# Future-Proof Your Supply Chain

## with Best of Breed Yard Management and Dock Scheduling



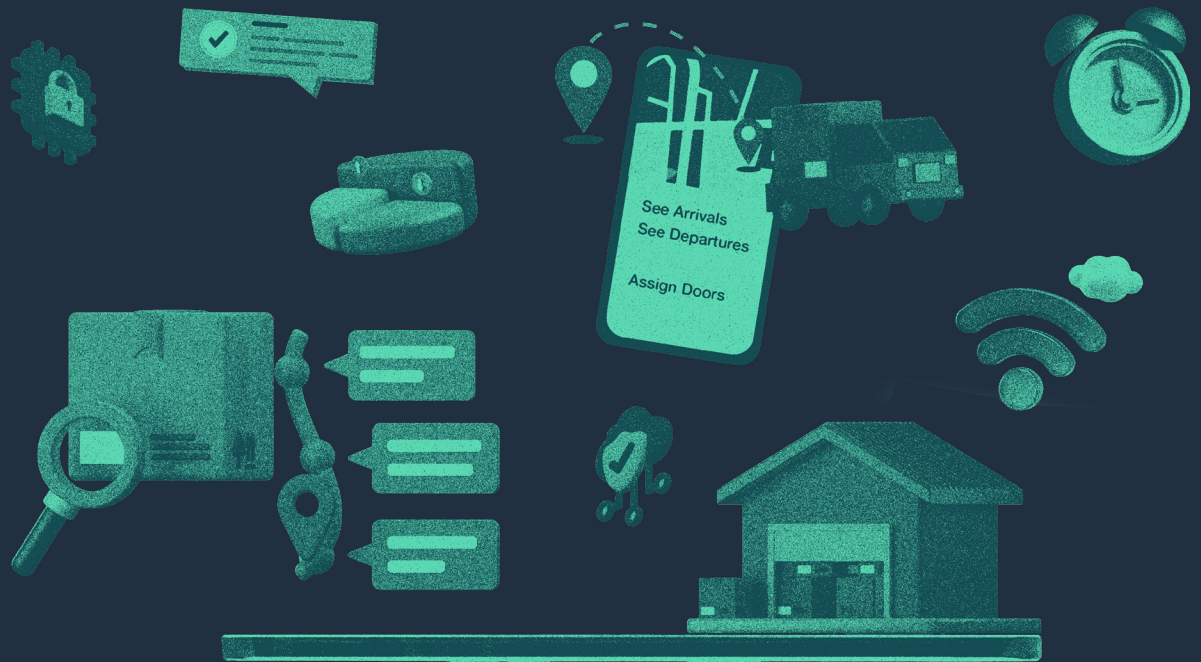**C3 Solutions**

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*If your yard Is operating in a constant state of chaos, cloud-based yard management and dock scheduling tools help calm the chaos, improve visibility, boost throughput and empower your staff.*

Manufacturing, distribution and logistics yards can be pretty chaotic places. There's always a steady stream of trucks and drivers entering the premises, heading to open dock doors and/or being staged out in the yard itself. Then, the whole process gets thrown in reverse as full or empty vehicles make their way back out onto the road. The constant flow of traffic, large amounts of inventory and varied activities—loading and unloading trucks, sorting and packing inventory and staging orders for shipment—can easily lead to confusion and chaos.

In some cases, there may also be a lack of communication between the different teams or departments that operate the plant or warehouse yard. In other situations, the basic layout of a yard may have been poorly planned which, in turn, creates even more congestion and chaos.

"We talk to a lot of warehouse and DC managers who are frustrated with the inefficiencies of their yards. They're in pain and really need help right now,"

said Francois Dorval, Senior Account Manager at C3 Solutions, Inc., which offers a cloud-based suite of tools that provide high levels of visibility and automation into both yard assets and shipments.

The C-suite is equally as concerned about their organizations' yards and docks, but most of them don't have the technology tools they need to be able to remedy the problem. Without the visibility, real-time reporting and dashboards that a best-of-breed yard management system (YMS) provides, these executives can't access up-to-date information; identify trends and problems early on; take corrective action; or avoid costly mistakes.

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> **We still see very large organizations using basic tools—plus some fairly advanced spreadsheets—to run their yards,"**
>
> - Neil McEvoy
> VP of Business Development and Customer Experience

In this white paper, we explore the top yard - and dock-related challenges that organizations are facing in the current business environment and explain how a best-of-breed YMS provides the real-time visibility, automated workflows, reporting and analytics that save companies both time and money in the yard and on the dock.

