

# Clark Freightways Drives Productivity with Centerline TMS

Marek Krasuski – Ontario Trucking News – May 2011

Success in today's competitive environment calls for a seamless integration of departmental activities to drive business forward. Compromised performance of even one practice in the overall matrix of operations jeopardizes success. The Concord, Ontario-based firm, Accord Software, has, since its inception more than 20 years ago, understood and embraced this foundational principal and built a reputation of excellence by providing innovative technological solutions that improve efficiencies, save time and increase profitability in the trucking industry.

At the heart of the firm's success is the development and implementation of its premium product suite, the Centreline Transportation Management System (TMS). This software platform is a resource planning and operations management tool that automates the

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cross-functional business processes of a transportation company. Critical business activities, ranging from dispatch, cross dock and rating, to invoicing, accounting and management, are streamlined through the effective automation of business practices that deliver optimal control over the entire shipping process.



The value of any product or service lies beyond the functionality it promises; its true worth is in the ability to deliver. Greg Rogge is General Manager and Vice President of Clark Freightways, a long-established British Columbia-based carrier with a network of 85 tractors, 170 trailers, and multiple branches and agents distributed throughout the province. Since incorporating Centreline's fully integrated suite of management tools two years ago, Greg says his expectations have been met, and exceeded. "The primary reason for wanting a system was to create information flow internally within our company and externally with our customers. They wanted to know what was happening with their orders, and they needed up-to-date information as much as we did." Clark Freightways previously had an operations system in place, but it lacked integrating capabilities. Information was siloed separately in each department and lacked the real-time capabilities of the Centreline TMS management tools.

The information flow Greg was looking for needed to address key functions of Clark's operations. Among them was a track and trace system, just one of the various modules in Centreline's TMS that reflects the various processes in the operation of a commercial carrier. The tracing function is an effective tool that



supports Clark's promise to keep their customers informed. "By using a reference number related to the shipment, our customers now have the ability to search a shipment and determine its exact location."

At the heart of the system is the Cross Dock control module which monitors freight shipments and feeds the activity directly into the billing system. It also determines line haul Preferred Carriers and Points of Interchange, tracks and manages claims, and monitors inbound and outbound freight manifesting. For Greg Rogge, these features provide a high degree of process control and a tremendous amount of valuable data. "The Cross Dock functions keep our customers informed about the status of the shipment, help us drive process efficiencies, and provides the tools to assess driver performance."

Chief among the management tools of the TMS system, especially for Clark Freightways with multiple power units, trailers and locations, is the mobile dispatch function. Typical dispatch environments are



extremely hectic with dispatchers being flooded with calls from drivers and customers requesting pickups. The Centerline TMS environment creates a seamless and accurate coordination of customer orders with

the highest utilization of trucks. As Greg explains, "With Centerline TMS dispatchers can see where every truck is in real time relative to the pickup orders, thereby ensuring that freight pickups are handled promptly and in an efficient manner."

Itinerary details are automatically sent to drivers' mo-



bile computing devices, similar to wireless PDAs, but with reinforced construction designs able to withstand the rigours of the trucking environment. "What the mobile device does," Greg continues, "is transmit the key details of the pickup or delivery directly to the driver, eliminating the time wasted on potentially dangerous cell phone conversations." Furthermore, the dispatch board is updated automatically with accurate date and time stamps as each stop is completed by the driver.

In an effort to guarantee customer satisfaction, Clark Freightways depends on Accord Software's Centreline TMS to achieve best practices. For decades, the company has built its reputation on the transportation of perishable goods, including refrigerated and frozen foodstuffs. This highly specialized task demands that food products remain at prescribed temperatures throughout the shipping process. Checks and balances programmed into Centreline's mobile devices require that drivers comply with step-by-step procedures in the loading and unloading of merchandise. The software reminds drivers to probe frozen food before loading to ensure that the temperature is accurate. Failure to do so will prevent the driver from continuing until the data has been entered into the

system. Such attention to detail guarantees customer satisfaction and demonstrates Clark's adherence to best practices. It also eliminates costly overruns due to driver error.

"If a driver forgets to collect payment on a COD delivery, for example, he will not be able to complete the delivery until he keys information into the hand-held device confirming that payment has been made," Greg explains.

