the first year.

**Up to 10 minutes saved per load**, transforming hours of sourcing into minutes.

**100% reduction** in double bookings and missed appointments.

Successful deployment across a decentralized network with **zero heavy IT integration required**.

### ABOUT OLYMPIC STEEL

Olympic Steel is a **leading national metals service center** focused on the direct sale and distribution of processed carbon, coated, and stainless flat-rolled sheet, coil, and plate steel.

Operating with a decentralized transportation structure, each individual corporate location manages its own daily freight requirements utilizing a corporate-approved vendor list.

### ABOUT THE TEAM

Taylor Zielinski, a 10-year veteran of Olympic Steel's corporate transportation team, oversees large-scale transportation spend analysis.

In this role, Taylor manages the company's dedicated 3PL accounts and continuously explores strategic opportunities to minimize logistics expenditures.



## THE CHALLENGE: THE STRUGGLE OF SPOT SOURCING AND MANUAL SCHEDULERS

With much of Olympic Steel's freight moving on the spot market, logistics coordination was handled locally, making visibility a challenge.

Prior to adopting Loadsmart's solutions, individual divisional traffic teams operated in silos. They managed carrier procurement through highly manual and complex communication chains.

According to Taylor, the baseline process relied heavily on repetition and **best estimates**:

*"Prior to using ShipperGuide, the divisional traffic teams would send several email blasts during the day complete with a list of loads to the carrier they had chosen to work with."*



The sheer **“amount of manual work that went into sourcing trucks each day through email and phone calls was a lot.”** Without a single source of truth, “loads were missed or double booked in the confusion.”

Furthermore, extracting actionable logistics metrics was nearly impossible. This presented a barrier to leadership because **“you need the information to make higher- level decisions.”**

Compounding this back-office strain was a highly fractured dock scheduling process. Before implementing Opendock, Olympic Steel’s locations relied on an **“excel sheet to ‘schedule’ trucks on.”** These spaces were manually booked via phone or email during carrier confirmation.

Because these spreadsheets failed to update dynamically, bookings ran the risk of being missed or not shared with the warehouse floor. This friction ended up **“making staging of materials difficult and slowing down loading times.”**

Olympic Steel recognized the need for a modern Transportation Management System (TMS), but they needed to consider their legacy ERP infrastructure.

Because their internal software relied on in-house coders, traditional, enterprise-grade TMS implementations didn’t make sense for the organization, due to prohibitive costs and lengthy implementation timelines.



## THE SOLUTION:

### A “TMS LIGHT” WITH ZERO IMPLEMENTATION FRICTION

The breakthrough occurred when a cold call from a ShipperGuide representative introduced Olympic Steel to a platform that delivered the robust functionality of a traditional TMS without technical headaches.

It presented what Taylor describes as a perfect **“TMS light” system**, functioning as an agile, cloud-based procurement platform requiring no integration with existing legacy systems.

Not requiring direct ERP integration, the platform gave Olympic Steel immediate operational leverage. Loadsmart enabled the team to **“reduce workloads, increase efficiency, and extrapolate data we have never been able to before.”** The rollout proved exceptionally straightforward. Loadsmart facilitated a seamless onboarding process by preloading vital lane information and carrier networks into the system.

When training commenced, the transition was smooth. Whenever questions arose, ShipperGuide’s support team proved highly accommodating, frequently returning answers **“within an hour, most of the time within 20 minutes.”**



## THE SOLUTION:

### A "TMS LIGHT" WITH ZERO IMPLEMENTATION FRICTION

The breakthrough occurred when a cold call from a ShipperGuide representative introduced Olympic Steel to a platform that delivered the robust functionality of a traditional TMS without technical headaches.

It presented what Taylor describes as a perfect *"TMS light" system*, functioning as an agile, cloud-based procurement platform requiring no integration with existing legacy systems.

