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For Immediate Release

'Tis the Season: How Small and Mid-Size Businesses Can Ship Smart Over the Holidays *Unishippers Provides B2B Tips to Avoid Shipping Challenges this Season*

SALT LAKE CITY, UT – With the start of the holiday season only a few months away, small and mid-size businesses should prepare early to ensure that their regularly shipped items, along with gifts to customers, get to their destination safely, on time and cost-effectively during the hectic holiday season.

To help small to mid-size businesses nationwide avoid lost, delayed or damaged shipments during the peak of the season, [Unishippers Global Logistics, LLC](#), the nation's first and one of the largest small package and freight shipping resellers, has compiled the following tips to allow for a smooth, painless shipping season.

Shipping Heavy Freight

- **Properly Prepare Pallets.** When shipping multiple or heavy boxes that need to be placed on a pallet, always use pallets that are in good condition and durable. Stack the boxes squarely, corner-to-corner on the pallet and be sure that the boxes do not hang over the edges. Distribute the weight evenly on the pallet and keep the top surface flat to minimize potential damage. Many times, shippers try to save a few dollars by skimping on shrink-wrap (or stretch wrap). Then, when boxes fall off of pallets that were not wrapped properly, the parcels become damaged or lost. A good rule of thumb is to wrap the pallet two to three complete times to ensure a secure, properly packed load. If every box on your pallet is not going to be labeled individually, it's a smart idea to at least mark each box 1 of 10, 2 of 10, etc. By doing so, you can minimize the risk of any boxes being missed if they should fall off the pallet.
- **Review Shipment Insurance Options.** Shipment insurance reduces the risks associated with the loss or damage to freight shipments during transit. Freight shipments are susceptible to damage, particularly if your shipment is traveling through an LTL network. A common misconception is that shipments are automatically insured by the carrier through their limits of liability. The truth is, carrier liability is not insurance and it may not protect the full value of your shipment. Carrier liability has limits based on the condition of the items being shipped and the class of the freight – regardless of the actual value of the shipment. With shipment insurance, you can receive reliable, full coverage for your shipments and the process to file a claim is often easier.

Shipping Small Packages

- **Properly Package Fragile Items.** If you're planning to send mugs, wine or other fragile gadgets to your customers as a thank you this holiday season, carefully package these products to avoid costly replacements. If you are planning to ship wine in particular, read the rules and regulations of the carrier you are using before you ship. For example, when shipping wine with UPS®, you need to be licensed to ship wine and must be entered into a contract with the carrier for wine transport.

- **Manage Expectations.** All small business shippers should be managing their customers' expectations, especially around the holiday season during peak shipping times. Ensure your customers are aware of how quickly you can fill an order, and always include the time it will take their shipment to get from point A to point B. In addition, service guarantee commitments for small package shipments are typically extended during the peak holiday season. Take time to familiarize yourself with these temporary changes and pass that information on to your customers.

Tips for All Shippers

- **Tightly Secure Packages.** With increased shipments over the holidays and because of unpredictable weather conditions, packages should be tightly secured to prevent damages in transit. To seal the packages, tape the opening of your box and use 2-inch-wide packaging tape to reinforce all seams. You should use clear or brown packaging tape, reinforced packing tape or even paper tape. Using materials such as string, twine, cord, masking or cellophane tape will not properly seal your box and can also cause you to incur additional charges as the packages or shipments may require special handling. Also be sure to place a strip of clear packaging tape over your label to prevent the address from smearing.
- **Check Shipping Rates.** To help protect your businesses' profit margin, be sure you are reviewing all shipping options to receive the most affordable rate. Compare different shipping costs and delivery times before the holiday rush begins to help preserve your bottom line. Using a transportation management system (TMS) is an efficient way to see multiple carriers and costs in one place.
- **Review Holiday Shipping Schedules.** Most carriers have reduced hours or are closed altogether over the holidays. The majority of shippers, like UPS and FedEx®, will not deliver packages on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve or New Year's day. To review key shipping dates, [click here](#) for the 2014 UPS year-end holiday schedule.

"It may only be October, but preparing your small or mid-size business now for the peak of the holiday shipping season is a smart strategy," said Unishippers President, Kevin Lathrop. "The holidays are already a hectic time of year, so we recommend business owners study these tips to ensure efficient, stress-free and cost-effective shipping this year."

About Unishippers

Founded in 1987, Unishippers has grown to the largest reseller of shipping services in the nation with more than 290 franchise locations. Headquartered in Salt Lake City, UT, the Unishippers concept is simple – work with major carriers including UPS®, Saia®, Estes®, YRC Freight™ and UPS Freight® to handle the pickup, transport and delivery of customers' shipments. All the while, franchisees work to provide customers with service and support. By leveraging the combined shipping volume of all its customers, Unishippers gets deeply discounted rates from its carriers, resulting in lower shipping costs. Unishippers serves more than 50,000 small to mid-sized businesses, and has been recognized as a top freight broker by *Transport Topics* and a top franchise by *Entrepreneur*, *Franchise Times* and the *Inc.* 5000. For information on Unishippers, including information on franchising opportunities and price quotes, visit www.unishippers.com.

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