



C3 Solutions



## Case Study

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# AUTOMATING THE CENTRALIZED APPOINTMENT DESK

Among the top 10 North American food retailers, this retail giant's logistics operation includes 20 distribution centers which receive **50,000 appointments per month**. These appointments were managed by a team of schedulers that received emails and updated dedicated spreadsheets for each warehouse; clearly a tedious process that was a bottleneck to their expected growth.

## THE CHALLENGE

Schedulers were burdened with many different challenges, which included:

- ★ Sorting and filing overwhelmingly large quantities of email appointment requests from carriers and suppliers.
- ★ Waiting for updated PO feeds to validate quantities and due times.
- ★ Struggling to successfully fit backhauls into the DC schedules.
- ★ Juggling DC capacity and unique operational constraints (compiled in huge instruction binders).
- ★ Being the single point of contact for all receiving inquiries between carriers, suppliers, buyers and DC operations.

The combination of these points made inbound planning/receiving very labor intensive, inefficient and a bottleneck for future growth.

*Improving processes for the container arrivals at port and backhaul management were also made possible. In the case of managing inbound marine containers, the ASN information is now loaded into C3 Reservations with expected pick-up dates being scheduled and visible on the carrier portal. Carriers confirm online the delivery appointments at the respective DCs and then proceed with picking up the containers at port en route to the DCs. This new process eliminates a lengthy trail of emails, provides visibility in real-time and the stored data is available for reporting and analysis.*

## THE RESULTS

- ✓ C3 Reservations reduced labor affected to scheduling by more than 60% in the first year.
- ✓ Suppliers use the self-serve portal to request appointments and buyers have access to PO status.
- ✓ Appointment information and total pallet counts are available in real-time (vs. waiting for a report once or twice daily).
- ✓ Integrating purchase order information into C3 Reservations meant that there was no need for copy/pasting and duplicate data entry. Pallet counts, the principal measure of volume, were automatically measured hourly, by shift, by commodity per DC (great for labor planning).
- ✓ Visibility in real-time was now accessible to all the DCs via their own online portal.
- ✓ As for backhaul management, POs are flagged automatically through data integration (from the grocer's ERP) and are managed by each site; eliminating another set of unique spreadsheets and hoards of emails.