Not requiring direct ERP integration, the platform gave Olympic Steel immediate operational leverage. Loadsmart enabled the team to *"reduce workloads, increase efficiency, and extrapolate data we have never been able to before."* The rollout proved exceptionally straightforward. Loadsmart facilitated a seamless onboarding process by preloading vital lane information and carrier networks into the system.

When training commenced, the transition was smooth. Whenever questions arose, ShipperGuide's support team proved highly accommodating, frequently returning answers *"within an hour, most of the time within 20 minutes."*

**\$260k**

Transportation Savings in Year 1  
(single division)

**10 min**

Saved per load  
during procurement

**100%**

Reduction in double bookings  
& missed appointments



## WHY SHIPPERGUIDE:

### IT IS MORE THAN JUST A TMS

#### TRADITIONAL TMS OPTIONS *(Oracle, etc.)*

High Integration Costs



Multi-Month or Multi-Year Implementation



Rigid Legacy Framework



#### SHIPPERGUIDE DEPLOYMENT

Zero System Integration Cost

Rapid, Frictionless Onboarding

Flexible, User-Friendly UI

Following the success of ShipperGuide, Olympic Steel scaled its use of Opendock. They expanded the digital dock scheduling platform to two additional major divisions to unify warehouse and gate operations.

[Learn More About Loadsmart](#)



## THE RESULTS:

The financial and operational impacts of the Loadsmart partnership were realized almost immediately during a regional trial in Winder, Georgia. At the end of the trial period, they were eager to finalize the contract.

### 1. HARD-COST REDUCTIONS

By gaining real-time market visibility, Olympic Steel unlocked meaningful procurement leverage. Within just 12 months of signing the agreement, the company **“saw over \$260k in reduced transportation spending at the Winder division”** alone.

This ROI stemmed directly from having clear market benchmark rates displayed instantly on-screen when bidding to carriers, allowing traffic managers to **effectively** push back on pricing effectively.

Prior to this visibility, negotiations relied strictly on inherited industry knowledge or repetitive, static RFQs from the same narrow pool of providers.

### 2. OPERATIONAL VELOCITY

By moving all freight booking to ShipperGuide, Olympic Steel cut significant time from every transaction:

- **Up to 10 minutes saved per load** during procurement.
- Sourcing workflows that previously took hours are now **completed in minutes**.
- Dock staging and loading times have vastly improved, drastically **increasing throughput** on the floor.

### 3. PROACTIVE CULTURE SHIFT

Eliminating the daily administrative noise fundamentally altered what the transportation team could achieve. Instead of losing hours tracking down lost emails or resolving double bookings, **“more focus went to analysis, other projects, and improving the flow at the division.”**

Corporate leadership now leverages the integrated Carrier Scorecard within the Analytics Portal during regular vendor audits to evaluate performance data objectively and make high-level decisions regarding vendor retention.



## LOOKING AHEAD TO A MULTI-YEAR PARTNERSHIP

Having both ShipperGuide and Opendock under one partnership simplified Olympic Steel's vendor management and solidified its decision to commit to an ongoing partnership.

**Taylor describes Loadsmart as a partner that goes beyond standard support — building custom reports and adjusting the platform to fit Olympic Steel's evolving needs.**

For Olympic Steel, the platform's long-term value is undeniable: *"Looking forward, we don't see Loadsmart going anywhere; the simplicity of use, cost effectiveness, and flexibility we receive are too good."*

For any other metals service center or manufacturer dealing with fragmented, spreadsheet-driven logistics, Olympic Steel's recommendation is clear: *"If they have no TMS, give them a shot. The simplicity and ease of the system will help in many facets of business. Everything from helping to lower shipping costs, improving data accuracy, to increasing productivity of workers."*

# READY TO MODERNIZE YOUR FREIGHT OPERATIONS?

See how ShipperGuide and Opendock work together at [Loadsmart.com](https://Loadsmart.com).

**LEARN MORE**

