

9 Strategic Moves for Smarter, AI-Driven Trade Management

Tariff policy is constantly evolving, and with every new change comes increased complexity, documentation burden, and pressure on already-stretched logistics teams. Whether you're bracing for the next wave or managing the aftermath of the last, staying ahead means rethinking how your organization handles compliance, sourcing, and operations.

This checklist outlines the most effective ways to navigate today's volatile trade environment using modern tools—especially AI—to streamline workflows, improve visibility, and scale without additional headcount.

1

Quantify Exposure to Reduce Cost Surprises

- ☐ Review product classifications (HTS codes) and country-of-origin mix
- ☐ Model the impact of new tariffs on your cost structure
- ☐ Flag at-risk suppliers and key customers for proactive mitigation

2

Optimize Timing and Sourcing to Minimize Risk

- ☐ Adjust inventory levels and consider front-loading high-risk imports
- ☐ Explore alternative sourcing options and leverage free trade agreements
- ☐ Diversify your supply base to reduce single-market exposure

3

Streamline Documentation to Avoid Delays

- ☐ Ensure complete, accurate customs paperwork (invoices, packing lists, etc.)
- ☐ Standardize document formats to minimize errors and clearance issues
- ☐ Use automation to cut manual processing time and reduce compliance risk

4

Use AI to Translate, Accelerate, and Scale Customs Workflows

- ☐ Automate extraction and processing of data from unstructured, multilingual documents (PDFs, emails, invoices)
- ☐ Normalize partner data using AI's translation and categorization capabilities
- ☐ Reduce customs entry times from 30 minutes to 2 minutes—a 28-minute gain per entry
- ☐ Free up team capacity to handle exceptions and tariff-related escalations
- ☐ Improve over time with machine learning-driven accuracy



5 Strengthen Compliance and Audit Readiness

- ☐ Stay current on tariff classifications, duty changes, and exemptions
- ☐ Maintain organized digital records to support audits and claims
- ☐ Run self-audits to catch misclassifications and incomplete documentation early

6 Train for Agility, Not Just Accuracy

- ☐ Educate teams on evolving tariff regulations and documentation standards
- ☐ Enable staff to work alongside AI, focusing on problem-solving and high-value tasks
- ☐ Promote cross-functional collaboration to align trade, finance, and logistics teams
- ☐ Support 2–3x business growth without expanding headcount, as seen by AI adopters like Scarborough

7 Monitor Policy Shifts with a Real-Time Lens

- ☐ Track developments from U.S. Customs, trade associations, and global agencies

- ☐ Embed tariff scenario modeling into regular operations reviews
- ☐ Stay nimble by revisiting sourcing and cost assumptions frequently

8 Collaborate Across the Ecosystem

- ☐ Communicate early and often with suppliers, brokers, and logistics partners
- ☐ Develop shared playbooks for managing documentation and customs changes
- ☐ Use shared tech platforms to improve supply chain visibility and coordination

9 Move from Defense to Offense with AI

- ☐ Use AI to move from reactive response to proactive trade strategy
- ☐ Eliminate “keyboard jobs” so teams can focus on real-time problem solving
- ☐ Turn tariff compliance into a competitive advantage through speed, accuracy, and scalability

FINAL WORD

The logistics industry has been on its heels, managing manual processes and reacting to surprises. But 2025 is the year to get on your toes. With AI as your translator, accelerator, and partner, your team can do more than survive this tariff wave. You can lead through it.

Unlock a Smarter Way to Manage Trade Complexity

Want to see how logistics leaders are reducing customs entry times from 30 minutes to just 2, and scaling operations without expanding their teams? [Request a personalized demo](#) and discover how Raft's AI-powered platform can help your team simplify compliance, reduce manual work, and stay agile in a constantly changing trade environment.