Why more and more food and drink wholesalers are implementing automated delivery management solutions to control their field operations

Wholesale delivery businesses are increasingly moving towards mobile technology to meet the time-sensitive and complex technical needs of the food and drink distribution industry.

The coordination and management of product inventory, delivery status, pricing and promotion strategies and customer account information creates a technological challenge for wholesale distributors. All of which can significantly affect profit margins.

To address the complexities of supply chain management processes, more and more food and drink distributors are implementing electronic, automated delivery management solutions to connect the dots between supplier and retailer, and between office staff and field/delivery workers.

Distributors are introducing mobile devices in the form of smartphones and tablets and, in some cases, more rugged devices, to automate data capture and streamline processes across their businesses.

So why are so many distributors in the food and drink sector implementing automated delivery management solutions to manage their field operations?

By streamlining operations and enabling effective communication across all parts of the business, distributors are enhancing efficiency, increasing productivity and growing profitability.

Many food and drink manufacturers and distributors will be already effectively managing logistics and supply chain processes with powerful warehouse management, ERP and accounting and route planning software and systems. However, whilst these systems may be integrated, there is often a missing link when it comes to visibility, data capture and control of in-the-field operations, mobile workforces and deliveries.

By instantly providing real-time customer order and route data at the touch of a button, distributors gain real-time visibility of the orders as they progress throughout the day, reducing the manual and costly admin associated with paper-based delivery processes.

The back office system links to the drivers' mobile devices and confirms the ETA for every future delivery based on the current driver progress and planned events. If a delivery becomes delayed or the ETA is beyond the customer's specified delivery window, the office team are alerted and can either reorder the planned route to prioritise an order, or contact the customer to inform them of a change of delivery time.

The delivery management solution by Mobile Enterprise Systems creates an end-to-end supply chain management solution for food and drink manufacturers and distributors. It can be fully integrated to existing accounting, ERP, WMS and TMS systems, as well as order processing software and any other business-critical applications. In fact, the solution can integrate with any application that supports import/export of data files, including homegrown and legacy systems.

Here's an overview of how the solution by Mobile Enterprise Systems operates for a food and drink distributor:

Each morning, drivers download their routes to their mobile devices, which are presented in drop-sequence. Throughout the day, as each delivery is completed, all delivery and transactional information is recorded directly onto the mobile device and this data is sent back to the office in real-time for instant processing.

Proof of delivery is recorded onto the mobile device with customer name and signature, and night drops and/or unattended deliveries can be recorded with photographic evidence.

In addition to sales, order and delivery data, the solution by Mobile Enterprise Systems can manage complex asset tracking (such as cages or trays left at customer sites), pre-booked and unplanned returns as well as cash payments, and full on-van stock control.

At the end of the day, drivers complete their end-of-day routines with full sales, cash and stock summary, including payment reconciliation.

Final word

By connecting delivery workers and office-based staff in real-time, providing them with the ability to exchange information quickly and instantly, distributors are not only able to more efficiently communicate with and monitor their delivery workforce, but they are also able to provide better quality of service to customers.

In addition, businesses maintain greater control of product inventory, payment and credit control, delivery status and progress against schedule and customer support services.

Find out more

Mobile Enterprise Systems is the leading supplier of electronic proof of delivery software providing a configurable and scalable, end-to-end solution allowing businesses with mobile workforces to benefit from advanced levels of responsiveness, performance and profitability.

If you're looking for a complete, powerful and adaptable EPOD system, get in touch for a free demo today. Call us on +44 (0)117 3250505 or email info@mobile-enterprise.co.uk and for more information visit www.routemagic.co.uk