

Tecumseh Tunes Up Tech Stack With Aptean TMS



tecumseh



Industry

Discrete Manufacturing

Challenges

- » Limited software functionality with web-based TMS
- » Invoice variances requiring manual resolution
- » Limited visibility of data and analytics on a global scale

Benefits

- » Comprehensive carrier selection and management features
- » Accurate invoicing and fully managed freight audit-and-pay
- » Total accessibility of key data and robust reporting

For nearly a century, Tecumseh has been helping customers keep it cool. Known for providing high-quality compressors, condensing units, evaporators, coolers and chillers for food service, food retail, residential and mobile applications, the discrete manufacturer is trusted for its reliable equipment and commitment to sustainability.

Headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the company has its main manufacturing and distribution center in Verona, Mississippi, with additional locations in Canada, Malaysia, China, India, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, France and Brazil. To say that Tecumseh's supply chains are complex is an understatement, and the company's transportation management system (TMS) needed an upgrade to provide the required visibility and control.

That got Brett Wallace, logistics manager, on the hunt for an upgrade. After hearing about Aptean TMS from industry peers, he started an exploratory dialogue with the provider to better understand how well the solution fit Tecumseh's processes. He was impressed by what he learned.

"I wanted an all-inclusive, one-stop-shop," Wallace said. "Aptean TMS was the only system that I found that could do everything I wanted. And I even tried at times—I came up with crazy questions just to see if they would say 'no.' I only got 'no' to one question, so I told them I'd let it slide since they said 'yes' to everything else."

Now, with the system successfully implemented at the Mississippi facility, the results speak for themselves. The full story demonstrates how Aptean TMS provides the advanced capabilities needed for modern logistics operations, as well as the power of collaboration between business and software provider.





Challenges: Limited Functionality and Invoice Discrepancies

The web-based TMS previously in use at Tecumseh had only basic features, so it sufficed for a while. However, it didn't provide rates for shipments to the organization's Canada warehouse, and it offered no auditing of freight bills, resulting in additional manual steps to maintain process accuracy.

Another issue was that high cost area charges were not being factored into pricing, creating discrepancies between the freight invoice and stated freight charge. These discrepancies required manual review, increasing the cost of invoice reconciliation.

Additionally, Tecumseh's logistics needs required a platform that supports dynamic pricing to take advantage of potential savings. What's more, the company needed a TMS that can easily and intuitively provide critical data and reports to monitor logistics costs and KPIs. Aptean TMS offered a solution for both of these critical requirements.



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Experience: Collaboration for a Smooth Implementation

Wallace's conversations with Aptean's team were convincing enough, but he admits to having some hesitation going into the implementation process. It can bring with it unanticipated problems, extended timelines and high stress if the company and software provider don't work together and maintain open communication. Of course, that wasn't the case for Tecumseh.

"Aptean did everything. They exceeded my expectations," Wallace said. "The implementation was great. Aptean staff came here and helped us a lot. They showed us how the system works, and they showed us the future. When we want to go farther with it, we know how much more it can do."

Speaking of going further, there's an ongoing dialogue between Tecumseh and Aptean regarding which functionalities of the TMS will be rolled out next. Besides taking advantage of dynamic pricing support, Wallace is also considering managing air and ocean freight with the system, tracking by part number and commercial invoice creation.



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"There are a number of features that we could utilize that we're not taking advantage of," said Wallace. "At the time that we implemented, we weren't really prepared to do all that Aptean had in mind, but they did a great job explaining what was possible to us."





Benefits: Less Manual Work, Greater Insight and Time Savings

Early returns from the system are already coming in. The robust feature set checks all of Tecumseh's boxes. And because Aptean's TMS product is fully managed, invoice discrepancies are handled by the provider's team. That means far less manual resolution of mismatched charges is required and unpaid invoices with extra fees don't pile up.

"One of the things that I really like is that when we get an invoice that doesn't match, they don't just tell me it doesn't match—they actually try to figure out the issue and resolve it," said Wallace. "That's wonderful. That's part of my job taken care of. And when I'm not messing with that, I may be able to find something else I can save money on."

