WHY A YMS?

COMPANIES OFTEN OVERLOOK THE YARD OUTSIDE THEIR WAREHOUSES OR MANUFACTURING PLANTS. THESE YARDS, HOWEVER, CAN BE SOURCES OF EFFICIENCY ...OR DELAYS.

A yard management system (YMS) "supports the efficient flow of work, equipment, and material through the normally enclosed area outside of a warehouse, distribution center, or manufacturing facility," says Gartner's Market Guide for Yard Management study. A YMS also supports the control and movement of trucks, trailers, and containers in the yard.

The YMS capabilities housed within a warehouse management system may be all some organizations need. But companies that need more robust capabilities may find that built-in solutions come up short.

WHEN TO CONSIDER A YMS

A YMS might be right for your company if you:

• Have multiple yards servicing many plants or warehouses and need help with tracking and control.

• Deal with poor management and scheduling, which leads to bottlenecks at the dock and within the yard, causing detention and demurrage charges and even lost sales.

• Need help managing the growth of e-commerce and the related demands for an automated, real-time ability to assist a warehouse management system.

JUSTIFYING THE INVESTMENT

Advancing technology promises even more value from future generations of YMS solutions. Yet investment in yard technology tends to fall to the bottom of the list of many companies' supply chain budgets. One reason is the perceived rate of return on that investment. To execute a project with a solid ROI requires clear objectives that are attainable and deliver value to the operation.

The following five areas are an excellent starting point to justify investment in yard automation, according to Greg Braun, senior vice president of sales and marketing at C3 Solutions, a dock scheduling and yard management systems vendor.

1. Driver self-check-in at the gate. A poorly managed gate results in drivers having to excessively wait to get on site and/or not have accurate instructions on where to deliver their trailer. In both cases, delays with product reception and driver detention charges are incurred.

Automating a gate operation starts with providing drivers with the means to carry out a self-check-in using their smartphone. Regardless of when the check-in is performed, once the driver crosses the site's geofence, a message is sent to the driver indicating where they need to drop their trailer and any other helpful information that the site needs to communicate. Not only does this streamline the overall gate process, but drivers also appreciate the quick turnaround time.

2. Carrier self-serve appointments. Another means to avoid congestion in the yard is to ensure an even flow of arriving drivers. When carriers are allowed to arrive at any time, they invariably end up all arriving simultaneously. Not only does this create issues at the gate and in the yard, but it also has a severe impact on warehouse throughput.

Implementing an automated dock scheduling system is a necessary step to improving the efficiency of your yard operation. Allowing carriers to request appointment times via a self-service web portal enables your operation to maintain an even flow of vehicles that increases the throughput of your process without increasing clerical effort.

3. System-directed trailer moves. A yard management system requires that a trailer move request is made in a timely and orderly manner. It is all too common for a dock operation to call out multiple trailer moves at the end of a shift rather than requesting moves as they occur. A process that does not direct trailers strategically risks creating dock congestion and potentially delaying the reception of priority goods.

An automated process-driven yard system moves trailers in an optimal order for the business. And in a complex operation where trailers need to be loaded at multiple locations before departing, a well-defined process keeps partially loaded trailers from being misplaced. Effective system-directed trailer moves ensure that the right trailer gets to the right door at the right time.

4. Carrier notifications. Trailer detention can be a significant problem for any yard operation relying on third-party trailers. Trailer detention fees are typically applied once trailer dwell time exceeds an agreed-upon grace period. Tracking detention fees and notifying carriers when their equipment is available is time consuming and unproductive.

An automated yard management system not only ensures that trailers are received in an order that minimizes detention time, but it also automatically notifies carriers once their equipment is available.

5. Optimized task management. Managing dedicated yard trucks is the largest direct cost area related to yard management. In contrast to forklift operations in the warehouse, most yard truck operations are essentially run haphazardly. The direct operating costs are a major concern. The ripple effect on the rest of the operation can often have an even greater impact on the business in both costs and missed service commitments.

Automated task management is where a strong yard system pays for itself. A system needs to identify when trailer moves can be eliminated—for example, unloaded trailers should be sent directly to a loading door when possible. Self-learning algorithms should be used to allocate trailer moves to the best driver based on their current performance. This level of automation minimizes the amount of empty distance yard drivers travel and ensures that the yard serves the business operation at the lowest possible cost.

