coneksion

MOVING BEYOND LEGACY OCEAN BOOKING PLATFORMS

A Modern Connectivity Guide for Shippers, BCOs, Forwarders, LSPs, and LogTech Providers

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

Introduction

Legacy ocean booking platforms helped digitize an important stage of global logistics. They gave shippers, beneficial cargo owners (BCO), freight forwarders, logistics service providers (LSP), and other supply chain stakeholders a practical way to connect with multiple ocean carriers at scale.

Direct carrier connectivity was (and still is) difficult to build. Carrier portals were fragmented. EDI integrations were expensive to maintain. Each carrier had its own processes, formats, and technology requirements. Multi-carrier booking platforms helped reduce that complexity and made ocean freight execution more manageable.

But the market has changed. Today, many businesses are reassessing whether legacy ocean booking platforms, carrier portals, and EDI-centric connectivity models still support the way modern logistics needs to operate. The issue is no longer only about carrier reach. It is about flexibility, automation, interoperability, neutrality, multimodal connectivity, and control over critical logistics data flows.

For shippers, BCOs, freight forwarders, LSPs, and logistics technology providers, the key question is no longer: **Can we connect to carriers?** It is: **Can our carrier connectivity model support where our business is going next**?

Why legacy ocean booking platforms are being reassessed

Legacy ocean booking platforms became widely used because they solved a real operational problem: giving businesses more practical access to multiple ocean carriers at scale.

Before centralized booking platforms became common, businesses often had to manage ocean carrier communication through emails, spreadsheets, individual carrier portals, phone calls, and direct EDI integrations. For many companies, this was slow, fragmented, and difficult to scale.

Multi-carrier platforms gave users a more practical way to interact with ocean carriers. They helped standardize parts of the booking process, improved access to carrier networks, and reduced the operational burden of managing every carrier connection separately.

That value was real. These platforms helped move ocean freight away from disconnected, manual communication.

However, solving an earlier stage of digitization does not automatically solve today's logistics execution requirements.

Modern logistics operations are more dynamic, distributed, and interconnected. Ocean booking is no longer just about submitting a booking request and receiving a confirmation. It is connected to shipment visibility, milestones, exceptions, documentation, downstream planning, analytics, customer service, and multimodal execution.

This is why many companies are now reassessing legacy ocean booking platforms and incumbent connectivity models. As explored in Multi-Carrier Ocean Booking: Why Businesses Are Moving Beyond Legacy Platforms, the discussion has shifted from simple carrier access to the broader question of how ocean carrier connectivity should operate in a modern supply chain environment.

Today, businesses need to know whether their connectivity model can support:

- faster execution;
- flexible integration with internal systems;
- automation-ready workflows;
- support for different data formats and protocols;
- easier onboarding of new carriers and partners;
- multimodal logistics connectivity;
- independence from restrictive platform ecosystems;
- long-term control over logistics data flows.
- For many organizations, the answer requires moving beyond older platform assumptions.

Who needs to rethink legacy carrier connectivity?

Legacy ocean booking modernization is not only relevant for shippers and BCOs. It affects a broader group of companies that depend on reliable carrier communication. For technology providers in particular, carrier connectivity is often a core part of the product experience. If that layer depends on a platform or suite outside their control, product flexibility and customer experience may become constrained.

Shippers and BCOs

Reduce duplicate data entry, accelerate confirmations, synchronize carrier responses with internal systems, and improve shipment visibility without relying on manual portal workflows.

Freight Forwarders and LSPs

Scale carrier integration across customers, regions, and trade lanes while reducing manual operations, documentation, and exception-management work.

Logistics Tech Providers

Embed carrier connectivity directly into product experiences, expand network coverage, and avoid building or maintaining every carrier integration internally.

From portal-based booking to API-first execution

One of the clearest signs that a legacy booking model has reached its limits is continued dependence on manual portals.

Portals can be useful, but they often create operational friction when teams must use them as the primary execution layer. If users need to copy shipment data from internal systems, rekey details into carrier screens, download confirmations, and manually update downstream systems, the business has not truly automated ocean booking. It has moved manual work into a digital interface.

Modern execution works differently. Shipment data should move directly from the shipper's, forwarder's, LSP's, or platform provider's system into the carrier's environment. Booking confirmations, amendments, cancellations, shipping instructions, milestones, and status updates should return automatically and synchronize with the systems where teams already work.

