

Freight Interview Guides

■ Background Information Provided to Interviewees

Purpose of the Interview

Cambridge Systematics is conducting a customer involvement/market research study for the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). As part of the study, Cambridge Systematics will be meeting with and interviewing a selection of major freight system users in the State of Indiana. This effort will help INDOT to better understand how companies use the State's transportation system to move goods, and help define a regional strategy for improving statewide freight mobility.

The interview format will be more of an informal discussion, but during the course of the discussion we would like to touch on the following topics:

- How do your logistics operations work? (major facilities, supply chain, etc.)
- What sorts of goods do you move, and how do you prefer to move them?
- What parts of Indiana's transportation system are most important to you?
- From your perspective, what are the current strengths or weaknesses of the State transportation system?

Use of Information from the Interview

Obviously, the more detailed the information discussed in the interview is, the better the final freight plan will be; however, we will not ask you to divulge any information that you are not comfortable discussing. To help you decide what information you are comfortable discussing the following is a description of how we intend to use the information from the interview:

- The results of the interview process will be used to support the identification of trends, deficiencies, and possible solutions in the regional plan. The interview process and results will also be documented at a very summary level in one of the project reports. No company or contact names will be used in the documentation. The reports use company types, such as "medium-sized consumer goods manufacturer."

- If you feel that a particular piece of information would be useful to the project, but is sensitive and should not be disclosed directly, please mention this to your interviewer and they will note this accordingly.
- You will have an opportunity to review text resulting from your interview before it is made available to the public.

For More Information

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Alexander Brown of Cambridge Systematics at (617) 354-0167 or ajb@camsys.com, or Steve Smith of INDOT at (317) 232-5646 or ssmith@indot.state.in.us.

■ Carrier Interview Guide

The following is the interview guide used with carriers.

Company Name:

Contact:

Title/Position:

Phone/Fax:

Address:

E-mail:

Purpose of Study

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We currently are conducting interviews with the region's freight stakeholders, consisting of public planning agencies, motor carriers, railroads, airlines, steamship lines, and shippers/receivers to accurately understand how the existing freight infrastructure is being used, what the strengths and weaknesses are, and provide all involved parties with the opportunity to participate in developing the list of recommended improvements.

The purpose of our interview today is to collect information from you on your operations and give you an opportunity to identify any key issues facing your operation. I'd like to start by having you describe your operation, then walk me through your service network, and wrap up with a discussion on what you think the strengths and weaknesses are of the existing freight system.

The more detailed the information is the more it will help us, however we are not asking you to divulge any data you believe would be confidential.

Description of Operation

- Describe the primary function of your operation. What are your day-to-day responsibilities?
- What type of service(s) do you provide?
- Is this your headquarters? If no, where is it? How many terminals/facilities do you have?
- How many employees do you have in the region? How many in total?

- What is the average length of haul for your trips? What is a typical range of trip lengths?
- What transportation equipment do you use (tractors, trailers, airplanes, box cars, containers, etc.)? Please provide the number of each.
- What type of sorting or storage facilities do you use (cross-dock facilities, warehouses, distribution centers, classification yards, etc.)?
- Describe your receiving/shipping facilities (rail yards, loading docks, etc.).
- Do you have good access to other modes of transportation? Please describe.
- What volume of freight is moved by your operation per week/month/year?
- Define the average size shipment handled (by volume and unit). What is the range of sizes?
- Categorize the type of freight you move (by weight, by value, by commodity).
- Describe the primary markets served (where is the freight originating and terminating).
- Are your customers mode-dependent? Yes or No. If yes, how?
- Do you have balanced freight flows (backhaul)? Yes or No. Explain implications whether yes or no. How long is your typical deadhead trip length to pickup your next load?
- Is your operation dependent on any other mode of transportation? If so, which one(s) and why (level of intermodal/multimodalism)?
- How would you characterize the transportation services you provide (e.g., expedited, reliable, time definite, guaranteed, economical, etc.)?
- How do you communicate with your customers (both shipper and receiver)? Do you provide en-route shipment status? Yes or No. If yes, how?
- Describe the typical flow of freight through your operation (e.g., from the time a load is picked up until it is delivered). Describe any uses of technology.
- Who are your major customers?
- Who are your major competitors?
- Do you have any expansion plans? Yes or No. If yes, what are they?

