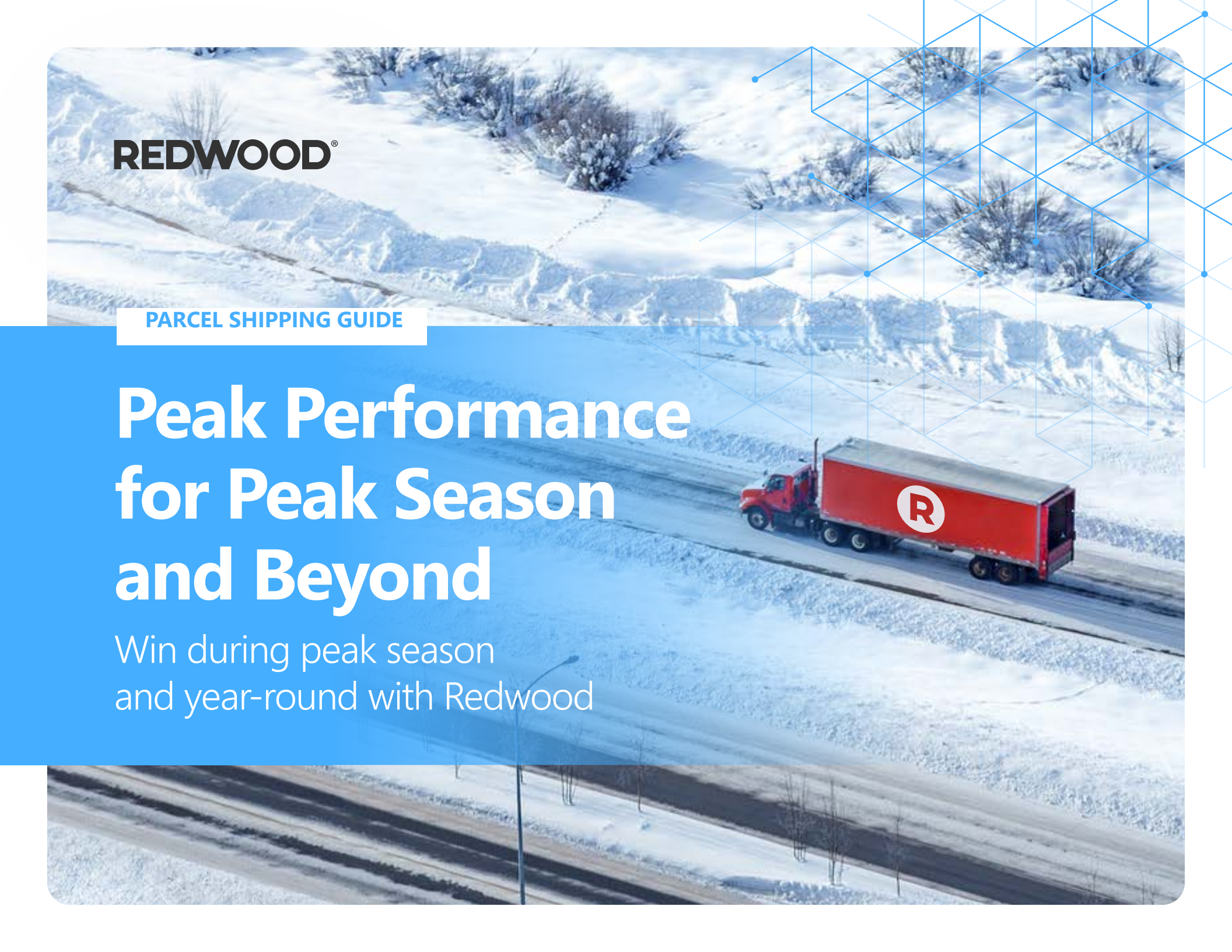


An aerial photograph of a snowy landscape. A red semi-truck with a white 'R' logo on its trailer is driving on a snow-covered road. The surrounding area is covered in deep snow with some bare trees and bushes. A blue geometric pattern of lines and dots is overlaid on the right side of the image.

REDWOOD®

PARCEL SHIPPING GUIDE

Peak Performance for Peak Season and Beyond

Win during peak season
and year-round with Redwood



Redwood saves parcel customers an average of \$1.1 million year-round. That's gold-medal performance.

