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CASE STUDY

TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

Estes Express Lines

Speedy document delivery streamlines business process

CHALLENGE

- Lacked an efficient method for transmitting volumes of Delivery Receipts (DR) and Bills of Lading (BOL)
- Needed to eliminate expense of mailing or trucking paper documents to headquarters
- Current scanning solution did not allow previewing of scanned documents
- Rapid business growth surpassed lifecycle of existing scanning equipment

STRATEGY

- Worked with IT consulting firm to develop customized imaging solution through strategic alliance with eCopy and IKON, now being rolled out nationwide
- Installed eCopy ScanStations on IKON supported multifunction peripherals (MFPs)
- Custom user screen allows employees to easily scan DRs or BOLs based on document size
- Additional custom option allows users to print cover page at end of scanning process for batch identification

RESULTS

- Simplified scanning process required little to no training, and custom help feature significantly decreases the chance of human error
- Users are required to log in at the device, allowing for audit trails

- Improved productivity due to more efficient scanning process - headquarters can instantly generate invoices
- eCopy ScanStations are easily monitored from remote location so adjustments can be made if necessary

ABOUT ESTES EXPRESS LINES

The Great Depression in the United States was a very unlikely time to start a business. But in 1931, an entrepreneur named W.W. Estes bought one used Chevrolet truck and established a small, local trucking business hauling farm produce and supplies in Southside Virginia. From that tenuous beginning, Estes Express Lines grew into a major motor freight carrier that even now bears W.W.'s name. The Estes family still owns and operates the company, but the intervening 75 years have brought dramatic transformation. Estes Express Lines has become one of the fastest growing multiregional, less-than-truckload (LTL) and truckload transportation systems in the country. More than 13,500 Estes employees and 27,000 trucks and trailers serve the United States and the Caribbean.

“By using eCopy in conjunction with our other systems, we have shortened our invoicing cycles significantly. Now invoices and accompanying documentation are available to corporate, and customer billing issues can be resolved more rapidly.”

— James Baker
Manager of Rapid Response
Estes Express Lines/ EDPS.

ESTES NEEDED A BETTER SOLUTION FOR DELIVERY OF BILLS OF LADING AND DELIVERY RECEIPTS...

Every Estes transaction requires two key documents: a customer-generated Bill of Lading (BOL) and an Estes-generated Delivery Receipt (DR). Each BOL contains information such as delivery contact information, type of freight, weight, number of pieces, destination and special

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handling instructions. Delivery Receipts are an Estes-designed standard form containing very similar information to the BOL. The most significant information on the DR is the customer's signature confirming delivery of freight. When completed, the paper receipts must then be transmitted to headquarters for processing, since Estes stores copies of both documents for future uses such as invoicing the customer.

In order to eliminate the need to mail or truck paper documents to its headquarters, in 2002 Estes implemented an electronic delivery process developed by dp Systems for Bills of Lading and Delivery Receipts. The solution worked very well when first implemented. As time progressed, issues were identified that the current solution did not address. It did not provide immediate previewing capabilities of scanned documents, which in turn caused additional problems. Also, disaster recovery scenarios were not taken into account. These issues were compounded by Estes' business growth and the end of its existing scanning equipment lifecycle.

DP SYSTEMS CUSTOMIZED AND DEVELOPED AN IMAGING SOLUTION THAT INCLUDED ECOPY AND IKON...

To that end, Estes worked with its IT consulting firm, dp Systems, to research various technologies available on the market. dp Systems tested and reviewed many imaging solutions by some of the industry's leading hardware and software providers. After this research was conducted, the findings indicated that no solution meeting LTL industry needs existed at the current time. So dp Systems customized and developed an imaging solution by creating a strategic alliance with eCopy and IKON, utilizing an IKON-supported multifunction printer (MFP) equipped with an eCopy ScanStation. Estes was especially intrigued by the demonstration four primary components:

- A user screen on all MFPs contains two buttons-BOL and DR- allowing users to easily start the scanning process based on the document types being scanned.
- A delayed send feature allows scanned images to be stored on the eCopy ScanStation for transmission to headquarters when network traffic is light and the headquarters' server is available. (This also addresses some disaster recovery issues.)
- A customized instruction button for the eCopy touch screen gives users access to graphic help instructions specific to the tasks they are performing on the system. For example, Bills of Lading come in various sizes, and a user may not be sure how to position one on the glass for scanning. With the instruction feature, the user can simply push a button and a photo of a correctly - positioned Bill of Lading will appear.
- A customized option automatically prints a cover page at the end of the process. The user then places the cover page with all of the Bills of Lading and Delivery Receipts that have been scanned in that batch for identification purposes as they are prepared for physical storage.

ESTES EXPRESS LINES HAS BEEN DELIGHTED WITH THE PROPOSED IMAGING SOLUTION...

Utilizing the new MFP's for scanning allows the end users to scan much more quickly-making them more productive. The company headquarters immediately receives the high quality scans of Bills of Lading and Delivery Receipts and can generate customer invoices instantly, significantly shortening the payment cycle. Baker adds, "The imaging solution is so easy to use that it requires very little training. That is extremely important to us with our distributed network and the number of employees who must use the system." For quality assurance purposes, the imaging solution allows Rapid Response to remotely monitor all of the eCopy ScanStations, manually adjusting image quality levels if deemed necessary upon a review of scan quality. "Its customized help feature means a significant decrease in human error, and with eCopy's preview feature, we have reduced the amount of rescan documents due to poor quality images, further improving our overall productivity," said Baker. "The best thing about this project was that everyone came together as a team: IKON, eCopy, dp Systems. The end result was a better capture system for the customer. Their previous system did not have quality control or image preview, and adding those capabilities improved the entire workflow." Marc Klein, Systems Analyst for IKON Office Solutions

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