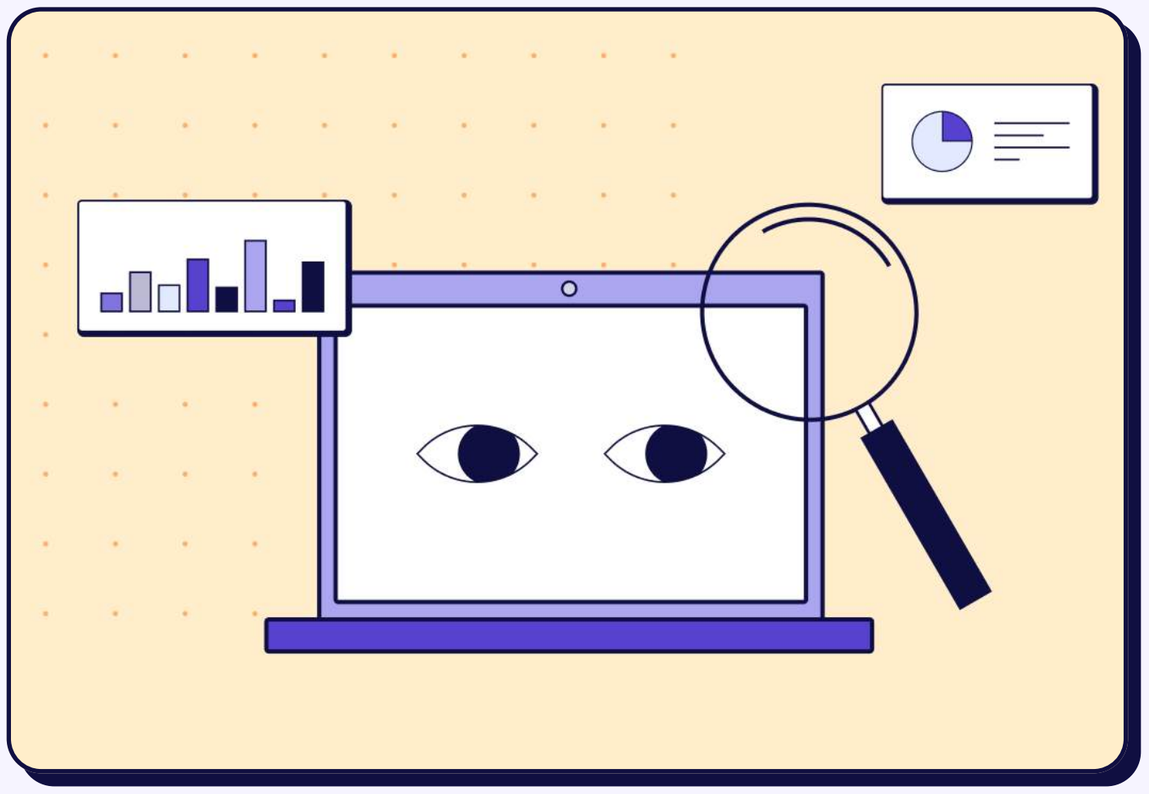
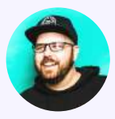
IMPLENTIO

WHITEPAPER

Overcoming Data Blind Spots in Your Outsourced Fulfillment





Jason Bang

Implentio Chief Customer Officer and Ops Expert

Operational data is your brand's compass. Monitoring your inventory levels, order processing times, shipping costs, etc. is like keeping a pulse on your business's vitals. The most successful e-commerce companies, those seven-to-eight-figure brands we all know, make strategic decisions using precise operational data aggregated from sources across their entire supply chain.

For brands relying on third-party logistics (3PL) partners to fulfill orders, getting consistently reliable operational data is a struggle. Due to the inherent operational complexity of serving multiple, often widely varied, clients under one roof, many 3PLs simply lack the data collection and reporting capabilities that brands need to succeed.

For that reason, e-commerce companies must learn how to navigate these 3PL-related blind spots in their supply chain. By identifying and remedying any gaps in visibility, brands are better equipped to make strategic decisions, improve the customer experience, and manage one of their biggest expenses— fulfillment and transportation.