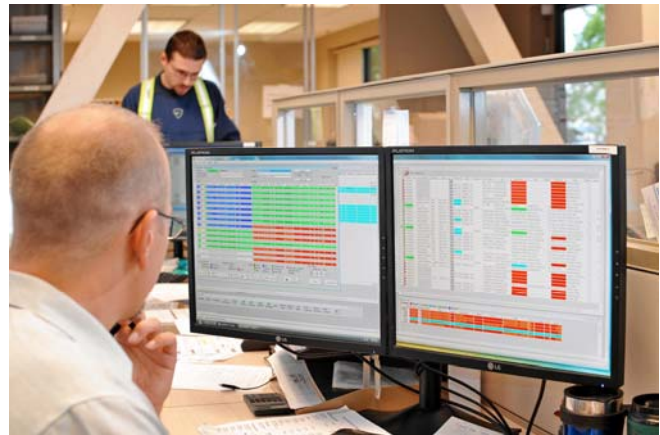
In contrast to traditional environments in which shipping data is collected from drivers at day's end, the immediate retrieval of information from the hand-held devices maximizes the effectiveness of the accounting and operations of the company. Detailed, real-time information transmitted to the office early in the day, Greg says, makes planning easier, more accurate, and reduces the risk and cost of running line haul trips unnecessarily.

Before integrating the Centreline TMS into company operations, Clark Freightways Senior Management consulted with representatives at Accord Software, including its president, Tony De Feo. "We are very proud of the power and flexibility that we have built into our solution," says Mr. De Feo, "but more importantly we are proud of the value that our solutions deliver to trucking companies like Clark Freightways and of the strong partnerships that we foster and

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maintain with them before, during and long after the sale."

Among the many management tools available in this integrated system is the rating function, a powerful business tool that eliminates waste, reduces duplication, saves employee's time, and shortens the billing and collection cycle. "The rating system," Tony says, "is an effective process of calculating, in short order, how much to charge a customer to move freight. Our



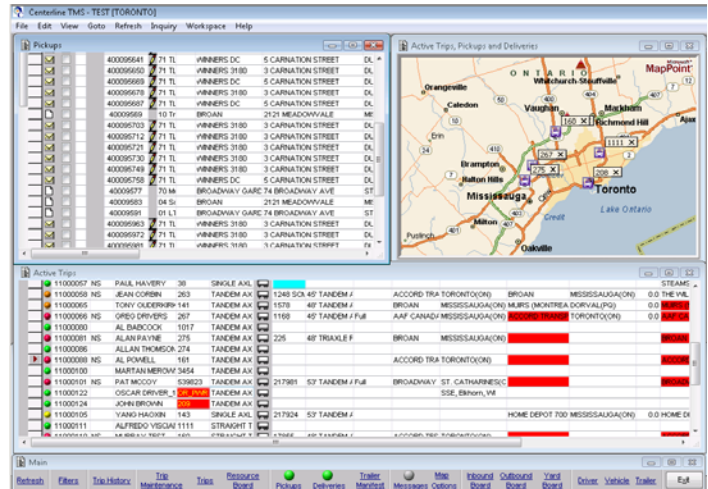
auto-rating function calculates even the most complicated of rate structures and provides an accurate rate with little or no intervention."

Rating staff are freed from the cumbersome process of calculating freight charges involving continuous references to rating manuals. Instead Centreline's rating engine completes the task automatically, with little if any intervention from staff. For Clark Freightways, this has proven to be another cost-saving tool.

"Carriers have come up with complicated pricing schemes to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Centreline's rating system allows us to tailor pricing plans that are best suited to our customers. In addition, it saves money because our employees don't waste time rating bills manually. The process also eliminates human error and provides the customer with an accurate and timely invoice, which is important to them." Indeed, the dramatic reduction in

the number of transactions that require operator intervention has resulted in a 90 percent auto-rating success rate by TMS users.

The auto-rating function, proven to be a time-saving tool, stands alongside an equally important module; WEB Order Entry. These electronic bills of lading have significantly reduced the time required to place orders. Using a secure web portal, customers connect to Clark Freightways' system, and enter their own orders by using user friendly drop-down fields to populate shipping details. The order is then automatically fed onto the dispatcher's board who forwards it to the hand-held of the driver nearest to the location. Once the cargo is loaded and delivered, the contract concludes with a digital Proof of Delivery (POD) document signed by the receiver and an email notification sent to the customer with delivery details.



Reflecting on the ease with which multiple tasks are performed, Greg Rogge concludes his assessment of Accord's suite of management tools with this missive: "Companies make changes either to save money or provide something of value to their customers. Centreline TMS does both!"

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