

Web-based freight management now affordable for all

The internet has made all the difference for small and medium-sized companies in the domestic freight forwarding industry with the advent of web-based transport management systems (TMS).

Initially, smaller operators were out in the cold, unable to afford the cost of TMS software. However, thanks to SaaS (software as a service) and cloud-based offerings, TMS implementations are now more accessible and affordable. Advancement of web-based SaaS products such as New Zealand's iCOS LIVE (internet cargo operating system) have dramatically reduced upfront costs and implementations, which can be completed in days, not the months it took only a few years ago. Cloud-based solutions are also far less complex, requiring less involvement from IT experts, and are easier to learn for front-office and logistics staff, including the drivers. And with web-based products such as iCOS LIVE there are no user licences. This means transport operators can bring their customers, internal users and drivers onto the system for no extra cost. iCOS LIVE's SaaS web-based product also permits clients to have unlimited users.

Absolute transparency

Another significant advantage of web-based freight management programmes is the absolute transparency it offers users – from management to the person behind the wheel, all have complete understanding of what they do, every day, at all hours. And with online access via tablets and smartphones, the reality of full transparency has evolved to include real-time activities, where even transport operators' clients have knowledge of where their freight items are in the greater scheme of domestic freight.

Consigned to the past are warehouse managers creating run sheets, paper dockets and handwriting labels, along with the time-consuming communication to and fro with the transport operator advising the when, where



With iCOS LIVE, freight jobs are displayed electronically in real time, showing every step of the journey from being booked through to proof of delivery



and how of consignment pickups, as well as chasing all those queries: 'Where is my freight?' and 'Has it been delivered yet?'

A super-smart online transport and logistics management system, iCOS LIVE has put paid to the screeds of consignment notes (if one ever salvaged them all from one's drivers) and delivery-specific instructions – the list is as daunting as it is endless. iCOS LIVE has done away with all the drudgery, allowing transport owners and their customers to take better stock of their day-to-day operations and manage their customers' businesses' shipping requirements as it was intended.

Freight management in real time

Distributors with their own fleets can sign up to iCOS LIVE for their transport and logistics management in their own right, or better still, have their transport

operators do that on their behalf – the advantages and cost savings are immense.

Being a SaaS web-based product, iCOS LIVE has no user licences, which means transport operators can have unlimited customers on their system. iCOS LIVE provides the ability to book job orders online or, even more advantageously, allows a user's internal IT department to send orders directly out of their own ERP systems electronically, saving resource at their end.

Jobs are highly visible on their own secure display, showing status movement as it takes place. A mapping view shows each step of the journey, from booked through to delivered, with proof of deliveries, date, timestamp, longitudes and latitudes. The proof of delivery can also be sent back electronically to the distributor's internal ERP system. They, in turn, can 'customer service' their customers, without making phone calls to their transport operator.

If the distributor uses several transport operators throughout the country all subscribing to iCOS LIVE, those companies can be 'LIVE linked' together so they



become an extension of each other, offering the distributor total transparency.

Return on investment

The return on investment for transport operators through iCOS LIVE is that their clients are locked into them, also reducing their resources and saving on outgoings. Phone noise in dispatch is reduced to a minimum – all pickups and deliveries are displayed on an affordable electronic tablet device – there's no need to phone the drivers.

Having total transparency for all customers, and for the business as a whole, from anywhere in New Zealand or the world via the internet 24/7, gives everyone involved the assurance that freight movement, no matter what it is, is fully visible. That can only give you and your customer more time to enjoy life.

For further information, contact sales@icoslive.com (quote reference ftd3005)