

Delivering flexibility and visibility to Albany with 3T DOCK



Introduction

Albany have a complex set of time critical transport requirements due to the nature of their business. The organisation, based in the North West of England, buy domestic consumer products from suppliers located throughout the UK and Europe. These are sold on to a wide variety of customers with multiple RDCs.

Importantly the on-sale and delivery of products can be agreed prior to goods being picked up. Following collection by a network of regional carriers goods are cross-docked and / or stored with Albany's principle 3rd party provider; Archbold Logistics. Archbold also take responsibility for delivery to the final destination. Goods are often dispatched on the day they arrive and delivery, particularly into the RDCs associated with the multiples, is subject to rigorous on time performance monitoring.

Albany therefore require a great deal of flexibility from their logistics operation, rigorous adherence to late advised schedules and excellent communication throughout in order to meet their customer's expectations and avoid late penalties. The focus of attention is very much on the crucial Hub operation managed by Archbold in Heywood, Lancashire, to ensure the efficient transfer of goods in and out.

A lack of visibility

Despite the best efforts of all parties involved, in the past, the operation of the Hub function has still suffered greatly from a lack of real time visibility between the three principle groups;

1. The Albany operations team agreeing the purchase, collection and sale of the products.

The Albany team had an incomplete understanding of when their chosen hauliers were due to be with Archbold, when they had actually arrived and when unloading was complete and the goods available for despatch. This resulted in the Albany team making multiple phone calls per order chasing hauliers and Archbold for information to ensure sales were completed.

2. The in-bound hauliers picking up goods from source and delivering into Archbold's warehouse.

Without a consistent view of available delivery slots the hauliers were booking into Archbold blind. They were then left without a record of the agreed times or an understanding what other activity might be happening on the site which might affect their ability to depart on time. They often felt that they were treated as second best to the needs of the Archbold operation causing some friction in the relationship.

3. Archbold Logistics operating the warehousing and transport to the final destination.

Archbold had an issue capturing the inbound delivery performance of suppliers and keeping Albany informed in a fair and amicable way. Past conversations on the subject were often data free and anecdotal. Also because neither the hauliers nor Albany had an understanding of the overall activity at the Heywood site, nor Archbold any means of managing capacity other than manual spreadsheets, this often resulted in peaks and troughs in demand on both a daily and weekly basis. This made it impossible for Archbold to manage their warehousing resources effectively especially as volumes increased and began to reach capacity for the site.



The 3T DOCK process

The cloud based 3T DOCK solution allows all three groups to share exactly the same, unbiased, real time, view of the Archbold hub operation.

The process is quite simple;

1. When Albany agree the collection of goods from a supplier a message is automatically sent from Albany's management system to the assigned haulier partner via 3T's DOCK system.
2. This message contains all of the relevant collection information for the haulier including order number, collection address and the latest delivery date and time to be at Archbold
3. The haulier receives this information as an email with a link to their 3T web portal to enable them to book their preferred delivery slot based on delivery requirements and availability.
4. Bays and delivery slots are customised to Albany's business requirements and Archbold's planned resource. Slots can be restricted or split by Archbold to provide additional flexibility.
5. The haulier can review available slots for any period but is restricted to the booking information for their own orders and can only book up until the required delivery time.
6. As deliveries arrive the Archbold warehouse team simply click through a process to time stamp a vehicle / order number's arrival, unloading and departure from site. This colour codes the activity for all users and highlights exceptions.
7. Albany can monitor activity, manage the process by exception and extract KPI data for any period and for any set of parameters directly from the DOCK system.

Discernible benefits

Vastly improved communication through the shared view of the Hub operation and dramatically more effective use of time and resources have been the principle benefits of the 3T DOCK solution.

Albany in particular have noticed the reduction in non-value adding phone calls made by their operations team chasing deliveries into Archbold. They have clarity of when orders are due to arrive so can plan future deliveries with confidence. Changes and updates to the schedule are uniformly made in real time, up until the agreed cut-off, avoiding miss communication. When orders arrive Albany are immediately informed and, with confidence in the process, can manage by exception. This has meant that the same team can comfortably cope with increasing volumes and focus on maintaining the relationships they enjoy with their customers.

Gareth McKevitt from Albany said "The system has noticeably reduced the amount of phone calls we make chasing information from suppliers. This has freed up time and removed a lot of frustration from our day. The whole business can function more smoothly"

Just as importantly Albany's relationship with their suppliers has improved as the DOCK tool has provided a platform for all groups to adhere to an agreed process. Shared visibility, access to the system and consistent KPI measures have removed any potential inconsistencies allowing the focus to be on solving real issues in a more collaborative environment.

Hauliers have found the solution both easy to use and to provide direct benefits. By securing their own booking slots carriers can manage the process to make backhaul collections also guarantee their off load time through adherence to the DOCK schedule.

Seabo, one of Albany's preferred hauliers said that: "After running through the process a couple of times, it was very simple and straight forward to follow... It's very good and a useful tool as it eradicates emails and calls – it's all done through a single platform. Clear training videos were provided by 3t, helping to make it simple to use"

Management of resources and the smooth running inbound and outbound activities have been the principle benefits to Archbold. Between them Albany and Archbold forecast the number of slots required for the business and Archbold provide resources accordingly. If capacity is reached for any given day loads can be prioritised and less time critical orders moved out to smooth demand. Additionally inbound and outbound requirements can be balanced so that available slots are utilised for the most time sensitive activities. Regular activities such as scheduled collections and shift changes can be fixed into the schedule in advance.

Alan Maher from Archbold said; "The system has brought discipline and structure to the process to cope with an increase in volume and provide visibility of inbound demand."

The 3T DOCK Application



To find out how 3T can help your organisation, please:

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