In this whitepaper, we'll cover the most common 3PL visibility issues, and then introduce four proven strategies to overcome these data blind spots, once and for all.

Where Do Data Blind Spots Come From?

In a nutshell, data blind spots arise from the inherent difficulty for 3PLs to collect distinct, precise data for their hundreds of clients. With hundreds to thousands of orders to pick, pack, and ship, 3PL providers must focus their efforts on getting orders out, accurately and on time. Of course, many 3PLs are continually upgrading their systems to better serve their customers' data needs, but brands must also recognize and be aware of their 3PL provider's technical limitations.

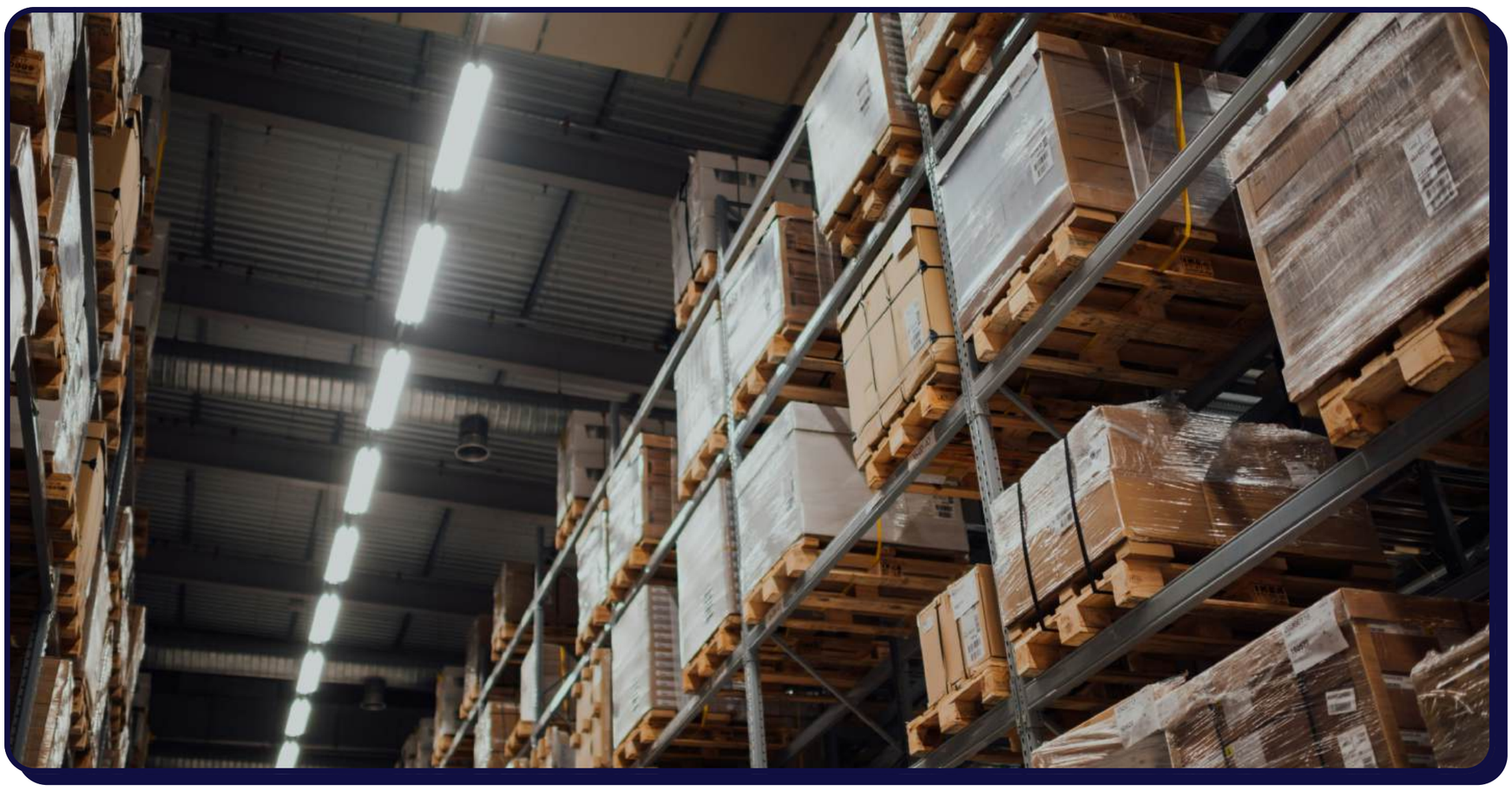
Here are some examples of key operational data you're most likely missing, and why:

Real-Time Inventory Data – Most often, your 3PL provider's warehouse management system (WMS) is the source of your inventory data. For this data to be up-to-date, your 3PL must have integrated systems that instantly relay data to one another; however, in reality, many 3PLs use spreadsheets and systems that require manual input and update.

Precise Pick & Pack Data – While clear visibility into pick & pack data ensures your orders are handled and billed according to your pre-negotiated agreements, many 3PLs do not have the automated monitoring required to collect this information. Without direct access to the warehouse, brands must rely on self-reported data.

Transportation Data – Because 3PLs serve many clients, in-depth shipping and transportation information is often unavailable to the individual brand.

The result: brands lack the operation insights and information they need to improve fulfillment processes, manage expenses, and improve the customer experience.



Top 4 Strategies to Remedy Supply Chain Blind Spots

Until 3PLs are able to improve their data collection and analysis capabilities, these visibility issues will continue to impact your brand's bottom line. Here's how you can leverage your existing data to overcome the aforementioned blind spots in your supply chain.

1. Avoid Back Orders and Predict Trends with Data Analytics

To understand your inventory patterns, you can consolidate the historical data from your e-commerce platforms, such as Shopify or WooCommerce, CRM systems like Hubspot and Insightly, as well as 3PL inventory data. A single source of truth ensures every available data stream is visible, eliminating potential data silos and fragmentation.

To effectively manage inventory levels, you can create statistical models using predictive analytics tools like Power BI or Excel that help you forecast demand and identify seasonal and product trends. This allows your brand to anticipate operational issues and order fluctuations. All you have to do is consolidate your existing ops data and work with your team to pick an algorithm that fits your business needs.

To monitor the health of your operations, automated tracking allows you to quickly detect anomalous behavior in your supply chain and take corrective action. With automated tracking of your ops data, you can uncover supply chain patterns, analyze your fulfillment data points in one place, and notify responsible parties of any errors before they impact your downstream operations.

2. Invest in Real-Time Reporting

To help you quickly resolve operational bottlenecks and minimize disruption for your customers, AI-powered reconciliation platforms use 3PL invoice data to provide real-time updates on fulfillment, delivery, and freight transit times. Additionally, real-time transit data allows you to find cost-saving opportunities in your shipping operations, enabling you to better adjust shipping schedules and negotiate with carriers.

