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Clark Freightways is the first BC trucking company to earn COR certification for workplace health and safety from the Trucking Safety Council of BC.

Clark Freightways' fleet of trucks have low resistance tires and aerodynamic trailer skirts to reduce drag and fuel consumption.

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DELIVERING THE GOODS



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MARCUS CLARK, PRESIDENT of Clark Freightways, firmly believes in reinvesting in his company. In fact, he's so dedicated to the practice that it almost assumes the status of a corporate culture.

For example, when we caught up with him in January, he was presiding over the final stages of a major makeover of Clark Freightways' information technologies. This was the latest in a series of initiatives that has seen the addition of a highly customized Transportation Management System (TMS) that fully integrates operations with accounting, as well as the creation of a proprietary Web Bill of Lading System – one of the most advanced in the industry – that allows customers to link directly with TMS and feed their orders through, thus saving time and money on their behalf. >





a skilled and loyal workforce, make Clark Freightways the leader in providing dry, refrigerated and frozen LTL (Less Than Truckload) trucking services to all points within B.C. But far from taking sole credit for the reinvestments, Clark emphasizes that he was inspired by his father, Clark Freightways founder Jim Clark, to nurture the company accordingly. “Right from the outset he believed in putting his money back into the firm,” he says. “Dad figured out early that investment in technology, which in those days meant newer trucks and reefers, allowed him more time to focus on core service improvements, rather than tinkering with problems.”

In the larger scheme of things, constant reinvestment and upgrading is necessary given today’s tough business climate. “The trucking industry is one of extremely small profit margins, and if you add to this the enormous cost of transportation, especially in B.C. with highly volatile fuel prices, the carbon tax, and a heavy reliance on manpower and skilled



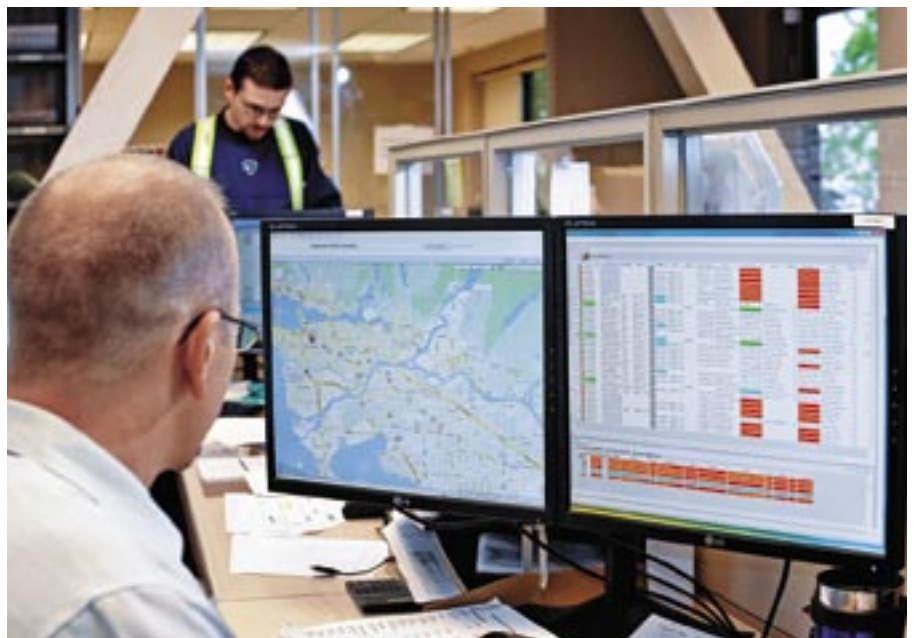
But these and other improvements are only the tip of the iceberg. The most obvious example of Clark’s enthusiasm for reinvestment is the company’s new state-of-the-art cross-dock headquarters in Coquitlam, which includes dry, cooler and freezer facilities to ensure the quality control of customers’ shipments. The five-acre site also has an on-site maintenance and certified inspection facility, including two wash bays, for its fleet of more than 175 trailers and 75 power units.

drivers, then becoming more efficient isn’t an option, it’s mandatory – that is, if you want to survive,” says Greg Rogge, Clark’s Freightways’ vice-president and general manager.

