

BOOSTING GROWTH

BY PROVIDING ONLINE ACCESS TO
CUSTOMERS & CARRIERS



CHOPTANK TRANSPORT USES
MCLEOD'S INTERNET MODULE TO STREAMLINE OPERATIONS
AND STRENGTHEN TIES WITH BUSINESS PARTNERS

BY DAVE REGULSKI, CHOPTANK TRANSPORT OPERATIONS MANAGER

Choptank Transport is an asset-based brokerage and third-party logistics company with over 100 employees. We handle over 100,000 shipments per year, and we're growing at a brisk pace. As everyone in the brokerage and logistics world knows, building and maintaining good connections with shippers and carriers is essential to success. At Choptank Transport, we strive to create strong, lasting relationships that are beneficial to both us and our business partners. A key part of our strategy is the use of software technology to support our business objectives, and a prime example of this is McLeod's Internet

module that ties into our McLeod PowerBroker™ dispatch system.

The Internet module makes it possible for our customers and carriers to conduct business with us online, and we gain multiple advantages from being connected in this way. It greatly reduces the time members of our staff spend on the phone handling various chores, and as a result these people are able to spend more time on work that enhances revenue and boosts growth. We also create stickier relationships with customers and carriers. Our business partners like online access, because it makes life easier for them in a variety of ways. The overall payback for us is that our people are more productive, our customers and carriers are happier, and our bottom line is improved.

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T H E A B I

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HOW INTERNET ACCESS WORKS AND WHY IT HELPS US GROW

The access we provide to our business partners is convenient and safe. Each new shipper and carrier receives instructions for creating a username and a password. The Choptank website has a link to the login page, so customers and carriers can get to the web portal from any computer or mobile device that has Internet access. Once securely logged into the online environment provided by the McLeod Internet module, it's easy to navigate and conduct business as desired. Each company has access to information that pertains only to our business relationship with that company.

Before we offered online access to our business partners, managing all of the accounts was much more labor intensive. Choptank Transport specializes in perishable freight, and much of it is frozen and shipped in refrigerated trailers. We also offer dry van, flatbed trucking, LTL, intermodal, and warehousing services. In order to provide a high standard of service to all of our customers, we've established relationships with a broad base of trucking companies. We currently have more than 20,000 carriers set up in our database.

We are always looking for ways to increase efficiency, and providing Internet access to our business partners has been an excellent way to achieve this. Our customers and carriers

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can use the web portal to handle a variety of business tasks independently without involving our personnel. By eliminating many time-consuming chores, we've increased productivity, and that has enabled our rapid pace of growth.

T O D O M O R E

The online access provided by the McLeod Internet module simplifies several important business tasks for shippers. For example, our customers can go online and do the following:

- **Tender loads electronically**—Any customer who has online access can go to a page that provides fields for entering the relevant data for a freight order. When we view this order, we'll be able to see instantly the type and volume of freight along with the pick-up and delivery locations and times.

PowerBroker will assign a rate from our rate engine. All we need to do at that point is review the information and evaluate the order. We may accept it as is or contact the customer to negotiate a different rate.

- **Check on the status of existing orders**—We know that some customers are eager to know the status of orders that are in progress, so we offer them the ability to view order status in real-time. This can include not only pick-up and delivery status, but also the latest position as recorded through mobile comm units or check calls.
- **Retrieve documents**—Documents are a big part of the transportation business, especially bills of lading and proofs of delivery. We provide access to electronic versions of these documents so that customers can retrieve them as needed at their convenience. Once they've located the relevant document, they have several retrieval options for the electronic file. It can be attached to an email or sent as a fax. Customers can also simply copy the file and save it to their system.

- **Pull accounting reports**—The most common accounting data that customers seek is the aging report that lists orders that are overdue. PowerBroker gives us options for choosing how this data is displayed, so we have control over what information is accessible.

Our customers are happy to have these online options, because it's convenient, and it saves them time and labor. They don't have to get a member of our staff on the phone when they need to retrieve a document or tender a load.

They can get the information they need quickly and easily. Our ability to provide these services gives us an advantage over competitors who don't offer the same capabilities.



WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS CAN DO ONLINE

We use the Internet interface to streamline and improve transactions with our carriers in several ways.

Here are some of the tasks that carriers can handle online:

- **Accept loads**—We take the freight orders from our customers, look for a good match between the orders and the lane preferences of our carriers, and then notify targeted carriers about specific freight via email. This ensures that they know immediately that new loads are available. Once they receive the email, they can log in, review the available freight, and accept or decline loads.

- **Check status of settlement payments**—

Our carriers can go online at any time and see the exact status of settlement payments. They will see a page with all of the basic information for each load, such as origin, destination, miles, invoice number, the date we received the relevant paperwork from them, and net pay. If payment has already been made, they can also see the check number and date.

- **Update lane preferences**—Carriers can log in and notify us which lanes they prefer to run. We want to avoid offering loads that don't fit the preferences of our carriers, because that wastes time on both sides. Keeping lane preferences current helps us direct the right loads to the right carriers.

- **Enter available equipment**—Carriers can use the interface to enter the types of equipment they have immediately available and where that equipment is currently located. This allows us to see where the

available equipment is at any given time.

All of these capabilities bring advantages to carriers. If we see that a carrier has a tractor available

just when and where we need it, we may have a load that saves that carrier hundreds of empty miles. Sometimes people need to check the status of settlement payments, but doing so during regular business hours isn't convenient. Now they can do it online at any time. Handling all of these transactions online helps carriers become more efficient and more effective at managing their business.

WHAT OUR CARRIERS CAN DO ONLINE



T O D O M O R E

ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH MCLEOD'S RAPID ALERT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM AND PRIVATE NOTIFICATION NETWORK



specific individuals who need to know. We use Rapid Alerts to give customers real-time updates on load status. Not all of our customers who tender loads online are also using EDI. For those without EDI capabilities, we make sure they get prompt updates about load status by arranging for emails or faxes to go out through RANS.

PNN provides automated posting of available orders to preferred business partners. Brokers and 3PLs can schedule for information to be sent automatically to selected carriers via email or fax. Each carrier file in PNN denotes the lane preferences of that carrier. PNN helps us with lane preference updates from our carriers. By having these files automatically changed when carriers update their preferences online, we save labor and avoid the errors that can occur when this data is entered manually.

We also use PNN to give carriers quick access to loads online. When an email goes out to a carrier through PNN, the email includes an online link. Carriers can click on that link and immediately go to the load online, where they can accept or decline it.



McLeod's Rapid Alert Notification System (RANS) and Private Notification Network (PNN) allow us to enhance communications and streamline operations even further. These two software tools automate several important tasks involving our customers and carriers. Time and money is saved on all sides.

RANS makes it possible to have notification messages about chosen critical events sent to the

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MCLEOD MAKES LIFE EASIER AND MORE PROFITABLE FOR EVERYONE

By allowing customers and carriers to conduct business with us through the Internet in all of these ways, we've dramatically cut down the amount of time many members of our staff spend on the phone. This gives them more time to handle loads. On average, we're seeing a productivity jump of five loads per person per week.

We've also strengthened our relationships with both our customers and our carriers. Our customers appreciate the efficiency, the access to load status data, and the ability to retrieve documents. The service levels we offer on the web portal allow us to do a better job of communicating with them. They can get their freight hauled with less labor on their part. We

know what our preferred carriers want in terms of loads, and we are able to match our loads to the right carriers with greater efficiency. We keep them moving, and they offer more of their capacity to us. And everyone likes the fact that we're available 24/7 through the web.

The results are solid and measurable, and they affect our bottom line. Giving our customers access to aging reports and document retrieval has translated into getting paid more quickly; and stickier relationships means that we get more of their business on a consistent basis. As we get stickier with our preferred carriers by

giving them higher volume and the loads they want, we find that we get better pricing and service. Overall, our revenue, margins, and profit have improved since we implemented this technology and taught our customers and carriers how to use it. Today we can't imagine running our business without providing Internet access to our business partners. McLeod's Internet module makes life easier and more profitable for everyone.



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