## You Can't Run a Busy Yard on Clipboards

Achieving high levels of productivity and throughput in the yard isn't always easy, and it can be especially difficult for companies that rely on clipboards, walkie-talkies and cell phones to run this very important link in their end-to-end supply chains. And because the yard is wedged squarely between the warehousing component (often managed by a warehouse management system or WMS) and the open road (where the transportation management system or TMS takes over), yards can all too easily become the "black hole" of the supply chain.

The pandemic, the massive uptick in e-commerce orders and the persistent labor shortage have all exacerbated the problem for companies that rely on clipboards and walkie-talkies to run their yards and schedule their dock doors for pickups and deliveries. These and other challenges have made it more difficult than ever for dock and yard operations to keep up with demand.

> *"We still see very large organizations using basic tools—plus some fairly advanced spreadsheets—to run their yards,"*

said Neil McEvoy, VP of Business Development and Customer Experience at C3 Solutions. "These companies don't know where things are in their yards at any given

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**The company didn't even have to increase the number of moves happening in the yard, but it began doing better moves that resulted in the 17% increase," Braun explained. No more "wrong trailers" being delivered to the "wrong dock doors," for example, had a direct, positive impact on the whole operation's productivity and efficiency levels. "**

*- Greg Braun
CRO at C3 Solutions*

time, and that's just not acceptable given all of the supply chain-related constraints and problems that have surfaced in recent years."

Many times, companies don't even realize that they have a yard challenge until something "goes boom"—a reefer sits in the yard for a week and its cargo spoils; a critical customer order never leaves the dock; or a carrier refuses to work with a company that's provided a poor experience for its drivers. As the transportation and supply chain landscape becomes increasingly complex, intertwined and competitive, companies need best-of-breed yard and dock management systems that help them avoid these challenges.

## Don't Let Your Supply Chain Grind to a Halt in the Yard

Applying technology to the dock and yard makes perfect sense in a world where nearly every aspect of the supply chain can be tracked right down to the individual item. "Companies barcode every pallet and know where everything is stacked and stored. Robots are driving around inside of warehouses and DCs, picking and packing orders," Marc Tomkinson, Chief Technology Officer at C3, explained. "You hit the yard and that all grinds to a halt because someone is forced to pick up a radio, make a note about the problem on a clipboard and then hopefully address it in time."

When those issues aren't addressed in time, they can impede throughput, productivity and performance. The problems can quickly spill over into customer experience issues and driver problems.

"Companies want and need to be seen as 'shippers of choice,' but when they waste a driver's time because an order can't be located or a dock door isn't open for them, things can turn bad pretty quickly," said Greg Braun, chief revenue officer at C3 Solutions, Inc.

"The negative impacts of that one event may extend across the entire supply chain."

## What is YMS and Dock Scheduling?

According to Gartner, YMS supports the efficient flow of work, equipment and materials through the normally-enclosed area outside of a warehouse, DC or manufacturing facility (the yard). [1] The software provides an overview of yard operations and supports the planning, direction and control of scheduling, movement, parking, inspection and reassignment of trucks, trailers and containers in the yard.

Dock scheduling is the use of optimization and scheduling tools to automate dock door and yard schedules, as defined by Gartner. In this system, a dock calendar is maintained, showing all operating constraints, such as open/close time, commodities accepted through the dock door (e.g., refrigerated or ambient) and trailer types accepted. Advanced dock scheduling systems consider both transportation constraints and upstream warehouse constraints like labor and other [2] warehouse resource constraints.

With a **best-of-breed YMS and dock scheduling solution** in place, companies can avoid these and other negative impacts while also improving performance, enhancing safety and gaining efficiencies. Combined, these benefits positively impact the bottom line and help organizations do more with less in any business conditions. For example, one recent company was able to **increase its warehouse throughout by 17%** by simply switching over to an automated yard management approach.

"The company didn't even have to increase the number of moves happening in the yard, but it began doing better moves that resulted in the 17% increase," Braun explained. No more "wrong trailers" being delivered to the "wrong dock doors," for example, had a direct, positive impact on the whole operation's productivity and efficiency levels.

