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>
> Derek Beevor, RoadTech

porating historic data such as journey times, and integrating real-time data such as drivers' hours, fuel issue data, navigational data and two-way messaging.

That's an awful lot of data, but fortunately many of today's fleet management systems have been designed to analyse it, and furthermore to present it not just in easily-accessible formats, but also in a way that places the focus on under-performing parts of the business.

INTEGRATION CHALLENGES

While deeper integration may be desirable as a way of improving efficiency, operators face two technology challenges if they are to make it a reality. So says Derek Beevor, managing director of fleet management provider Road Tech Computer Systems. "The biggest challenge for anyone wanting greater integration of data is presented by the legacy systems already in place and data security levels on servers."

A legacy system might be based on an outdated programming language, or on →

TRANSPORT EXCHANGE INTEGRATION

Real-time location integration is one of the enhancements made on Transport Exchange Group's second-generation Java-based freight exchange platform. "The latest Exchange 2.0 platform was developed with integration in mind. We recognised the added value our freight exchanges could deliver to other fleet and transport management systems," says managing director Lyall Cresswell.

The exchange's 4,500-plus members will be able to utilise their vehicle tracking system to promote available capacity and match precise vehicle locations with over 40,000 loads posted each month on the freight exchange. By taking advantage of the live vehicle tracking data integration, they will also be able to view the real-time location and progress of their loads whilst in transit, gaining added visibility and control.

While Navman Wireless is the first tracking company to be integrated on the new platform, it won't be the last, says Cresswell. "We are now in discussions with a wide range of technology providers that operate in the logistics marketplace to take advantage of collaborative opportunities."

Updates are every 15 seconds, which Cresswell claims is essential for building trust. "Last-known position is not accurate enough if that was fifteen or even five minutes ago," he says. "Operators have already made the investment in the tracking technology. The platform allows them to publicise in real time what capacity they have available."

Various criteria can be used to search for transport availability, including location, vehicle size and capacity. Users can search for a vehicle or simply advertise the load, in which case the platform notifies operators of all vehicles available within the load geofence or meeting required parameters.

Loads and vehicles are tracked in the same way as if they were the consignor's own vehicles. There is visibility even at subcontractor level, says Cresswell. "Shippers increasingly want visibility of consignment location, and this enables small fleets, owner-operators or logistics providers using subcontractors to provide the required level of information." ■

CASE STUDY TOTAL VISIBILITY

To manage the huge amount of operational data from its 300-plus customers better, Colne-based Matthew Kibble Transport realised it needed to implement systems to improve operational standards and efficiency and customer service. The company offers distribution services in the UK and continental Europe, and is a member of the Pallet-Track network.

"We needed a robust, dynamic system that not only handled our day-to-day workload, but also delivered a rich suite of reports to assist with our growth plans," explains managing director Matthew Kibble.

The company chose to deploy an integrated solution from HaulTech that manages jobs, resources and schedules, and also maintains customer databases and rates. HaulTech's traffic management system provides complete control of job booking, resource allocation, load planning, document generation and customer account management in a single reference system.

Customers can track individual consignments and retrieve proof of delivery confirmation via a secure web portal. Consignment and delivery documentation and labelling are generated by the system and then scanned back in as proof of delivery once jobs are completed.

Daily driver and vehicle revenue reports, accompanied by customer trend and POD management reports, provide senior management with the data required to identify trends and manage operational performance. Customers can access consignment tracking and POD data via a secure web portal.

"The HaulTech team was not afraid to make suggestions as to ways in which to improve the way we managed our workload and assets," Kibble says. "The system has paid for itself in a very short time." ■