This is the foundation of API-first carrier connectivity: fewer manual handoffs, fewer avoidable errors, faster booking cycles, stronger visibility, and better support for automation and AI.

AI cannot create meaningful operational value if the underlying data is fragmented, delayed, or trapped in disconnected portals. Before booking decisions can become intelligent, the data flows need to become reliable, structured, and accessible.

Headless vs GUI carrier connectivity

Modernizing carrier connectivity does not always mean adopting another full platform interface. Some companies need a graphical user interface where operators manage bookings, tendering, documents, exceptions, or visibility. Others already have a TMS, ERP, FMS, forwarding platform, customer portal, or proprietary logistics application and do not want to add another daily login.

GUI-based platform	Headless connectivity layer
• Users log into a platform to complete booking or execution tasks. • Useful when teams need new operator-facing workflows. • Can centralize work but may introduce another daily interface.	• Connectivity works in the background through APIs and data flows, bringing carrier data directly into your existing interface. • Useful when teams already work in a TMS, ERP, FMS, forwarding system, or proprietary platform. • Can modernize carrier communication without disrupting user workflows.

For legacy ocean booking migration, this matters. The objective should not automatically be to replace one portal with another. In many cases, the better approach is to remove the portal as the primary execution layer and connect carrier data directly into the systems the business already uses.

Why multimodal connectivity matters

Ocean booking does not happen in isolation. A shipment may begin with a road move to the port, continue by ocean, connect to rail or road at destination, and finish through parcel or last-mile delivery. Along the way, multiple carriers, systems, partners, and data formats may be involved.

If ocean connectivity sits in one platform, road in another, parcel in another, and visibility somewhere else, logistics teams are left with fragmented execution.

That fragmentation creates practical problems:

- data does not move consistently across modes;
- teams spend time reconciling information manually;
- exceptions are harder to detect and manage;
- customer updates become less reliable;
- IT teams must maintain multiple separate integrations;
- vendor management becomes more complex;
- end-to-end visibility is harder to achieve.

Ocean may be the starting point, but the long-term objective should be broader: a carrier connectivity foundation that can support ocean, road, parcel, air, rail, and other logistics partners as business needs evolve.

Why neutrality has become a strategic priority

Carrier connectivity is not just a technical capability. It is a strategic layer of logistics infrastructure.

When a business depends on a specific platform for carrier communication, that platform influences how data moves, which workflows are supported, how quickly changes can be made, and how much control the business has over its execution model.

This becomes especially important when carrier connectivity is tied to a software suite, a carrier-controlled ecosystem, a commercially conflicted provider, or a platform whose future roadmap may not align with the customer's needs.

For shippers, BCOs, forwarders, and LSPs, this can create operational dependency.

For logistics technology providers, it can create strategic dependency. If the connectivity layer is controlled by a company that also sells competing software, the provider may lose influence over a critical part of its product and customer experience.

That is why vendor-neutral carrier connectivity is becoming more important.

Neutrality means the connectivity layer does not force customers into a specific TMS, ERP, freight suite, booking platform, or operating model. It supports the systems and workflows the customer chooses.

Legacy platform model vs modern connectivity model

Legacy platform model	Modern carrier connectivity model
Portal-driven workflows	API-first, system-driven execution
Manual data entry and rekeying	Automated data exchange between systems
Batch-oriented or rigid EDI processes	Flexible API, EDI, XML, JSON, CSV, and protocol support
Platform-defined workflows	Connectivity embedded into existing operating systems
Ocean-focused scope	Multimodal connectivity across ocean, road, parcel, air, and rail
Limited flexibility in message types	Broader support for bookings, confirmations, amendments, shipping instructions, milestones, documents, and invoices
Separate interface for users	Headless connectivity available where no new UI is needed
Dependency on a specific platform ecosystem	Vendor-neutral connectivity layer
Digitized access	Automated, scalable, integration-led execution

The difference is architectural. Legacy platforms gave companies a place to execute ocean booking. Modern connectivity gives companies a way to integrate carriers into their own logistics ecosystem.

What modern carrier connectivity solutions should provide

A future-ready carrier connectivity model should help companies move beyond platform dependency and toward scalable logistics execution.