Peak-season parcel shipping has grown into a competitive sport. Are you ready?

A lot is riding on your performance during the upcoming peak shipping season. Those 34 days between Black Friday 2025 and New Year's Day 2026 are like the Winter Olympics of parcel shipping. Preparing and sending enormous volumes of packages in just over a month isn't for the faint of heart.

Will your team have the stamina to keep going, despite high volumes, unrelenting customer demands, and inevitable surprises? Will your resources, and partners' resources, have the strength to hold up? Will you achieve gold-medal performance by delivering on time, in full, and profitably?

Like a seasoned coach or expert sports commentator, Redwood is here to share one universal truth of both Olympic sports and parcel shipping: Success doesn't happen in a single moment, or even over the course of 34 days. It's the result of a year-round effort. The strongest shippers plan for peak season, execute against it, and learn from it. Just as an Alpine skier or bobsled team wouldn't show up unprepared on race day, neither should you.

Welcome to Redwood's annual peak-season shipping guide.

We're presenting our annual parcel shipping guide to help you train rigorously, perform at your peak when it matters most, and build muscle memory that prepares you for next November and December. Think of this guide as your game plan for peak-season success.

This year's guide centers on three key activities that will get you to the podium.



Hundreds of shippers have taken their performance to new heights with Redwood.

1 PREPARE

The snowflakes aren't flying yet. But trust us when we say it's already "go time" for your team. What should you be doing right now to prepare for the peak holiday season?

2 PERFORM

Despite all your training, you have to be ready for race day surprises and snow squalls, just like a world-class winter athlete. How can you ensure speed, agility, and resilience when it matters most?

3 PERFECT

You might think it's all downhill after New Year's Day. But don't cool down before you deal with returns, audit your invoices, and gather lessons learned for 2026.

Don't skate on thin ice, or ski without a helmet. The stakes are high. The risks are real. Keep reading to gear up for a winning parcel shipping season.



① PREPARE

Get your team ready for greatness, starting now.

In the pre-season, it's time to assess your fitness. How ready are you for the upcoming peak season? Let's start with your team and your internal preparation. Your pre-peak gameplan needs to include:

- 🕒 **Demand stats.** Study historic demand data from the 2024 holiday season, your projected sales for 2025, and demand-influencing factors like Black Friday promotions, new product launches, or social media campaigns.
- 📍 **A distribution playbook.** Where is inventory most needed? Can you front-load stores or warehouses to avoid paying peak-season rates or use zone-skipping to minimize carrier surcharges?
- 📅 **A game-day schedule.** When will customers want deliveries? Don't forget you're scheduling not just for Christmas, but also Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and New Year's celebrations. Balance customer needs with carriers' effective dates for rate increases. Reduce drag by shipping early, in bigger quantities, where possible.
- 👥 **Bench strength.** You need deep labor resources ready to ship, receive, and curbside-deliver all those parcels across your distribution network. Moving shipments up is always a strong move to avoid higher seasonal labor rates.

Remember, parcel shipping is a **team sport**.

No matter how strong you are, your success also depends on partners, including carriers. Just as every Olympic medalist has a strong, qualified support system, you should choose your transportation partners carefully. Take a tough look at:



THEIR SUPPORT FOR YOUR GAME PLAN.

You've done the internal planning. You know what you need to deliver. As you pick your carrier team, look at rate schedules, service offerings, shipping deadlines, capacities, and a willingness to negotiate. Consider both veteran carriers and rookies.



THEIR USE OF TECHNOLOGY.

Isn't it thrilling to watch a downhill skier navigate a treacherous course, in real time, up close, via drone-mounted cameras? Your employees and customers will be equally thrilled to watch every parcel at every stage of its delivery journey. Make sure your carriers are using real-time connectivity and visibility tools.



THEIR WIN-AND-LOSS RECORD.

How did your established carriers do during the 2024 peak season? Did they deliver on time? Did they navigate disruptions and reach the finish line consistently? Did they support your profitability? Maybe it's time to qualify some new transportation partners.





