

Relocation Technology: Looking to the past to create an answer for the future

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Technology has created some exciting solutions for the procurement of global removal services over the past years, but it has been a long time since there have been any significant changes to the traditional RFP/RFI approach, not to mention the billing and audit processes.

From where we sit at Parsifal Corporation, two major industry challenges today include the time involved in the RFP/RFI process and, secondly, the time involved in invoice creation, audit and payment. These are areas where there are tremendous improvement opportunities through sophisticated procurement technology, along with simplified invoice creation, audit and payment.

The Traditional Processes

The traditional RFP/RFI process is long and laborious, involving extensive documentation with complex spreadsheets, and often involves procurement personnel who are not familiar with the household goods/removal business. The result? The supplier spends a lot of time collecting and assembling rates, and the client spends a lot of time analyzing and attempting to make sense of a significant amount of data that often only covers a percentage of their shipments.

On the auditing side, the process commonly doesn't start until the move has been completed and the supplier invoice has been received. However, errors noted in this post move audit are more difficult to resolve, creating pain for suppliers and delays in the invoice processing.

The Future

Clearly, the RFP/RFI primary goal is to ensure competitive pricing, hopefully without losing sight of the quality of service. At the same time, the intent of the audit, at least for Parsifal, is to bring unbiased accuracy to the billing process for removal invoices, and to do so with respect and fairness to all players.

(The Future continued)

Can these goals be accomplished while improving the process all the way from the RFP/RFI to the billing and payment? With the significant advances in block chain, AI and data mining, the short answer is yes.

It starts with technology to change the RFP/RFI from a single event every few years to an ongoing, technology-driven RFP that constantly analyzes price and service quality. It starts with system integration, from the virtual survey to pricing, along with an upstream audit of the move process *as it occurs*. Gone will be the days when the additional services or weight/volume of a shipment are challenged post move. The audit will be integrated into the move process with any issues resolved in real time.

This will require the convergence of a few technologies, and necessitate the resolution of initial challenges involving service fees that are tough to capture and support. We are, however, working with suppliers towards surmounting these hurdles one by one.

From a handheld device, newer technology can now perform the survey and soon will enable supplier personnel to upload required information for invoicing, auditing and payment purposes at origin and delivery completion. Who would have believed this ten years ago?

Welcome to the future.



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