Meanwhile, audits against contract and spot quotes are regularly performed to ensure costs are accurate, and dynamic pricing is enabled. Deriving insights from data is facilitated with built-in analytics. Wallace has already negotiated multiple rate decreases by leveraging the greater price visibility and is now targeting six key performance indicators (KPIs) for improvement with the goal of establishing a trend line in the right direction.

What's more, Tecumseh employees are able to save valuable time thanks to process automations. Aptean TMS calculates charges based on the latest changes, including freight added to prepaid orders, so doing the math manually is no longer necessary. Daily reports with the prior day's bills of lading are automatically generated and disseminated every morning, alleviating the shipping clerks of that task and promoting visibility.



"There's a lot more information and a lot more reporting in the system, and it's easy to read and understand. It's great—it's been a gamechanger. It helps me do my job."

Brett Wallace, Logistics Manager, Tecumseh

Outlook: Expanded Rollout and Continued Partnership

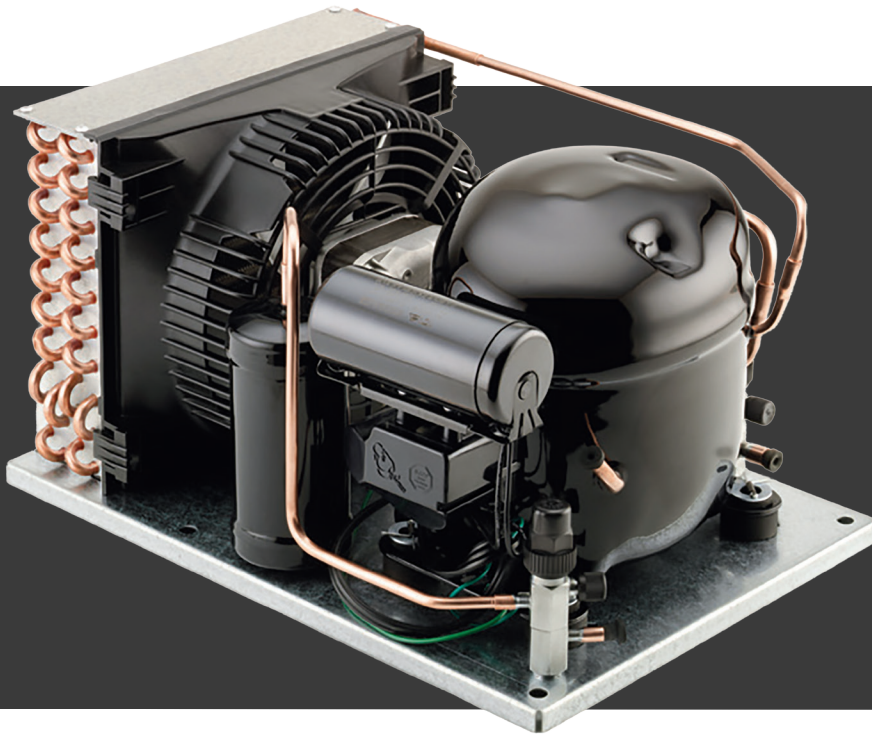
As evidenced by its many locations around the world, Tecumseh is a global company. Wallace is confident that Aptean TMS can serve the organization on that level and plans to extend the system to other facilities to unite the different teams with one platform.

“My grand plan is to get this going here and then roll it out everywhere else,” Wallace said. “We’ve got plants in India, France and Brazil, and I know Aptean can support all those locations. Eventually, we want everybody working on the same system. The flow of information will be so much better.”

As far as best practices for other businesses considering an upgrade to a new system, Wallace recommends doing what he did and asking current customers of the solutions you’re considering for their honest opinions. From there, you can work with the providers to assess the fit of their offerings with your company’s needs.

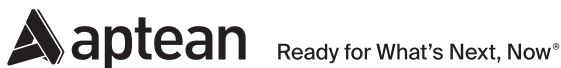
“I talked to as many people as I could, and I heard great things,” he said. “But I was still scared to make the jump, because if this didn’t work, there was going to be egg on my face. It sounded too good to be true. But everything Aptean said the software can do, it can do it.”

With Aptean TMS, Tecumseh has full control over logistics operations and is ready to accelerate into another century of success.



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