Investing in technology focused on strategic aspects of your yard operation not only maximizes your return on investment but also ensures that your yard can sustain your company's growth. ∎

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YMS Guide

A yard management system (YMS) can provide significant benefits to your operation by managing shipments from the yard gate to the dock. Here's a short list of leading providers to help start your search.

C3 Solutions
www.c3solutions.com
514-315-3139

PRODUCT: C3 Yard

DESCRIPTION: Empowers yard managers by providing visibility on yard assets, optimizing the flow of trailers from gate to gate, and automating yard driver task assignment.

Cypress Inland Corporation
www.yardview.com
303-781-3430

PRODUCT: YardViewPro

DESCRIPTION: Provides dock scheduling, yard driver tasking and management, gate control and recording, automation, and visibility for all departments, customers, and carriers.

Descartes Systems Group
www.descartes.com
519-746-8110

PRODUCT: Descartes YMS

DESCRIPTION: Yard management and trailer tracking software that tracks trailer and content movement across locations and accesses trailer history, driver and yard activity.

Exotrac
www.exotrac.com
212-989-0171

PRODUCT: YardTrac Pro and Lite

DESCRIPTION: Comprehensive real−time YMS delivers high functionality and speed at an economical price point. Web and mobile applications suited to any vertical in the supply chain.

FourKites
www.fourkites.com
888-466-6958

PRODUCT: Dynamic Yard

DESCRIPTION: Gives enterprises the ability to proactively manage facilities based on real−time in−yard freight data and analytics. The system's data allows enterprises to reduce detention and demurrage costs, and optimize operations throughout all facilities company−wide.

Korber
www.koerber-supplychain.com
800-328-3271

PRODUCT: K.Motion YMS

DESCRIPTION: Enables users to track trailers, yard inventory, and movement between doors and yard for faster trailer turns and strategic staging by trailer type.

Made4net
www.made4net.com
201-645-4345

PRODUCT: Made4net YardExpert

DESCRIPTION: Tracks pertinent information for trailers, manages yard check in and wait times, and schedules and prioritizes dock assignments.

One Network Enterprises
www.onenetwork.com
866-302-1936

PRODUCT: One Network Yard Management System

DESCRIPTION: Provides gate−dock−gate real−time visibility of equipment and inventory. Optimally plans, executes, and audits loads synchronized to warehouse, dock−door scheduling, and demand priorities.

PINC Solutions
www.pinc.com/yard-management
877-511-PINC

PRODUCT: PINC Yard Management System

DESCRIPTION: Handles operational needs including inventory, workflow automation, carrier management, gate appointments, yard visibility, dock door scheduling, yard and shuttle trucks, metrics, and real−time location information.

Sentier Systems
www.yardcommander.com
866-503-4823

PRODUCT: Yard Commander

DESCRIPTION: A fully functional, budget friendly YMS that offers visibility to assets in the yard as well as historical data of asset transactions.

Yard Management Solutions
www.yardmanagementsolutions.com
800-766-6197

PRODUCT: Yard Management Solutions

DESCRIPTION: Constantly monitors every aspect of a yard operation to keep users updated on KPIs, employee performance, and potential problems. Provides dock scheduling, automatic gate entry systems, detention destroyer, real−time visibility of trailers, automated putaway and communications.

Zebra Technologies
www.zebra.com
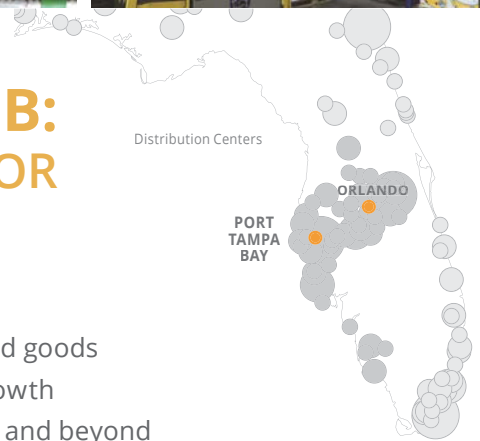*262-960-6108*

PRODUCT: MotionWorks Yard

DESCRIPTION: Helps create greater efficiencies by synchronizing yard operations, loading docks, and gate check−in and check−out with actionable and optional real−time location.