

Partnerlink

On the Road to Deliver Accurate
Freight Tracking with Aptean Routing
& Scheduling

Industry

Road Haulage & Distribution

Challenges

- » Transporting over 12,000 pallets a week with a fleet size of over 1,700 trucks
- » Limited visibility of freight movement across partner networks
- » Manual, time-consuming processes to track consignments and chase deliveries

Benefits


- » Track freight in real-time regardless of delivery handler
- » Reduce time and cost to track consignments
- » Improved customer communications to inform on delivery status
- » Happier drivers and increased driver retention levels



Partnerlink is a freight-sharing network that offers the efficient and direct movement of freight to its ultimate destination. Working on a point-to-point basis, the network eliminates multiple handling and wasted miles that occur when operating a traditional hub and spoke distribution arrangement.

Partnerlink reaches all four corners of the UK, offering strong regional distribution and excellent customer service for its users. The partners within the network share knowledge, resources, and values that allow them to deliver the very highest solutions with the very best customer service.

The network has six key shareholders: Knights of Old, AK Worthington, Viamaster, David Hathaway Transport, John G Russell and R Swain & Sons. It moves approximately 12,000 pallets weekly, has 1,700 trucks and 500 trailers in the UK, four million square feet of warehousing, 3,500 employees and a combined turnover of around £375 million per annum.



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John Davidson, Managing Director, Partnerlink



Tracking freight

Central to maintaining customer service across the network was the requirement to track freight across the partner organizations, regardless of which partner was transporting it to its final destination.

John Davidson, managing director at Partnerlink explains, “To a degree, the pallet industry has followed the parcel industry, and in our own daily lives, we know how accurate receiving parcels can be in terms of tracking. You get a text message narrowing delivery time down to the exact hour in some cases, and that makes for very happy customers. Knowledge is power.”

“We wanted the ability to be able to accurately track freight across the network,” explains Davidson. “So much of a logistics company’s time is spent chasing deliveries over the phone. A customer would call and ask where the freight is and when it would be arriving, and in turn, we’d have to call the partner organizations, and they would need to call the drivers. It could take as many as three or four phone calls to locate the pallet, and the customer would be getting more and more frustrated chasing his consignment.”

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The solution

Partnerlink recognized the need to invest significantly and realized that the smaller carriers within the network wouldn't want to invest in expensive hand-held hardware for their drivers to capture delivery status. So, they began identifying those technology providers who could offer the solution on an Android device.

The chosen software solution had to provide the ability to communicate with the office, capture signatures and be future proof. Android provides benefits that Microsoft Windows solutions couldn't. Including the ability to deploy rugged devices, having a low or high-cost device and a large screen for ease of use for drivers.

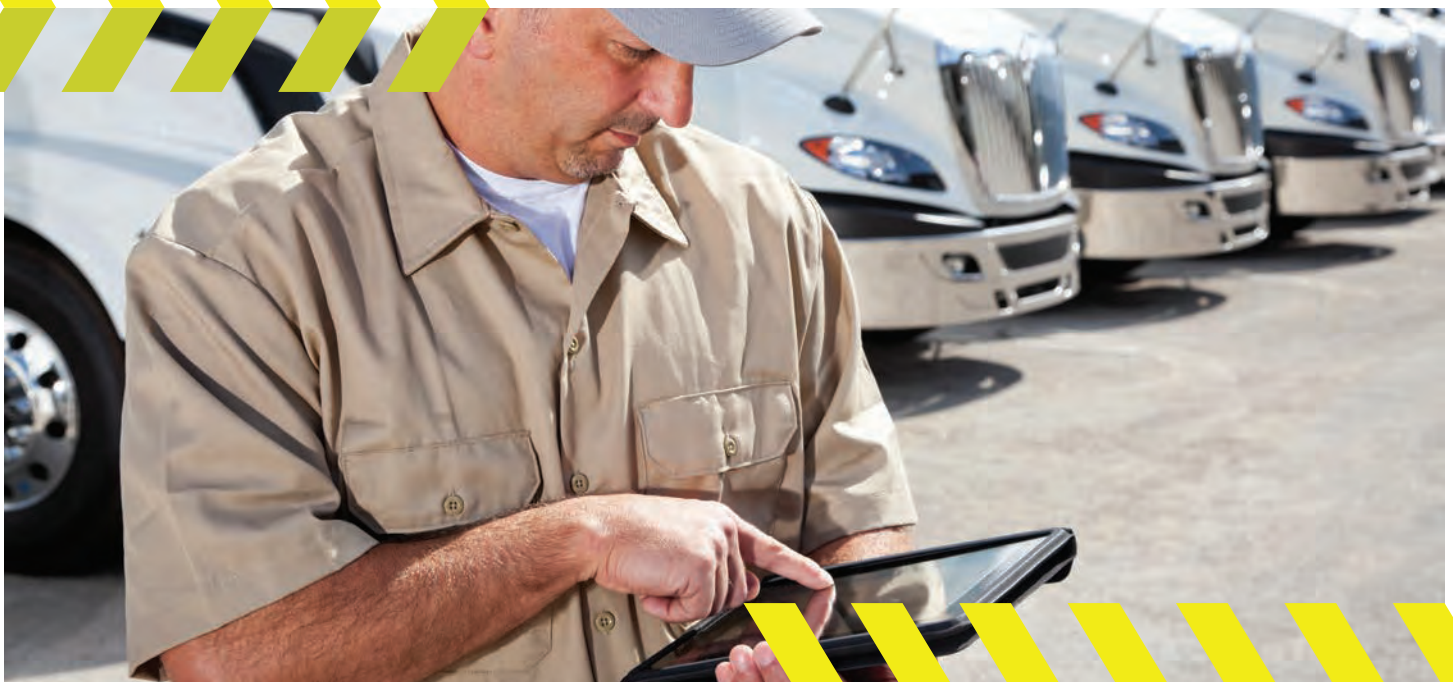
"Aptean Routing & Scheduling *Calidus Edition* provided the solutions we'd been looking for and was clearly ahead of the marketplace. We can now see the signatures of those who have signed for consignments, and we no longer need to call up and ask who signed for it when chasing a delivery," explains John Davidson.