Clark Freightways, which was originally launched in 1957 as Clark Reefer Lines Ltd., is best described as a family owned and operated regional carrier specializing in the movement of refrigerated, frozen and dry LTL freight. With distribution facilities located throughout

These improvements, combined with

From top left clockwise: Founder Jim Clark stands by one of his first trucks; a bigger truck in the 1960s; the latest technology is a driver’s handheld computer and the company’s mapping and tracking system.





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RAISING THE BAR

Thanks to developing a strict set of guidelines during over a half-century of handling fresh and frozen products, Clark Freightways can accurately lay claim to writing the book on transporting perishable commodities. Its document, "Best Practises for Handling Perishable Freight", is the combination of its own formidable experience and numerous standards and practices on the subject from sources around the world.

Clark Freightways' adherence to the document is crucial to its daily operations, since Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points programs vary from shipper to shipper and therefore standards must be of the highest calibre to ensure customer satisfaction. Every employee receives specific training in temperature control and refrigeration equipment principles. □



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B.C. – a combination of company-owned facilities and collaboration with regional partners – it reaches over 600 communities in the province. What best differentiates Clark Freightways from its many competitors is the wide variety of service offerings and extensive B.C. regional coverage that no other regional or niche carrier can match. "While there are lots of national and regional carriers, they don't necessarily serve small or mid-size communities," says Clark. "We do. While other carriers go from hub to hub, we can go from place to place. For example, if someone in a more remote community needs to get something to Haida Gwaii, we're the people to do it."

The rerouting of goods in order to maximize the efficiencies of major carriers is commonplace in today's industry, but the longest that goods are in transit from any main Clark Freightways service point is two to three days. "And that would be for the most remote communities on our service map," says Rogge. "The overwhelming bulk of our delivery is overnight or next-day, including Saturdays."

Clark Freightways has a solution to meet virtually any transportation need. Its TL (Truck Load) service means that customers have exclusive access to dry trailers or reefers to ship products when needed. Clark Freightways' Transportation



Management System enables the transport team to efficiently plan and route TL shipments in a cost-effective manner.

One of Clark Freightways' service offerings is a Dedicated Transportation Service that shifts many of the burdens and risk elements associated with transportation and distribution logistical requirements from the customers to the company, and it allows them to achieve consistency and predictability with respect to cost. This allows customers to free up their resources and focus on their own core business. Direct store deliveries are a standard option for the LTL service, and Clark notes that "our food retail customers can get any product from whoever they want and still enjoy the same service as the major carriers provide."

All of Clark Freightways' activities are governed by strict health and safety standards, which includes comprehensive orientation and training, proactive identification and elimination of hazards, and emergency preparedness planning. The motivation is simple: by keeping people safe, costs are minimized.

The degree of devotion Clark Freightways applies to reinvestment is also directed towards managing its carbon footprint. It was an early adopter of fuel-efficient technologies and has carried forward with initiatives such as speed restrictions and



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— Marcus Clark,
president, Clark Freightways

zero idling. “More recently we invested in equipping our fleet with low resistance tires and aerodynamic trailer skirts, which reduce drag and therefore fuel consumption,” says Rogge. Since fuel is a high operating cost for motor carriers, saving fuel helps Clark Freightways reduce costs, and the savings are passed directly on to customers.

