IDENTIFYING CRITICAL PHARMA LOGISTICS CHALLENGES IN CANADA



INTRODUCTION

Every business endures pressure in terms of strict delivery schedules and meeting production efficiency. But when it comes to pharmaceuticals and healthcare product manufacturers, these deadlines become a matter of life and death, due to which ensuring product quality and timely deliveries are paramount for companies operating in this sector. This necessitates them to incorporate a changeover from existing pharma logistics strategies and traditional supply chain practices to new and innovative techniques to improve efficiency. Furthermore, in order to be adequately equipped to distribute pharmaceutical and healthcare products across Canada, pharma companies must be fully aware of the pharma logistics pinpoints that the market has to offer.



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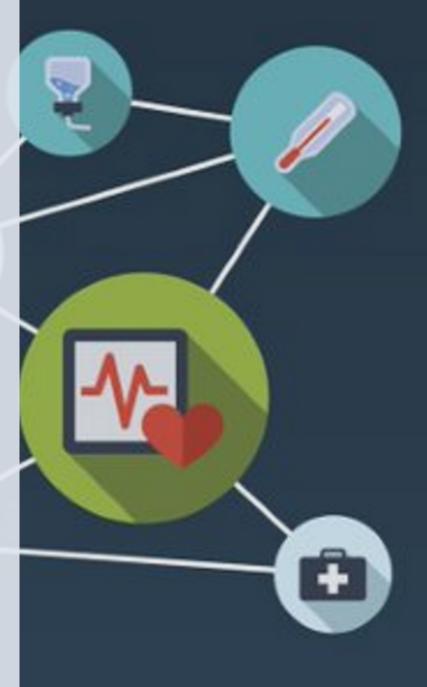
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Large territories

Cold chains used for pharma logistics in Canada need to be highly robust due to the region's vast territories. The region's immense landscape provides challenging driving conditions including long distances, mountain winter conditions in the west, and unexpected weather scenarios that can result in roadblocks to effective delivery such as bridges ruined by rain, roads blocked by ice, and many other hazards. All of these factors have the potential to not only add to major transit delays but can also result in significant costs. Moreover, it can also prove to be difficult for pharma logistics providers to reach places up in the north due to limited infrastructure. In such territories, it may not be possible to place the pharmaceutical products on a direct flight to the required location, so the medicine may need to travel via truck for two days to complete the journey safely.





Extreme weather conditions

Temperatures can sometimes soar to extremes in Canada and this can sometimes compromise the quality of pharma products during transit. The pharma logistics facilities used must be able to protect the products from overheating in the hot climates or from freezing in the cold climates. This places a heavy burden on validating quality systems within the chain. The unpredictability of the weather conditions in Canada, in terms of their severity and duration, makes it extremely challenging for pharma logistics providers to preserve and ensure the quality and timely delivery of products.



Partnerships and collaborations

The pharmaceutical industry in Canada is rapidly moving towards an externalized R&D set up through partnerships and collaborations. A similar trend has been noted in the pharma logistics segment with several manufacturers outsourcing supply chain processes in an effort to benefit from the expertise of pharma logistics providers. However, this comes with challenges of its own. By delegating responsibilities externally, pharma manufacturers risk losing the end-to-end control that they once had on all their operations. Therefore, a stringent and robust quality agreement must be formed between all parties to protect the integrity of the product. Particularly well-defined standard operating procedures must be established regarding how the product and the raw materials will be treated. Cold chain partnerships with pharma logistics companies are largely a matter of trust. Once the cargo is handed to a forwarder or carrier, shippers must rely on their partners to safely steward their temperature-sensitive products through the cold chain. The success of these partnerships relies on effective communication. The best way to ensure effective monitoring of shipments is a truly collaborative approach, whereby all stakeholders charged with moving temperature-sen

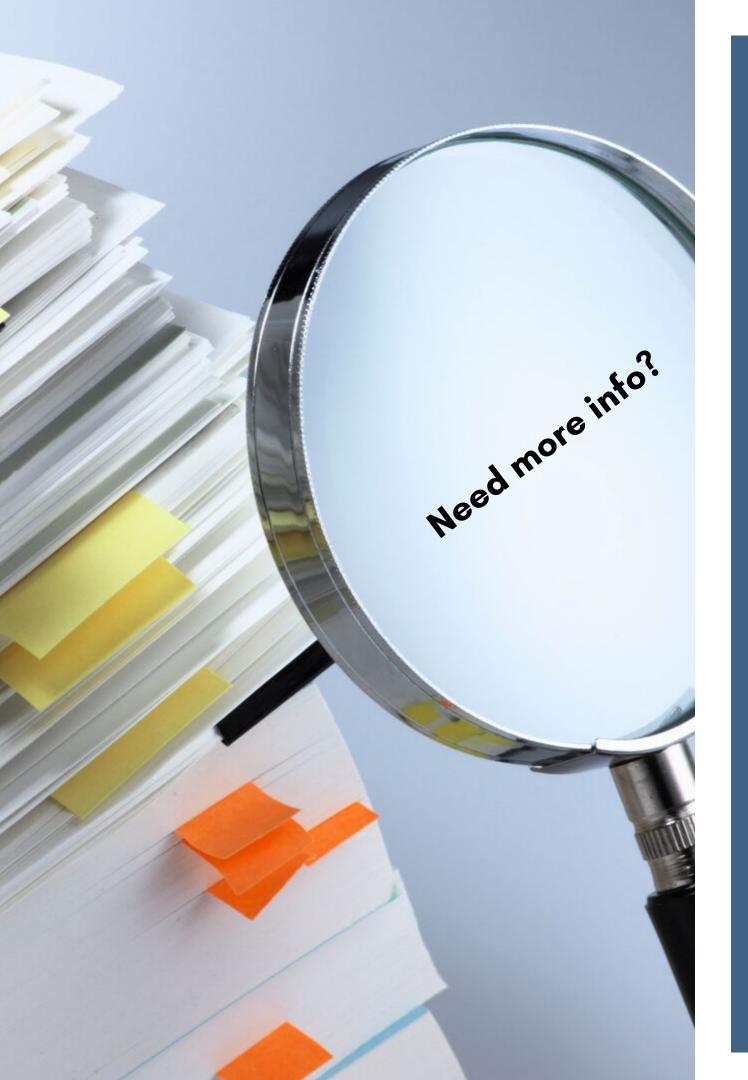




Parallel Trade

The recent spate of selling pharmaceuticals from Canada into the US is only the tip of the iceberg. Canadian pharmaceutical companies were buying drugs at a lower price negotiated by the Canadian government and selling them across the border into the US where pricing is higher. This also occurs between borders in Europe between large wholesalers, as well as through black market transactions in developing countries. The danger here is that pharmaceutical companies lose the ability to know where these drugs are coming from. This can be largely avoided by the use of RFID technology.







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