The software sends the driver's location back to the Aptean server, and with the help of each driver's manifest, it can estimate when the driver will be at the drops within that run. It also provides a predicted delivery status via a traffic light system; green, amber and red – showing how late consignments are running.

For the network partner, it's easy to see where the vehicles are, where the freight in question is, with which partner and if they're on time or running late. Where delivery has been made, the system updates across the network so that all parties can see the status – reducing the need for any freight chasing within the network.

"When we chased deliveries on the phone, we used to say that in an ideal world, you'd take the phone receiver of the customer's incoming call to chase a delivery and put it next to the phone receiver of the outgoing call to the driver so they could speak – and essentially that's what the technology is doing," explains John Davidson.

"Aptean's ePOD and TTM software is cutting edge technology that saves our partners so much time by eliminating the leg work to track freight and providing real-time information to keep customers happy," said Davidson.





Benefits

The benefits of the new solution are four-fold. There is much less cost to the network in terms of both times and the cost of telephone calls to track down consignments. The traffic light system via the arrivals and departures board provides the information needed at the touch of a button to better inform customers when they can expect their freight to arrive.

This led to a redeployment of personnel who can now focus on providing proactive customer service instead of firefighting, making much better use of their time.

The information now available at the network's fingertips also means that network members can pre-empt any problems and inform the customer accordingly before they need to chase it up.

John Davidson explains, "This keeps us ahead of the game. Customers are rarely annoyed that the consignment is late – simply that they didn't know it was and were unable to plan accordingly. If we contact them and tell them it's running late, it takes the wind out of their sails, and they are much happier knowing before it causes them any problems. We have noticed that our customers are happier, and we have received hardly any complaints since the software has been implemented."

The final benefit is that it keeps the drivers happy.

“The industry finds it hard to retain drivers. It’s a stressful job, and driver retention is a massive industry issue – we fight hard to keep our drivers happy. The pressure is phenomenal in an industry that has tight time and profit margins. Reducing the number of calls to the drivers to chase deliveries takes an enormous amount of pressure off and helps retention,” explains Davidson.

And one benefit they’re preparing for the future is better customer ETAs.

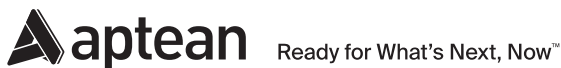
“I suspect the way the industry’s going is to be able to email the customer with an exact ETA narrowed down to the hour of when they can expect delivery of their freight – much like we’ve come to expect from our online grocery shopping or parcels. We’re well on the road to being able to provide that to our customers,” concludes Davidson.



Are You Ready to Learn More?

Aptean Routing & Scheduling can help improve your transportation operation. Find out how, now.

Contact us at info@aptean.com or visit www.aptean.com.



About Aptean

Aptean is one of the world’s leading providers of industry-specific software. Our enterprise resource planning and supply chain solutions are uniquely designed to meet the needs of specialized manufacturers and distributors, while our compliance solutions serve specific markets such as finance and life sciences. With both cloud and on-premise deployment options, Aptean’s products, services and unmatched expertise help businesses of all sizes, across many industries, to scale and succeed.

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