Rate Shopping

04/30/2025 3:10 pm CDT

Overview

Rate Shopping refers to the process of comparing rates from different shipping providers. Shipbridge enables you to either configure **Rate Shopping settings** or install a generic **Rate Shopper plugin** to help you find the most affordable shipping rate. For a straightforward workflow such as Scan and Ship, you can configure your installation's settings to automatically calculate the cheapest shipping rate available. The Rate Shopper plugin, on the other hand, provides a more flexible solution, allowing you to customize the rate shopping criteria based on a broader set of factors.

Prerequisites

Before you can begin comparing shipping rates, you should obtain your carriers' API credentials:

- UPS
- USPS
- FedEx

Next, you should configure the required API Credentials in Shipbridge:

1. Navigate to **Menu** > **Options** > **Rates**.

2. Enter your **API Credentials**.

3. Click **Save**.

Plugin

If you choose to utilize the **Rate Shopper** plugin, you should first install it on your Shipbridge station. Open a ticket to Sellercloud Support to obtain the file. If you don't have a support account, you can register here.

Rate Shopping Settings

Shipbridge's **Rate Shopping** operates optimally with the Scan and Ship workflow. By configuring a custom set of settings, you can automatically determine the most economical shipping rate available for each order. The two main settings are:

- **Enable Amazon Buy Shipping for all Amazon Orders** – This setting is located in the Carriers tab. It enables rate shopping calculations with Amazon-provided rates only, overriding all conflicting settings.
- **Always Use Cheapest Rate To Ship** – This setting is located in the **Scan and Ship** tab and is designed to select the most cost-effective shipping rate available for a given shipment. It simplifies the process by ensuring that the lowest possible rate is consistently selected without manual intervention. Once enabled, the Scan and Ship **Rate Calculator** button will be replaced by a **Ship Using Cheapest Rate** one.

If the **Always use cheapest rate setting** is enabled, and UPS Additional Shipper Numbers are utilized, Shipbridge automatically checks rates from all UPS Shipper Numbers and chooses the cheapest option.

Additional related settings:

- **Calculate Rates based on Estimated Delivery Date** – Found in the **Rates** tab. When enabled, the rate calculation process will be based on the order's estimated delivery date. If UPS SurePost rates are to be included in the calculation, you must also enable the **Use UPS Ground Delivery Days** setting. Otherwise, Shipbridge will not be able to include a Delivery Date in the rate request. Applicable to workflows beyond Scan and Ship.
- **Add extra day after … time** – This sub-setting automatically extends the Estimated Delivery date by one day for shipping requests received after the specified cutoff time.
- **Only show priority services for rush orders** — Located in the **Rates** tab. When enabled, it will automatically exclude non-priority rates for rush orders. This setting is applicable to workflows beyond Scan and Ship.

To enable the above settings:

1. Navigate to your Shipbridge installation **Menu** and select **Options**.

2. Find the required setting and enable it. You can use the search option at the bottom for your convenience.

3. Click **Save**.

If you have multiple Shipbridge stations, you need to configure the settings on each one separately.

Rate Shopper Plugin

If the above settings are insufficient for your shipping workflow, you can utilize a **Rate Shopper** plugin to compare real-time shipping rates from your integrated carriers, ensuring you select the most cost-effective option.

The generic **Rate Shopper** plugin is a ready-to-use option that overrides all other rate shopping-related settings and is customizable to align with your shipping strategies. It can be tailored to prioritize different factors when calculating shipping rates for your orders. For example, it can assist in estimating the final shipping cost by determining whether the address type is commercial or residential.
To request additional plugin customizations, open a ticket for our Sellercloud Support team.
Only one plugin can be active at a time. If you have multiple Shipbridge stations, you should install the plugin on each one.
The generic plugin does not set delivery confirmation and package type. As a result, FedEx OneRate shipping services are not factored in when calculating the order's lowest shipping rate.

Rate Shopper Customizations

Some of the plugin customization options may include, but are not limited to:
- Placing a constraint on shipping orders without specified dimensions.
- Enforcing a security PIN to ship orders with a Grand Total beyond a specific amount.
- If the order contains a product with a specific carrier set as a Shipping Preference, the plugin will first select the cheapest option from this carrier. If no such option is available, the plugin will look for the most economical alternative.
- Implementing a rule for non-Amazon orders. For instance, it can automatically select the cheapest UPS or FedEx rate. If no such option is available, it will select the cheapest USPS rate.

A few of the above functionalities are also available as settings within Sellercloud and Shipbridge, for example, the **Require PIN before shipping orders with order total >$** setting.