ARCHERPOINT
by Cherry Bekaert

Playbook

How Mid-Sized 3PL Companies Scale Without Chaos

Scalable strategies for growing your logistics without breaking operations

Growth Should Be Exciting. So Why Does It Feel Risky?

For mid-sized 3PL companies, growth brings opportunity—but also pressure. New customers. New service requirements. New locations.

At first, it looks like success. But beneath the surface, something else is happening. Processes start to strain. Systems stop keeping up. Teams rely more on workarounds than workflows. And what once felt manageable begins to feel chaotic.

This playbook is designed to help you understand why and what to do about it.

The Problem

Growth Often Exposes What Was Already Broken

Most 3PL organizations don’t break because of growth. They break because growth amplifies existing weaknesses. What worked at one facility doesn’t scale across three. What worked for five customers doesn’t work for twenty. And what used to be a workaround becomes part of the company’s daily operations.

Common signals of strain:

- ✕ Increasing reliance on spreadsheets and manual processes
- ✕ Disconnect between operations and finance
- ✕ Growing difficulty in onboarding new customers
- ✕ Inconsistent service delivery across locations

Growth doesn’t create these issues. It makes them impossible to ignore.

Next:
The Breaking Point

The Breaking Point

When Systems Can’t Keep Up, Operations Slow Down

At a certain point, complexity reaches a tipping point. Orders still move. Trucks still ship.
But everything takes more effort.

Employees must switch between different systems just to complete a single task. Data must be re-entered, validated, and reconciled. Decisions take longer because the information is taken from multiple, disconnected systems.

The organization adapts but loses efficiency. And that’s when growth starts to feel like friction instead of momentum.

Next:
Fragmented Systems

Fragmented Systems

When Systems Don’t Talk, People Become the Integration Layer

Most 3PLs operate across multiple systems: ERP, WMS, TMS, CRM, HCM. Each serves a purpose. But together, they often create fragmentation. Instead of flowing seamlessly, data gets stuck.

- ✕ Customer updates don’t sync across systems
- ✕ Operational data doesn’t align with financial reporting
- ✕ Teams rely on manual coordination to bridge gaps

Over time, employees become the “middleware” holding everything together. And that’s not scalable.

Next:
Cost of Inefficiency

Cost of Inefficiency

The Hidden Cost of Fragmentation

These challenges don’t always show up clearly in a financial report. But they show up everywhere else:

- ✕ Lost time
- ✕ Missed revenue
- ✕ Reduced visibility
- ✕ Lower margins

Operational inefficiencies compound over time, often in ways that are difficult to track. And as the business grows, those inefficiencies multiply.

Next:
The Labor Reality

The Labor Reality

Labor Pressure Is Changing Everything

Labor is one of the most immediate constraints facing 3PL companies today. But the challenge isn't just finding workers—it's enabling them to be effective. Teams are being asked to do more, faster, and with greater accuracy. At the same time, systems and processes haven't kept pace.
This creates a dangerous cycle:

- ✕ Employees spend time navigating systems instead of executing tasks
- ✕ Training becomes more difficult due to process inconsistency
- ✕ Burnout increases as expectations rise
- ✕ Turnover leads to even more operational instability

Many organizations respond by adding labor or rushing into automation.
But without fixing the underlying processes, those solutions often fall short.

Next:
Customer Pressure

Customer Pressure

More Work. Same Price. Less Margin.

Customer expectations have changed. Faster delivery. Real-time visibility. Custom reporting. These are no longer differentiators—they're expected.

But pricing hasn't kept up. 3PLs often deliver more value without capturing additional revenue. This creates "hidden work"—tasks that support customer experience but aren't fully billed.

Over time, this erodes margins. And without visibility into where those costs are occurring, it's difficult to correct.

Next:
Why Automation
Alone Doesn't Fix It

Why Automation Alone Doesn’t Fix It

Automation Amplifies Processes—It Doesn’t Fix Them

Automation can be powerful. But only when the underlying process is ready. Many 3PLs invest in automation to solve immediate problems, such as labor shortages, bottlenecks, or customer pressure. But without process clarity, automation can:

- ✕ Expose bottlenecks instead of eliminating them
- ✕ Replicate inefficiencies at scale
- ✕ Create new points of failure

The most successful organizations take a different approach.
They define and refine the process first. Then they apply automation where it delivers real value.

Next: What 3PL Does Different

What 3PL Does Different

The Shift From Chaos to Control

High-performing 3PLs don't eliminate complexity—they manage it. They focus on building a strong operational foundation.

This includes:

- Establishing a clear system of record for data
- Connecting systems to reduce manual effort
- Aligning operations with financial outcomes
- Creating standardized, repeatable processes

The result is greater clarity and stability. Because when your systems, processes, and data are aligned, growth becomes easier, not harder.

Next:
Ready to Scale?

Ready to Scale?

A Simple Readiness Checklist

Before adding new customers, locations, or services, ask:

1. Are your processes consistent across operations?	Y	N
2. Does data flow seamlessly between systems?	Y	N
3. Can you see profitability at the customer or service level?	Y	N
4. Are decisions based on real-time, reliable information?	Y	N
5. Can your current systems support additional complexity without manual effort?	Y	N

If the answer to any of these is **NO**,
growth may introduce more risk than reward.

Next:
Get Started

ARCHERPOINT
by Cherry Bekaert

Get Started

Scaling Doesn't Have to Mean Chaos

Growth is not the problem. Unstructured growth is. With the right foundation—aligned processes, connected systems, and clear visibility—3PL companies can scale confidently and profitably.

ArcherPoint helps mid-sized 3PL companies modernize operations, connect fragmented systems, and improve visibility with Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central. **Contact ArcherPoint by Cherry Bekaert** to learn about how to simplify complexity and scale your business with confidence.

CONTACT US