**By implementing a best-of-breed YMS, the yard drivers are no longer required to communicate with the dispatch office; their next task is systematically displayed on their cab device once they've completed one. If drivers need to go on break, signal an issue in the yard or with a trailer, everything is communicated through the device.**

## Reducing All of the Stop-and-Go

In another example, Dorval recently worked with a company whose yard drivers were required to stop their vehicles anytime they had to talk on the radio or write something down. The rules were meant to keep the unionized drivers and those around them safe, but they also created a high level of inefficiency out in the yard and on the dock. **With communications taking every 5-10 minutes on average, it meant a lot of stopping and going out in the yard.**

The same company's dispatch office relied heavily on Excel spreadsheets to run the operation, which in turn created even more delays and chaos. It also introduced more errors into the overall yard management process.

> *"The dispatcher admitted that every time he got distracted by a call while moving cells on a spreadsheet—or copying-and-pasting from another spreadsheet—the odds of making a mistake increased considerably,"*

Dorval explained.

By implementing a best-of-breed YMS, the yard drivers are no longer required to communicate with the dispatch office; their next task is systematically displayed on their cab device once they've completed one. If drivers need to go on break, signal an issue in the yard or with a trailer, everything is communicated through the device. Productivity gains are substantial without compromising safety. For the dispatch office, the risk of manual errors are eliminated and the constant radio communications are a thing of the past.

## Transforming Logistics Operations into Dynamic Flow-Through Centers

Yard management systems help to improve the efficiency and safety of warehouse yards. They automate tasks like gate control,

appointment scheduling and vehicle routing. This can free up staff to focus on other tasks, such as customer service or inventory management. Dock scheduling systems help to improve the efficiency of dock operations. The systems automate tasks such as appointment scheduling and loading/unloading operations.

Unlike mega-suite software vendors that offer yard and dock management as adjuncts to their larger solutions, or acquired other developers and then weaved those companies' offerings right into the mega-suite, best-of-breed software providers offer



specialized solutions that can be tailored to a company's specific needs. This can save both time and money in the long run, and ensures that organizations don't pay for features that they don't even need.

Best-of-breed software is also more scalable and can be easily adapted as your company grows, as opposed to forcing companies to continually upgrade or invest in new platforms. Today's best-of-breed options also integrate directly with existing WMS, TMS and enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions, which ensures a steady flow of data across these platforms. "With a best-of-breed system, you get a solution that's tailored to your business," said McEvoy, who spent 15 years in logistics before joining C3 Solutions.

"Whereas with the off-the-shelf mega-suite option, you'll be forced to 'fit' into a cookie-cutter approach that may or may not be

suitable for your departments and individual team members."

Once in place, best-of-breed yard and dock tools help companies address their immediate supply chain challenges while also helping to future-proof their operations, take advantage of new opportunities and head off potential disruptions. Based in the cloud and highly scalable, these platforms will be able to keep up as organizations increase their volumes, expand into new territories and/or service entirely new customer segments.

their supply chains, stating the **business case for YMS and dock scheduling tools** has become easier in recent years.

"The supply chain is now front-page news, whereas in the past it was just a topic that VPs of supply chains and logistics managers worried about," said McEvoy.

"Even individual consumers understand that if someone overseas is having a problem moving shipping containers, that issue may be felt around the world."

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**If you don't invest in technology now, you risk falling behind the curve and subsequently losing market share"**

*- Marc Tomkinson,
CTO at C3 Solutions*

## Effective Yard and Dock Management for a Fast-Paced World

The world is changing at a fast pace, and it can be difficult to keep up. New disruptions and opportunities are emerging all the time, and the way we live and work is constantly evolving. This can be challenging for companies that continue to use clipboards, radios and spreadsheets to run their ever-evolving yard and dock operations.

Shrinking delivery times are also driving more companies to think of their yards not as "black holes," but rather as critical conduits in the smooth movement of goods across the end-to-end supply chain. Using technology, organizations can effectively handle the growing onslaught of e-commerce orders, improve the overall effectiveness of their supply chains, save money, improve customer service and increase profitability.

> ***"If you don't invest in technology now, you risk falling behind the curve and subsequently losing market share,"***

Tomkinson cautioned.

"The cost of delaying this decision can add up quickly and will translate into higher operational costs, reduced productivity and missed opportunities."

With C-suite executives more focused on

# Future-Proof Your Supply Chain with Best of Breed Yard Management and Dock Scheduling

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# Did you consider all the aspects necessary to ensure the highest possible ROI for your company?



PLAYBOOK

## How to Maximize Your Yard Management and Dock Scheduling Investment:

A Comprehensive ROI Overview to Help Build Your Case

Download Now

## References

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