Dock Scheduling
Case Study

At C3 Solutions, we learn a lot from our customers as their requirements often promote creative ideas that make our software even better applied to real-world applications. Aware that our software solutions aren't the only answer for companies desiring to become shippers of choice, this case study is a great example of how a **small software configuration change** made a **big difference**.

Becoming a Shipper of Choice
Using a Scheduling Software to Streamline the Shipping Process

A specialized warehousing and transportation company, with warehouses on the East and West coast of the United States, first implemented C3 Reservations to manage the pickups of their customer orders. Essentially, they receive container loads from the ports that they then break down in their warehouses, and then prepare a mix of TL and LTL truckloads to ship out to their customers across the country. Their WMS and in-house customer service software assists the logistics planning departments to determine which loads to stage on any given day.

The Challenge

Their problems were typical and in line with what we see in the marketplace. Without a true capacity plan per warehouse and ways to make carriers accountable for their timeliness, carrier pickups were chaotic and causing, among other things, driver wait times.

Aggravating the situation was that all carriers were being paid/arranged by their customers, and therefore the poor service at the shipping docks was known by their customers and thus also echoed back to the top management.

The Results

Their volumes at over 3,000 shipments per month justified data integration from their systems into C3 Reservations. They had an excellent project team that involved SMEs from operations and I.T. who successfully deployed the scheduling system across their **19 sites in a few months**. As expected, **driver wait times disappeared** and so did customer complaints.

During the course of the project, the project team worked with C3's business specialists to examine ways to streamline the shipping process. One must always be cognizant that implementing a new software should reduce the effort and not augment the number of "clicks" users need to make.

Was this going to be just another layer of software to burden the customer service and shipping leads, or will it really help their daily routine?

For one, all the order numbers (and BOLs) are integrated into C3 Solutions in order to facilitate scheduling. Customer service schedules the loads, and the customer's designated broker or carrier is identified in the appointment details. They, brokers and carriers, in turn, receive an automated email and can consult their appointment status on their portal. They can also request a different time in the portal. So the first battle was won, we eliminated all the back and forth emails that used to be the norm.

Here is how the team was able to achieve such a streamlined shipping process:

1 C3 Reservations now triggers automatically a confirmation of the day's pick up orders directly to the shipping department's printer. We've customized the message to include a summary of the BOL, order numbers, line numbers, and all the necessary information plus a barcode.

2 When the warehouse staff has finished picking the items and staging the order, they bring their picking documents to the shipping lead who matches this with the printed C3 document. They put the C3 summary page on top of the picking documents and insert them in a plastic sleeve folder.
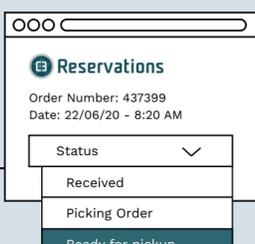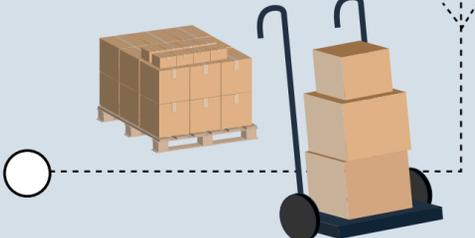
3 Now the shipping lead knows this load is staged and changes the state of the appointment to be "Ready for pickup". They simply scan the barcode and confirm that the load is ready for pick up.

4 The CSR's who greet drivers know that the load is ready for them and to which door groups they can direct the drivers to.

5 Once the truck is at the door, the shipper takes the clear sleeve folder and scans (using their phone) the barcode off the C3 template page, bringing up the appointment information. Now they easily confirm the truck is finished to be loaded and departed.

Although C3 knew about this configuration process, they were truly impressed when it went into action. The layout and process was so simple and clean. It was the first time C3 had visited a customer with such a streamlined process. When the C3 team told the shipping admin that seeing such a well organized and clean counter was a first, he nodded his head with satisfaction. **"It wasn't like that before C3 came along"**, he answered.

Conclusion

For those who think scheduling is only about booking a time slot and measuring when a driver arrives and leaves, try thinking outside the "appointment" box.
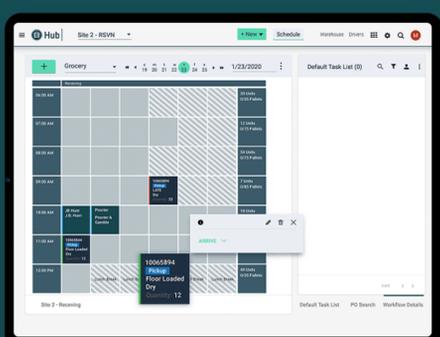
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Book a demo now!