1. Multi-carrier connectivity and collaboration
Access to the carriers that matter for the organization's network, trade lanes, customers, and service commitments.

2. Flexible data format and protocol support
Support for APIs, EDI, XML, JSON, CSV, SFTP, and proprietary formats without requiring the customer to build every connection separately.

3. Embedded integration with existing systems
Carrier data should flow into TMS, ERP, FMS, forwarding platforms, control towers, visibility systems, customer portals, or proprietary logistics applications.

4. Full logistics messaging cycle
Support for booking requests, confirmations, amendments, cancellations, shipping instructions, schedules, milestones, documents, and invoices.

5. Headless architecture where needed
Companies with strong operational systems should not be forced into another portal.

6. Multimodal scalability
The same foundation should support ocean, road, parcel, air, rail, and other logistics partner connectivity as requirements expand.

7. Vendor neutrality
The connectivity provider should not force customers into a specific software suite, operating model, or commercial dependency.

8. Managed onboarding and maintenance
Carrier requirements change. A modern provider should reduce the burden of onboarding, mapping, monitoring, and maintaining connections.

A practical migration checklist

Moving beyond legacy ocean booking platforms does not need to happen all at once. A phased approach can reduce risk and protect operational continuity.

1. Map current dependencies
Identify where the current legacy platform, portal workflow, or EDI-centric process sits in the operation. Map carriers, trade lanes, regions, customers, message types, internal systems, manual workarounds, reporting dependencies, and exception workflows.

2. Define the future operating model
Decide how carrier connectivity should work in the future: GUI, headless, hybrid, ocean-only, or multimodal.

3. Prioritize high-value message flows
Access to the carriers that matter for the organization's network, trade lanes, customers, and service commitments.

4. Choose the right connectivity architecture
Evaluate whether the business needs a GUI platform, a headless connectivity layer, direct carrier integrations, or managed carrier connectivity through a neutral provider.

5. Start with selected carriers, lanes, or regions
Begin with a defined rollout scope, then expand gradually once the model is stable.

6. Synchronize with internal systems
Make sure carrier data flows into the systems where teams actually work: TMS, ERP, FMS, WMS, visibility platforms, forwarding systems, control towers, and customer portals.

7. Plan for multimodal expansion
Solve today's ocean booking problem without creating tomorrow's limitation.

8. Evaluate neutrality and long-term control
Ask who controls the connectivity layer, whether the provider is tied to a competing suite, and whether the model can adapt as business requirements change.

How Coneksion supports carrier connectivity modernization

Coneksion helps shippers, BCOs, freight forwarders, LSPs, and logistics technology providers move beyond legacy carrier connectivity models through a modern, API-first, vendor-neutral data connectivity layer.

Rather than forcing users into another platform or portal, Coneksion enables logistics data to flow between the systems companies already use and the carriers, partners, and stakeholders they need to connect with.

Coneksion supports:

- Multi-carrier collaboration across different modalities
- A vast network of pre-connected carriers, with the option to extend it based on customer requests
- Technology-agnostic integrations bridging the gap between API and EDI
- Third-party integrations and plug-and-play partner access
- Data aggregation, harmonization, and enrichment
- Extension of existing IT systems
- Turnkey carrier onboarding and managed logistics data flows

For shippers and BCOs, Coneksion can help reduce portal dependency and automate ocean booking workflows. For freight forwarders and LSPs, Coneksion can help scale carrier communication across customers, carriers, regions, and transport modes. For logistics technology providers, Coneksion can help embed carrier connectivity directly into their own platforms without requiring them to build and maintain every connection themselves.

About Coneksion®

Coneksion® is a leading provider of fully managed data connectivity solutions for global logistics and supply chains. Built on technologies such as the Coneksion Common Carrier Layer (CCL) and a proprietary iPaaS, its solutions enable seamless multi-carrier collaboration across ocean, air, road, and parcel, among other use cases.

Coneksion helps shippers, BCOs, logistics service providers, and logistics technology providers streamline data exchange with carriers and other partners, improving end-to-end efficiency.

With offices in Europe and the United States, Coneksion supports customers globally.

For more information, please visit coneksion.com or contact us at talktous@coneksion.com.

Coneksion®
Revontulenpuisto2 C
02100 Espoo,Finland
E-mail: talktous@coneksion.com