Streamlining Operations with Cutting-Edge Terminal Automation Systems

www.dtn.com

Terminals aren't just a cost center anymore — they've evolved into an integral stop in the fuel supply chain and a place of tremendous operational and inventory complexity.

As such, control and visibility in terminal operations are more important today than ever. Compliance, credit checks, product allocations, and inventory must all be closely managed to ensure profitability, safety, and efficiency.

Although terminal automation systems (TAS) have been in use for years, they need to evolve to keep pace with changes in terminal operations relating to complexity, regulatory burdens, customer service, and data sharing. A next-generation TAS can overcome these issues and help take terminals to a new level of operational excellence.

However, not all are created equal. The following is a discussion of the features and capabilities you need to drive maximum visibility and control — and that you should look for as you find your next-generation TAS.

Bottom-line benefits

By knowing what to look for in a next-generation TAS, you can quickly see the results of your investment, including:

- Faster truck loading and increased throughput
- Better demand management
- Reduced inventory risks
- Instant inventory views in tight supply situations
- Access to information for trend analysis
- Improved driver interaction

Real-time inventory management

Because of high market volatility, it's crucial to always know current inventory of each product in your tanks. With a cutting-edge TAS, you can.

- See and manage your inventory in real time — by tank, product, owner, or exchange partner — with color-coded displays and an easy-to-use tracking interface
- Support a large number of tank gauging solutions and enable fast, easy set-up
- Get an at-a-glance snapshot of terminal activity at each lane to monitor current lifting activity and help forecast demand for daily hedge balancing
- Automatically pause lifting across all lanes at a set time to capture tank gauges, calculate inventory, and distribute reports to key players
- Instantly allocate gains and losses at close to simplify your reconciliations

Advanced lifting controls

The faster you can load trucks, the more you can move in and out. More trucks, more profitable. With a quality TAS, you can:

- Apply lifting controls across a matrix of variables, including shipper, customer, driver, carrier, product, and terminal
- Interface with third-party credit and allocation vendors so that only authorized personnel are allowed access to the terminal
- Ensure compliance with government access regulations affecting your terminal, such as the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program

Advanced reporting and analysis

Why collect terminal data if you can't analyze, manipulate, and report on it?

Your TAS should provide a range of reports with multiple filtering options, plus the flexibility to create your own reports based on available information.

When you choose an advanced Terminal Automation System, it should offer:

- Easy-to-read inventory, bill of lading, database, muster, administration, and configuration reports
- The ability to create custom reports that show activity detail, track movements, compare volumes — plus export data to Microsoft Excel or other systems for analysis
- The ability to automatically generate and distribute reports via email, printers, or FTP, based on criteria and intervals that you set

All the bells and whistles in the world can't make up for a systems provider that doesn't truly understand your pain points and the end-to-end refined fuels industry.

Your vendor should demonstrate a thorough understanding of your operational needs and the market's trends. Don't be afraid to ask: Do you have a successful track record of helping companies better serve their customers, increase efficiency, and cut operational costs?

Cutting-edge terminal automation systems are poised to meet the growing needs of today's terminal operations to help you:

- Increase control and visibility, to accurately and securely meet demand
- Load trucks faster to increase overall throughput
- Reduce inventory risks, improve customer service and driver interaction—especially when supply is tight
- Recognize trends, minimize risks, and chart a more profitable course

Discuss modernizing your business with DTN terminal solutions.

Contact an expert

DTN°