General Questions

- Do you use the Internet for business operations? Do you maintain your own web page?
- What other types of technology do you use (on-board computers, transponders, track and trace, etc.)? Have these improved or hindered your operations? How?
- What type of security protocols do you have in place?
- How has the increased emphasis on homeland security impacted your operations?
- What are the strengths of the State's freight transportation system?
- What are the weaknesses of the State's freight transportation system?
- How could the existing transportation system be operated differently to improve your operations?
- How could the existing transportation system physically be changed to improve your operations?
- Are you familiar with any freight planning that takes place in Indiana? Have you participated? If yes, how? If no, would you like to participate in the future?
- Are you aware of any planned improvements?
- Do you have any other comments, concerns, or issues that we have not addressed?

■ Shipper/Receiver Interview Guide

The following is the guide used for shippers and receivers interview.

Company Name:

Contact:

Title/Position:

Phone/Fax:

Address:

E-mail:

HQ Location:

Purpose of Study

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We currently are conducting interviews with the region's freight stakeholders, consisting of public planning agencies, motor carriers, railroads, airlines, steamship lines, and shippers/receivers to accurately understand how the existing freight infrastructure is being used, what the strengths and weaknesses are, and provide all involved parties with the opportunity to participate in developing the list of recommended improvements.

The purpose of our interview today is to collect information from you on your operations and give you an opportunity to identify any key issues facing your operation. I'd like to start by having you describe your operation, then walk me through your supply chain, and wrap up with a discussion on what you think the strengths and weaknesses are of the existing freight system.

The more detailed the information is the more it will help us, however we are not asking you to divulge any data you believe would be confidential

Description of Operations

- Describe the primary function of your operation. What are your day-to-day responsibilities?
- Describe the products/services your company provides.
- Why are you based here? or Why do you have a branch here? Does Indiana have competitive advantages over other areas? What are they?
- Is this your headquarters? If not, where is it?

- Do you have other locations/terminals/plants? If so, where are they located?
- How many employees do you have at this location? How many in total?
- Do you manage your own transportation/logistics? If not, who does your logistics management? Do they handle both your inbound and outbound transportation needs?
- If you have your own fleet of trucks, please provide number of power units, number of trailers, and dimensions of trailers. Does your fleet have backhaul opportunities?

Inbound Flows

- What are the primary raw materials brought in for production?
- Where are your suppliers located, geographically? Does your selection of suppliers depend on their business location?
- How do you place orders? Is it technology driven (automated)? If so, how?
- What modes are used for delivery of these materials? Why do you use these modes? Or, why don't you use other modes?
- Are your materials mode specific/dependent?
- For truck deliveries, how many loading/unloading docks do you have?
- If you use rail, do you have a rail siding? How many cars does it hold?
- What volume of freight do you receive weekly or monthly (by mode)?
- What service requirements do you have for these shipments? Do you have any penalties for late or missed shipments?

Production Process

- Is your manufacturing process automated? If so, what system are you using?
- How important is timeliness of delivery to your production lines? How do you ensure reliable delivery? Do you require service contracts?
- Do you maintain an inventory of raw materials? If so, how many days worth? If not, are you operating on JIT? Have you ever had to shut down a production line due to a missed shipment?
- How long does a production run take? Are your orders customized or do you make standard products?
- Do you maintain an inventory of finished products? If so, how many days?

- Do you have your own warehouse space? If so, how much warehouse space do you have (in square feet) for raw materials and then for finished products? If not, do you use a public warehouse? Please describe.

Outbound Flows

- What are the primary products manufactured/distributed?
- How do customers place orders? Is it technology driven (automated)? If so, how?
- What modes are used for delivery of these products?
- Are your products mode specific/dependent?
- For truck deliveries, how many loading/unloading docks do you have?
- If you use rail, do you have a rail siding? How many cars does it hold?
- What volume of freight do you send out weekly or monthly (by mode)?
- What service requirements do you have for these shipments? Do you have any penalties for late or missed shipments?

General Questions

- Do you use the Internet for business operations? Do you maintain your own web page?
- What other types of technology do you use (on-board computers, order systems, track and trace, etc.)? Have these improved or hindered your operations? How?
- What type of security protocols do you have in place?
- How has the increased emphasis on homeland security impacted your operations?
- What are the strengths of the State's transportation infrastructure?
- What are the weaknesses of the State's transportation infrastructure?
- How could the existing infrastructure be operated differently to improve your operations?
- How could the existing infrastructure physically be changed to improve your operations?
- Are you familiar with any freight planning that takes place in Indiana? Have you participated? If yes, how? If no, would you like to participate in the future?
- Are you aware of any planned improvements?