Although it’s a far cry from Clark Freightways’ genesis as a one-man show (“Dad was hauling peaches from the Okanagan as Jim Clark Trucking even before he began this company,” says Clark), in many respects the elements in place today – dedication to customers and operational efficiency – were the same 50 years ago, when Jim Clark’s geographical scope was Williams Lake, Quesnel and the Okanagan. When asked why his father got into the business in the first place, Clark says, “Dad was always independent. After working for other transportation outfits, he figured he could do a better job himself.” In late 1959, Jim Clark applied for a licence as a public carrier so that he could begin hauling frozen foods; he then began operating as Clark Transport and gained a reputation for providing fast, efficient service at a fair price. Three years later he incorporated as Clark Reefer Lines Ltd. and operated out of his first real terminal in Burnaby, hauling any foods requiring temperature control.

By the time of Jim Clark’s passing in 1997, the general infrastructure and geographical scope of operations that defines the company today were firmly established. Shortly before Jim passed, his employees successfully decertified from their existing union and established their own in-house association. “Our employees, who Dad always enjoyed a good relationship with, wanted to start their own association, and the BC Transportation and Warehousing Association was born,” says Clark. To which Rogge adds, “Today, the president of the



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UPGRADING, TRAINING AND SAFETY

One of Clark Freightways' defining characteristics is its focus on self-improvement, with efforts directed both to customers and to its staff and operations.

For example, Clark Freightways has responded to the need for customers to receive the most up-to-date information possible with regards to shipments. In order to achieve this, it has stationed scanning and other web service tools at all of its branches and with its business partners. This allows Clark Freightways to scan PODs (proof of delivery) and provide its customers with timely information.

At the heart of their web services is a proprietary Web Bill of Lading System which provides customers with the ability to easily create their freight bills in seconds, through the use of pre-populated template waybills and easy drop-down menus. This eliminates the need for duplication or repetitive data entry. The Web Bill of Lading System also allows customers to easily create, store and utilize templates for recurring orders to further save time and money. The system provides customers with the ability to create and schedule pickups online and track and trace their shipments using their own reference, bill of lading, or purchase order number.

Additionally, Clark Freightways will soon offer real-time delivery notification via email. Customers will be able to receive a notification for each delivery they schedule within minutes of when a driver electronically keys in each shipment with his

handheld computer (ever mindful about reducing its carbon footprint, this company hopes to introduce paperless invoicing later this year).

Self-improvement also extends to workplace safety and training. From a human resources perspective, Clark Freightways has developed one of the most extensive training and orientation programs within the trucking industry, including best practices for the handling of perishable products that are designed to meet or exceed the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points requirements of many of its customers.

In order to ensure that all aspects of its organization operate at optimum levels, Clark Freightways has fostered a culture of safety that all employees and management participate in. The company has one of the most proactive occupational health and safety programs to be found in the trucking sector, and in October of 2010 it achieved another milestone by becoming the first B.C.-based carrier to be COR certified by the Trucking Safety Council of BC. The Certificate of Recognition is a nationally recognized program that provides monetary incentives to employers who go beyond the legal requirements of the Workers' Compensation Act and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation by taking the "best practice" approach to implementing health and safety programs and return-to-work programs. □

BCTWA is one of our terminal managers, Rob Ihaksi."

In reviewing his father's many achievements, Clark remarks, "he grew up in a seven-member family during the height of The Depression by his Irish mother, Anne, who raised her kids to be strong and independent. Dad was proud of his heritage, which is why our fleet bears the green-with-shamrock logo."

Today, despite the many challenges facing the industry – such as the ongoing consolidation of carriers – Clark and his colleagues remain proudly independent and committed to a singular objective: maintaining course on their chosen way of business. "We're a success because we provide as many solutions as possible to our customers, many of whom we've been serving for over 30 years now," he says. "Yes, this is a tough industry. But we know it well, and we'll continue to employ creative and innovative ways to serve every region and community in the province." ■

This promotional feature was prepared for Clark Freightways by BCBusiness magazine's Special Advertising Features Writer: Robin Brunet. For information, contact VP of corporate features John Cochran at 604-299-7311. Email: jcochrane@canadawide.com

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