Case Study: McNaughton & Gunn Saline, Michigan

Problems:
- Multiple shipping computers with separate databases made it difficult to obtain consolidated information for management.
- Comparing rates between carriers was unmanageable & consequently costly.
- Training operators on multiple systems was challenging, creating errors & frustration.
- Manual data entry of addresses was time consuming & error prone.

Solution: Logic Systems Engineering designed a shipping system which processed all carriers on a single networked system.

Traffic Manager Del Dunn of McNaughton & Gunn Inc., located in Saline, Michigan, was frustrated. His traffic department had three separate shipping systems. One for processing his UPS, FedEx Ground and U.S. Postal Service packages, a FedEx Powership supplied by FedEx for air shipments and a third system for creating labels and bills of lading for LTL (less than truckload) shipments.

Tedious Process

Because shipping data was located in three places, compiling traffic reports on all the company's shipping activities was difficult and laborious. Comparing rates between carriers was unmanageable. Training operators how to use three different systems correctly was challenging.

Shipping clerk Rex Whiting disliked the lengthy closing process. At the end of the day, he had to close on two separate systems and write in six separate books for the various carriers. UPS alone required a book for collect, consignee, hundred-weight and GroundSaver shipments. And the extra time it took to manually key shipping addresses in the FedEx system was unproductive. Additionally, the whole company was standardizing on a Microsoft Windows operating system. McNaughton & Gunn wanted to catch up with times and rid itself of Microsoft DOS.

Planning for Updates

With future plans to upgrade its Digital VAX host computer system, John Ausic, MIS manager, wanted a solution that would integrate, be flexible and easy to change when the company upgraded. He also wanted to supply the personal computers (rather than be stuck having to purchase them at a higher price from the vendor) and have the shipping system be part of the company's Windows NT network.

Coming to the rescue was Logic Systems Engineering of Ann Arbor, Michigan. The solution it implemented for McNaughton & Gunn provided three Clippership workstations, integrated with the Digital VAX system through terminal emulation (Clippership is a Windows-based multicarrier shipping software that rates, routes, prepares barcoded tracking labels and electronic manifests.)

The three workstations shared a common database on the McNaughton & Gunn Windows NT network, providing a single history file containing shipment data for all packages. Now, one workstation handles all UPS, FedEx, and USPS shipments, while the other two workstations easily process LTL shipments.

Meeting the Needs

Clippership was customized by certified developers at Logic Systems Engineering Corporation with TracerX to meet the exact needs of McNaughton & Gunn. TracerX is a programming language that is specifically designed to create procedures for transporting data among a variety of different data sources, including serial devices, host systems, databases, programs and Windows dialogs.

One of the unique advantages that Logic Systems Engineering offers is the capacity to customize shipping systems to meet the exact requirements of clients. Logic's Developers are extensively trained and tested in order to be certified as competent. Additionally, staff is trained and certified in carrier compliance for UPS, FedEx Ground, FedEx, USPS, DHL and BAX Global.

For McNaughton & Gunn, the LTL workstations were customized with radio dials and check boxes to prompt the operator for accessorial charges. Now, custom designed labels containing the LTL carrier's barcoded pro-number are produced in the exact quantity needed. The system is user friendly and very easy to operate.

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A Simple Solution

Whiting was delighted with the new closing process because it is faster and easier. No more confusing books to fill out! Now for UPS, he merely has to produce a barcoded label that the driver scans into his electronic clipboard. He electronically transmits manifests to UPS and FedEx Ground. And FedEx dials in to get its manifest during the night.

The solution implemented centralizes all shipping information in one location and eliminates the need for duplicate data entry, which saves McNaughton & Gunn an estimated one hour per day. With all data now located in one location, Logic Systems Engineering customized the shipping information required by McNaughton & Gunn's traffic department in the exact format required, utilizing less paper, less paper shuffling and less file space.

Traffic Manager Del Dunn is happy because his people are happy. He gets all the information he needs to run his department effectively and is also increasing the department's profit.

Dunn designed a feature to the system which now contributes an additional $25,000 per year in revenue to McNaughton & Gunn's bottom line through the utilization of a handling charge utility, providing an immediate return on investment. Dunn adds, I would recommend Logic Systems Engineering to anyone that is in distribution, mailing or shipping.

Of course, Julie McFarland, CEO, is happy because the shipping system helps increase profit and productivity for her company.

Computerized Shipping System: including electronic scale, PC and bar code label printer.

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