

**ARTICLE**  
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**Collaborative logistics should take full advantage of SMS messaging**

*Dr Pieter Streicher, managing director of BulksMS.com, a Cape Town based messaging service provider, considers how SMS messaging is facilitating collaboration within the logistics supply chain.*

Today, advances in the Internet and SMS messaging offer logistics industry players a competitive strategy to continue adding value to customers. The move toward the use of Web-based and mobile technologies for business collaboration within the supply chain is enabling logistics providers to meet the growing challenges of globalisation and the need to reduce carbon emissions while still meeting customer expectations for the shipping or delivery of orders.

Logistics management is primarily an information business. Information on raw material supply forecasts drives the process flow of products. Information about truck delivery schedules allows assets to be shared to reduce the expense and carbon emissions associated with haulage from distribution centres to retailers. The real-time modification and synchronisation of information makes up the manifests, waybills and other documentation required to ship goods. The efficient management of these information flows therefore becomes part of a logistics operation's drive to enhance profitability and working capital.

The benefits of the Internet is that it allows a company to share and manage information more easily and cheaply with firms in another city or country by providing connectivity between logistic management systems. Many third party logistics providers (3PLs) are enabling supply chain efficiencies and shared processes between firms by adopting Web-based software as a service model.

Taking the collaborative model further and maximising the use of mobile technologies, SMS messaging allows a company to instantaneously communicate real-time information at a relatively low cost with targeted parties outside of the computer networks. Today, cellphones are the preferred communications channel because they are bound to always be on a person or nearer than a computer. This is a key driver for adopting SMS messaging.

SMS messaging can be used for logistics management in several ways:

- 📱 Customers can track an order during shipping and be informed of its current status via automated messages from a logistics management system.
- 📱 Customers can receive an automated message notifying them of the delivery of an order.
- 📱 Notifying drivers of a change in delivery schedules whilst on the road.
- 📱 Placing an order with suppliers.
- 📱 Scheduling reminders to staff about core tasks or supplier appointments.
- 📱 Truck owners are able to broadcast the fact that they have unused capacity for haulage.

The use of SMS messaging for prompted or automated communications within the supply chain goes far in removing the barriers to collaborative logistics among industry players. Implemented alongside Web-based software services, SMS communications help in lowering the hidden costs of logistics management for firms and provide high levels of certainty to all parties within the supply chain.

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[452 words]



## About BulkSMS.com

[BulkSMS.com](http://BulkSMS.com), a division of Celerity Systems (Pty) Ltd, has been in operation since 2000 and is headquartered in Cape Town, South Africa. BulkSMS is a leading wireless application service provider offering bulk SMS messaging solutions to large and small businesses, public benefit organisations, and individuals. BulkSMS.com has a global market presence, including Europe, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. To further an organisation's SMS communication needs, BulkSMS offers two-way bulk SMS messaging, premium rate solutions and supports mobile marketing campaigns. BulkSMS flagship messaging solution is the BulkSMS Text Messenger, a desktop application. BulkSMS is a member of the Wireless Application Service Provider Association (WASPA).

For more information on BulkSMS's commercial messaging services visit [www.bulksms.co.za](http://www.bulksms.co.za) and for details on BulkSMS's messaging service offering discounted bulk SMS message prices for public benefit organisations (such as schools, NGOs and faith-based organisations) visit <http://community.bulksms.com>. For direct enquiries email [info@bulksms.com](mailto:info@bulksms.com) or contact BulkSMS telephonically on +27-21-552 6321.