Advance Car Carriers

In it for the long haul.

At a glance

Industry: Automotive Logistics

Application: Inventory Tracking

Product: Intermec CN3 Mobile Computer

SONAR

Intermec®
PartnerNet

How enterprise mobility is allowing Advance Car Carriers to improve delivery accuracy and efficiency

Advance Car Carriers (ACC) is a leading independent Australian logistics supplier, providing on-time car carrying services for the Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne metropolitan areas, along with regular interstate & intrastate deliveries. Being such a high volume automotive logistics supplier, ACC requires a flexible and responsive communication structure to ensure delivery accuracy and efficiency.

Over the years as ACC has grown its operations, the paper based reporting and communication systems the company was using had been pushed to their limits. Issues including reporting inaccuracies and significant time investment from staff to find answers for their clients, which include rental car companies and car-yards – highlighted that there were a number of flaws inherent in their paper-based systems.

To help address legacy system issues and improve customer satisfaction – ACC turned to Trans Data and Intermec to implement significant technology upgrade to increase the efficiency of their operations, streamlining a number

of processes to further improve their commitment to strong customer service. This included upgrades to their docket generation, allocation and completion processing, along with the removal of their paper-based systems.

The Challenge
ACC had a significant amount of paper in their operations, and needed to provide accurate whereabouts of their drivers to clients in a time-critical situation (such as to auction houses where strict deadlines are imposed). This was coupled with a desire to integrate their vehicle survey reports, billing and zoning and communications into one cohesive system.

Additionally, ACC was heavily reliant on two-way radio communication, which was complemented with mobile phone communications, which came at a high cost to the operation and on occasions where drivers were out of range (due to tunnels or driving through regional areas), customers were often left wanting for accurate answers as to the whereabouts of their deliveries. This was often compounded by the fact that dispatchers

were often fielding multiple drivers radioing in, leading to communication bottlenecks. ACC sought a solution that delivered significant efficiency and clarity improvements and a dynamic system for tracking and tracing their high-value cargo.

Obviously, having an accurate, automated system is of utmost importance in any supply chain, but when transporting high-value goods such as cars, accuracy is imperative, lest there be significant impacts on the bottom line.

After an extensive audit of logistics technologies on the market, ACC turned to Intermec and their partner Trans Data to help upgrade their systems.

Using technology to improve customer service

ACC prides itself on its customer service, describing itself as "the most service-oriented delivery company within the Australian automotive industry". In order to effectively deliver on that promise to their customers, it was important that they listen to their customers and provide solutions to the problems they were facing.

ACC implemented the Intermec CN3 and Trans-Send application software to continue to deliver on their promise. Utilising these two technologies in conjunction with one another meant that ACC was able to give their customers up-to-date locations of drivers, along with streamlining the vehicle survey reports, which give descriptions on the car, along with damages and codings for dents and scratches and their severity. The new system allowed for accurate vehicle survey reports to be done at the pick-up or drop off of the vehicle, by the driver or the customer.

Additionally, the new system allowed for proof of service documents to be automatically forwarded to customers, showing them when cars were dropped off, by whom and in what condition. This is especially useful for customers who have many cars in their operations (such as car auction houses or car rental companies), particularly when customers can drop cars off at a different branches of the same organisation. The loss or misplacement of cars leads to valuable resources being wasted in order to track them down and rectify the situation.

Improving communication to increase efficiency

ACC was also able to utilise the technology to record orders from clients to move cars from A to B, as well as allocating jobs to drivers using a PDT, where they can complete pickup and delivery details, inspect and record any damage and collect a signature. This is all communicated to the Trans-Send software at base and stored in the correct place for recording and billing purposes. David Sturrock, Managing Director of Advance Car Carriers said "The trading week ends Sunday and we invoice Monday, billing errors have been eliminated and cash flow is improved. This is a great result".

Truck drivers, who each have individual Intermec CN3's allocated to them, now rely on a more text-based system for communications – sending messages back to base from a pre-programmed set of standard messaging to ensure that drivers aren't texting while driving. This has not only improved the clarity of information to dispatchers, but also increased safety for drivers In fact, the Sydney branch has completely removed two-way radios from a number of their trucks at a significant cost saving.

The GPS built into the CN3s also comes in useful to minimise the amount of time spent communicating with drivers as to their whereabouts. Where previously dispatchers, when faced with a call from a client asking where their delivery was, had to put the client on hold and call the driver (with varying degrees of success). Now, the dispatcher simply looks at a dynamic map and communicates their location to the client. As an example, if a car rental company needed to know where a specific car is, they simply give its model, registration or description, and the dispatcher can give a timely report as to the ETA of the model.

Streamlined billing technology

ACC's Sydney operation bills their clients based on pick-up and destination addresses, divided into zones. This process was previously done based on a complicated colour-coded Excel spreadsheet which had a number of flaws. Now, the process is significantly more efficient, having been automated by the new system.

The system in Brisbane and Melbourne is slightly different, but the automated solution allows the respective offices to progressively move towards a simpler, more streamlined operation that resembles the Sydney operation. According to Ross Willson, General Manager of ACC NSW, "This just wouldn't have been possible before the new system was implemented".

Efficiency gains associated with billing have also been seen in the loading, route planning and unloading processes, as the increased visibility as to what jobs are being billed allows for a smarter job load to be assigned to each driver.

New technologies delivering better customer service

Both ACC and their customers are seeing the benefits since the implementation began in July 2009. There has been faster and easier operations at the base, direct links between the software and the accounting packages, faster billing, no lost jobs and more accurate and complete data entry from the drivers, notably in the areas of payment-on-deliveries, Vehicle Survey Reports and vehicle tracking.

The long-term strategy places ACC in a position to continue to provide best of breed service to their customers, while growing the business, as the technology is fully scalable. ACC will look to see a return on investment in approximately five years. By partnering with Intermec and Trans Data, ACC has reaped significant benefits. Not only in terms of "hard costs" like reduced investment in two-way radios and the cost of mobile phone calls, but is also seeing efficiency gains in its staff, both dispatchers and office staff. Ross Willson stated that "Since we've removed our reliance on two-way radios, the office now sounds like an office should – we've got rid of the noisy chatter in the background and it is quiet in here".

SONAR

Sonar Technologies Australia
175 Briens Road
Northmead NSW 2152
Phone: +61 2 9630 3533
www.sonartechnologies.com

Intermec®
PartnerNet