3. Focus on the Customer Experience

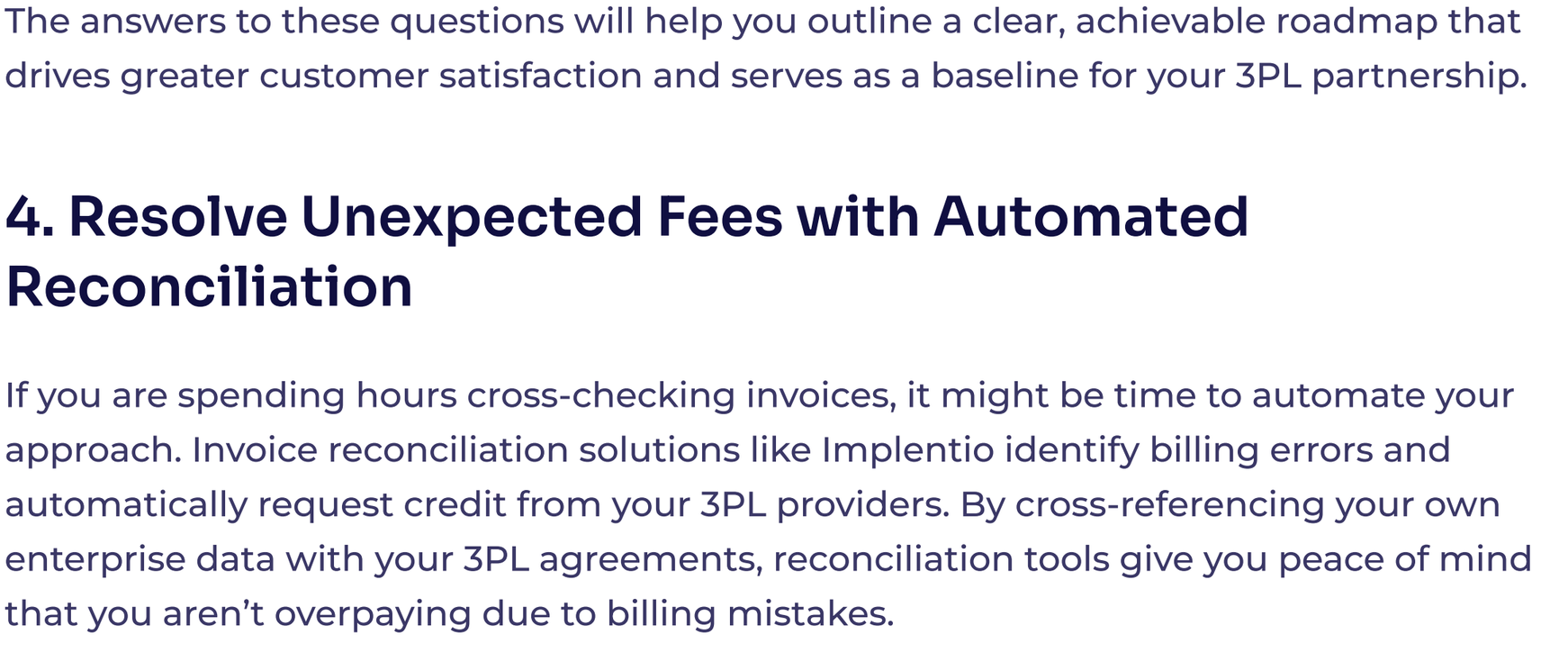
All operational data is a reflection of your customer's needs and preferences. By extracting insights from your existing data, you can answer important questions like:

- Is this cutting down lead time for my customers?
- Are these warehouses strategically located to ensure low shipping costs?
- Will this help me respond to unexpected customer demand?

The answers to these questions will help you outline a clear, achievable roadmap that drives greater customer satisfaction and serves as a baseline for your 3PL partnership.

4. Resolve Unexpected Fees with Automated Reconciliation

If you are spending hours cross-checking invoices, it might be time to automate your approach. Invoice reconciliation solutions like Implentio identify billing errors and automatically request credit from your 3PL providers. By cross-referencing your own enterprise data with your 3PL agreements, reconciliation tools give you peace of mind that you aren't overpaying due to billing mistakes.



How Implentio Unlocks the Value of Your Ops Data

Here's how Implentio can help your brand save money, streamline operations, and make strategic business decisions with confidence.

- **Unlock next-level transparency:** Implentio combines millions of data points from various 3PL sources. After centralizing your data in an intuitive dashboard, advanced data analytics provide actionable ops insights.
- **Streamline 3PL invoicing and reconciliation:** Implentio consolidates all your 3PL invoices from the past year and summarizes fees incurred. After cross-checking costs from pick & pack and freight, you get a curated list of errors eligible for a credit or discount. All in just a few clicks.
- **Automate credit and discount requests:** Once you have that list of eligible credit opportunities, Implentio makes it easy to request credits from your 3PL. The platform automatically tees up a detailed email. All you need to do is hit send and watch our Credit Tracker for real-time status updates.

Get in Control of Your Operations with Implentio

Learn how Implentio helps you take full control of your ops data and save money on every 3PL invoice.

implentio.com info@implentio.com