

BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY

LTI Trucking Services is using onboard routing and mapping, and other enterprise management technologies, to improve its bottom line.

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“We always want to better manage our operations and provide our customers with the highest quality transportation service possible,” says Nicholas Civello, president of LTI Trucking Services, Inc. “Today, however, carrier responsibilities are more demanding and stagnant rates and rising operating costs for fuel, drivers and insurance are impediments to success.

“To reduce costs and out of route and deadhead mileage,” Civello continues, “better operating information and reporting capabilities are a necessity. Information technology has never been more valuable because it’s a way to take cost out of our system, operate more efficiently and profitably, and ultimately satisfy our customers.”

Based near St. Louis, the refrigerated truckload operation fields 150 tractors and 300 trailers. Its fleet operates primarily throughout the Midwest, and in parts of the southwest and southeast. A separate Logistics & Brokerage division provides service nationwide.

Latest investments

LTI, Civello notes, has adopted several technologies it feels are already helping the company operate more productively and efficiently. One of its latest investments was in the newest version of McLeod Loadmaster Software and two of the supplier’s solutions. A long time user of McLeod LoadMaster, LTI upgraded to Version 8.0 of the enterprise transportation management system.

“At the same time,” Civello relates, “we’ve adopted McLeod’s new Integrated Mapping System, which allows dispatchers to graphically see loads and available trucks and their locations on a large panel monitor or on individual computers. Complete information on drivers, tractors and loads is easily accessible while color-coded alerts on icons indicate the status of orders and if trucks are pre-assigned or late. Integrated Mapping also allows dispatchers to drill down geographically on a truck icon, down to street level, to better determine its exact location.”

LTI also implemented McLeod’s new Rapid Alert Notification System (RANS) module, which works with the carrier’s Qualcomm mobile communications and tracking systems to notify Fleet Managers, Freight Coordinators and management about issues such as out-of-route and deadhead miles and on-time delivery. The module constantly searches for exceptions to user-defined thresholds and provides instant notification by email, a message window or an audible alert. Potential issues of concern to LTI include when a tractor is late for its next stop or out-of -route based on the current stop. In addition, an

Empty Distance Alert is issued when an order's empty distance exceeds a defined error threshold by percentage or number of miles.

Technology benefits

"We needed to better manage our equipment and improve utilization," Civello states, "and the technologies we've adopted have done that. We also feel they help enhance driver retention by making us proactive so we can communicate effectively with our drivers, increase their productivity and allow us to get them home more regularly and consistently.

"With advanced information technology," Civello continues, "we can better manage our assets. The software has helped us look at our operations very closely and reduce deadhead, improve equipment utilization, control costs, and increase revenue per truck."

The results at LTI back up Civello's claim. While growing at a rate of 37 loads per month or ten percent per year, the carrier also improved its operating ratio by two percent in one very competitive year, which improved its bottom line by \$370,000. In addition, the company is meeting higher on-time delivery standards, achieving a 97.5% On Time Pick Up rate and an On Time Delivery rate of 98%.

"We have come to depend on our information technologies to provide accurate data, and for the ability to evaluate costs and measure our performance," Civello states. "We also share that information, which has strengthened our relationship with valued customers and opened the door for us to increase business.

"The trucking industry has always been faced with challenges and changes, and more so in recent years, and has made large strides with technology and innovation to address them," Civello concludes. "Technology improves our performance and makes us a better operating company. It gives us a competitive edge as we grow and has exceeded our expectations so we can exceed those of our customers."

LTI's Equipment & Maintenance Programs

Under the direction of Maintenance Manager Steve Haas, LTI Trucking Services fields 150 late-model Freightliner tractors and 300 Utility refrigerated trailers. The company's in-house maintenance operation is supplied with parts by a Freightliner dealer and other local suppliers that have proven to offer high quality items at a low cost, and that are willing to deliver daily to help keep the fleet's inventory down. In addition, tire purchases are made through the Ameritrust purchasing program.

LTI Tractor Specifications

Model: Freightliner Columbia CL 120; 70-inch Mid-Roof XT sleeper

Wheelbase: 228 inches

Engine: MBE 4000; 450 HP @ 1900 RPM, 1550 lb/ft @ 1100 RPM

Clutch: Eaton Fuller Solo

Transmission: Eaton Fuller Lightning

Driveshafts: Meritor

Power Steering: TRW THP-60
Rear Axle: Meritor R Series, tandem; 3.58 ratio
Hubs: ConMet aluminum
Wheel Seals: Chicago Rawhide Scotseal Plus XL
Brakes: Meritor Q Plus
Drums: ConMet, cast iron
ABS: Meritor WABCO
Automatic Slack Adjusters: Meritor
Parking Brakes: Haldex Gold Seal
Rear Suspension: Frerightliner Airliner
Wheels: Accuride aluminum disc
Tires: 295/75R22.5 Goodyear; G395LHS steer, G372A drive
5th Wheel: Fontaine No-Slack II 6000 Series
Air Compressor: Bendix AD-IS, heated
Air Dryer: Meritor WABCO, 15.5 CFM
Air Cleaners: Donaldson
Fan Clutch: Kysor, on/off
Batteries: Alliance (4); 2800 CCA
Starter: Delco 39 MT
Alternator: Delco; 135 amp, 35 SI
Fuel/Water Separator: Davco 382
Block Heater: Phillips-Temro, 1500 watt
Lighting: Truck-Lite
Air Horn: Hadley
Seats: Bostrom
Fuel Tanks: dual aluminum, 110 gallon

LTI Trailer Specifications

Model: Utility VS2RA, 53-ft by 102-inch
Refrigeration Unit: Thermo King SB Series
Landing Gear: SAF Holland Binkley Model 51000
Anti Dock Walk: Hendrickson SureLok
Slider/Axles/Suspension: Hendrickson; with Quik Draw air operated repositioning
Oil Seals: Stemco Guardian HP
Hub Caps: Stemco Sentinel
Hubodometer: Stemco Data Trak
Brakes: Hendrickson HXS
Automatic Slack Adjusters: Haldex
Brake Chambers: AnchorLok
ABS: Haldex
Tires: 295/75R22.5, Bridgestone R195F
Automatic Tire Inflation: Meritor MTIS (P.S.I), with ThermAlert
Lighting: Grote LED

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