Three ways to increase your terminal's throughput

Everyone knows the saying "time is money," but it's a hard reality for terminal operators. Lifting delays mean fewer gallons sold, which can lead to a reduction in future orders — or worse, canceled orders and re-routed trucks. Fortunately, there are ways to help reduce delays and boost throughput. Let's explore three of them.

1 Eliminate manual data entry

High-speed internet has been around for decades, but many terminal operators still manually scan multiple-page documents and rely on email to send driver credentials, bills of lading (BOLs), and other critical records. Managing the files and ensuring that the right person receives the correct item requires considerable effort. The process is also prone to human error — especially as additional trucks arrive, dividing focus.

These dated processes consume valuable employee time, which could be dedicated to other tasks that drive revenue and growth. Instead, opt for professional solutions that do the work for you. Automated data collection, collation, and distribution will save you significant time and prevent costly manual data entry errors that lead to added delays.

2 Establish a single source of truth

Loading fuel into a truck sounds like a simple task, but in reality, it often requires a complex array of disparate software applications working together simultaneously to communicate sensitive, proprietary information in a variety of formats to multiple recipients. While the interconnected nature of terminal operations systems may appear advanced, they are vulnerable to breakdowns. If one application requires a bug fix or update, that one change can disrupt connectivity between applications, causing breakdowns elsewhere within the fragile ecosystem.

There is a better way. Establishing a single source of truth gets everybody on the same page. Consolidate the complex array of applications into one software solution capable of communicating with drivers, terminal operators, carriers, and anyone else who needs the data. Everyone gets what they need when they need it. There are no gaps in a tech stack because there is no stack. All of the data originates from one common interface, minimizing connectivity issues and costly delays due to mismatched orders or BOLs.

3 Simplify communications

When an outage occurs or terminal hours need to be adjusted, what's your notification process? If you use manually-created emails or texts, you run the risk of skipping an address or a recipient missing the message while their phone charges somewhere out of sight.

How do you verify that an assigned driver is qualified to lift the allocated order? If the process isn't complete before the truck shows up, it can cause expensive backups with other trucks waiting to fill their orders. If word gets around that there's a wait, it could even lead to carriers canceling their orders and moving their money to a different terminal.

With an automated communications platform, you can easily notify affected partners of important operations updates. Further, you won't be spamming those on your distribution list who are not affected, which may be even more important as it helps prevent future messages from landing in the dreaded junk folder. Instead, keep your communications targeted, so each time your partners get an alert from you, they know it is relevant and actionable for them, which builds trust.

Become the partner of choice

Trust is where it all begins. Waiting for data to be independently and manually checked can compromise it. Customers may not be comfortable dispatching drivers or buying as much product as they want for fear of having to claw those dollars back and delay deliveries to their customers. Without trust, individual emails, texts, and calls become necessary for confirming or denying lifts, which creates added delays.

The best solution is a single application that addresses all of these pain points, creates a single source of truth, and limits technical vulnerabilities. Every driver who shows up at your gate has already transferred their credentials, and the carrier is waiting for that BOL. By minimizing denials and delays, your terminal becomes the model of efficiency. The faster trucks get in and out, the better your reputation becomes, and more industry partners will want to do business with you. In this way, saving time saves — and earns — you money.

Learn more about how Partner Insights can power your supply chain.

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