31 questions about slot booking
Checklist to help select the right Slot Booking Software

Each warehouse needs at a certain moment in time a software-based slot booking solution, to optimize the inbound and outbound flows.
This becomes even more crucial today due to the constraints on transport capacity and workforce availability. In times of shortages, these resources need to be utilized in the most efficient way.

If unplanned, trucks tend to arrive in peaks and troughs, leading to yard congestions, shortages in docks and unbalan
ces in warehouse resource needs.

Planning the arrival of the trucks is the natural way forward, leading to the need for some sort of slot booking solution.

However, how does an organization select the right slot booking solution?

Nobody is waiting for the trucks, but for the goods they carry!
The first slot booking tools looked only at transport and warehouse optimization.
The objective of those tools was to balance the number of shipments with the number of docks.
The central data object was the appointment.

However, that is a very tactical, operational view.
While the carrier booked a slot, the buying department might be chasing the supplier to get clarity on when the order will be delivered.
More advanced slot booking solutions started to interface with WMS and/or ERP systems and forced carriers to indicate the order(s) which will be delivered on the truck for which an appointment was requested.

The information in the slot booking solution now also became interesting for the respective procurement and sales departments of the receiver and suppliers.

Next generation slot booking tools are digital logistics collaboration platforms
Slot booking is its narrowest from is already a cross-company process. It connects carriers and warehouses.

Once the connection is made with the order, the customer service department of the suppliers and buying & planning departments of the receiving party also start using to the cross-company platform to:
- plan delivery dates;
- share information on availability;
- measure carrier performance;
- handle claims;
- …

The slot booking tool becomes the digital logistics collaboration platform, replacing email and telephone.

The time to make carriers pay for booking a slot is over
Another element to consider in the selection of a slot booking solution is the pricing model.
The time to make carriers pay for booking a slot is over. Carriers will charge it through, with a markup. Furthermore, onboarding carriers and suppliers can take some time. Convincing them to pay per slot will slow down the implementation and stress unnecessarily the supplier relationship. The pricing model is therefore certainly an element to take into consideration when selecting a tool.

In a summary, every logistics organization needs a slot booking solution. However, selecting the right, future-proof solution might need some reflection.

Software vendor Streamliner (**www.streamliner.cloud**) has therefore created this checklist to help access and selected the right slot booking solution.

Results

0 – 15 questions answered Yes	Not worth looking at
15 - 25 questions answered Yes	An average and not future-proof solution
>= 26 questions answered Yes	To be considered

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Your supply chain community

Checklist for a Slot Booking Tool selection

	Yes	No
Order based and not truck based slot booking		
• Does the tool force the carriers to select the order numbers(s) when reserving a slot?	☐	☐
• Does the tool allow carriers to combine and/or split orders, from different suppliers, when booking a slot?	☐	☐
Carrier and supplier self-booking		
• Can carriers and suppliers book themselves the slot, based on the constraints set by the receiving warehouse?	☐	☐
• Can the solution be configured to confirm the slot automatically or manually, based the receiver's preferences?	☐	☐
Dynamic slot booking		
• Is the length of a slot calculated based on the size of the load?	☐	☐
• Can carriers and suppliers update booked slot in real-time if delays during execution occur?	☐	☐
Warehouse resource planning is leading, not the number of docks.		
• Does the solution allow for a day-by-day definition of the total number of slots, based on a warehouse resource planning calendar?	☐	☐
Warehouse or warehousing site can be divided into zones		
• Can the inbound and outbound capacity, opening hours etc… be set at zone level?	☐	☐
User management		
• Can carrier and suppliers manage their own users on the tool or does the receiver has to create and delete all users on the platform?	☐	☐
Recurrent reservations		
• Can time slots be reserved for specific carriers and/or suppliers with a recurring frequency?	☐	☐
Real-time yard management		
• Does the solution allow to follow up and share the status of the goods receipt and loading operation with the carriers and the suppliers?	☐	☐
• Can the solution allocate gates?	☐	☐
• Can the tool be connected with a driver registration kiosk?	☐	☐
Shared KPI dashboard		
• Does the solution measure supplier and carrier performance?	☐	☐
• Does the solution share the KPI dashboards with the relevant carriers and suppliers?	☐	☐
• Can the tool produce an audit trail based on any decisions that were made or actions that were taken as a result of the conversation between the users?	☐	☐
Integrated notifications, communication, and collaboration capabilities		
• Does the slot booking solution include an instant messaging (chat) capability?	☐	☐
• Does the tool send out automatic notification in case of delays or other deviations/issues?	☐	☐
Document sharing		
• Can the different stakeholders (suppliers, carriers, receivers) share documents and photos, linked to a shipment, in a secure and real-time way?	☐	☐
Cross dock		
• Can the solution support cross dock flows from supplier's sites, via central warehouses to stores?	☐	☐
Integrated Claims handling		
• Can delivery deviations/issues be raised, and a claims process managed?	☐	☐
Pricing model: the receiver pays		
• Is the pricing based on the receiver paying?	☐	☐
On premise or Saas		
• Can the slot booking solution be implemented on premise?	☐	☐
• Can the slot booking solution be implemented as a Saas-solution in the cloud?	☐	☐
• Is the solution "evergreen"?	☐	☐
API		
• Can the slot booking solution be linked with an ERP, WMS or TMS system using API's?	☐	☐
• Can the slot booking solution be interfaced with legacy systems using XLM of CSV file transfer?	☐	☐
International & scalable		
• Does the solution cater for only one way of working and one set of supplier performance metrics across a global network of warehouses or does the solution allow for multiple ways of working and performance metrics?	☐	☐
• Is the solution multi-lingual, based on the user's preference?	☐	☐
• Can the solution support users and processes, based in different time zones?	☐	☐
• Is the solution GDPR compliant?	☐	☐