② PERFORM

The spotlight's on you.
Move **like a champion.**

Peak season is showtime. You need to execute with confidence, speed, and precision, following your pre-season game plan. And you need to proactively manage the employees on your internal team, as well as your network of carrier partners. You need to give customers what they're looking for, meeting all your marks and milestones with the ease of a pro.

Achieving peak performance during peak season depends on using advanced technology, including a transportation management system (TMS) and an integration platform that connects it to carriers to monitor every order and every shipment in real time. There are no second chances in today's crowded, competitive landscape.

But, of course, there are always surprises when you enter the competitive arena. Bobsled teams face bumps that slow them down, snowboarders pull a hamstring, skiers find themselves facing icy conditions or a sudden squall.

Your team will doubtlessly face surprises as well. Demand peaks and valleys, uneven carrier performance, equipment breakdowns, and extreme weather have the potential to disrupt even the most carefully defined pre-season plans.

Winners pivot quickly, agilely, and confidently.

Disruptions are inevitable in both winter sports and supply chains. Winners know how to course-correct and maintain peak performance, even in the toughest conditions. Just like an elite athlete, your parcel team needs to be ready for the unexpected. That means having the right resources, including:



REAL-TIME DATA INSIGHTS, FROM FIRST MILE TO LAST.

Smart shippers don't send parcels and wait to see what happens. They use advanced tech and real-time data to track every shipment, and they share that real-time awareness with customers, to enhance service and build loyalty.



INTELLIGENT, REAL-TIME AGILITY.

Demand forecasts often prove wrong in terms of order timing or volumes. Based on real-time data and analysis, you should be able to pivot quickly and get right back on course via mode-shifting, carrier-balancing, and other strategies.



LAST, PROFITABLE DISRUPTION MANAGEMENT.

When an important customer delivery is delayed, it's relatively easy to simply expedite it. But that's rarely the optimal, most profitable resolution. With modern technology, you can apply advanced intelligence to weigh trade-offs and arrive at an ideal resolution that balances cost, service, and other key metrics.





③ PERFECT

It's the off season.

Time to **look back, and ahead.**

It's natural to feel a sense of relief on January 2 as you look back at a successful peak season. But there are no days off for champions. It's time to turn your attention to:

- ⦿ Optimizing reverse logistics for post-peak returns
- ⦿ Parcel cost reconciliation
- ⦿ Carrier invoice auditing
- ⦿ 2026 RFPs and contract negotiations
- ⦿ Carrier performance ratings
- ⦿ Updating forecasting models
- ⦿ Applying lessons learned

Even if you have a great peak season, successful athletes never rest on their laurels. During the off season, champions take a hard, critical look at how they can do even better next time.

Shippers need to identify internal areas for improvement, measure employee and carrier performance, strengthen their customer relationships, and relentlessly drive out costs. Data and advanced tech are critical here. Gathering detailed data from the peak season and applying analytics is like watching a tape of your best and worst moments. You'll be off to a great start in creating your next winning peak-season game plan.

Leverage Our Winning Record

Hundreds of customers.
Millions of parcels.
20 peak seasons.
23% average savings.
That's the Redwood advantage.

At Redwood, we understand the challenges you're facing, because we've supported shippers during peak season, and year-round, for 20 years. We've helped hundreds of customers prepare, perform, and perfect, for an average yearly cost savings of 23%.

Few companies have the internal expertise, hands-on experience, and advanced technology to achieve gold-medal performance on their own. That's where Redwood comes in.

Think of us as your personal coaching staff. As former professionals at FedEx, UPS, and other carriers, our Parcel Advisory group provides the expertise you need, including:

- Contract negotiation coaching
- Invoice audits
- Carrier mix optimization
- Process innovation and best practices
- Cloud-native TMS and other solutions
- Dashboards and business intelligence tools
- Systems integration with carriers and customers via RedwoodConnect™

From peak season shipping volumes to everyday order fulfillment, our experts can help you create a winning training regimen and game plan for parcel shipping.

Beat the competition, energize your team, and thrill the crowd from customers to executives and investors with Redwood's expert coaching. Start your championship run by contacting us this season.



Redwood customers negotiate more favorable carrier contracts in just 43 days, on average.