CASE STUDY

Transportation

ADR-Haanpaa Loads Their Trucks With Chemicals And Xplore's Rugged Tablet PC's

ADR-Haanpaa is a leading logistics company in Finland providing transportation services for various chemicals including both hazardous and non-hazardous goods. The history of the company dates back to 1949, when the founder of the company, Jussi Haanpaa, established the company in Oulu, a city in northern Finland and began providing timber transportation services for the local forest industry. Currently the company has operations throughout Finland, Sweden, Norway and Estonia, employs over 900 people and has around 500 trucks in its fleet. ADR-Haanpaa focuses on the transportation of special, liquid chemicals. Therefore the safety requirements are significantly more stringent than for a normal shipment. It is imperative that advanced operations control systems are in place, with equipment that meets the standards, well-trained personnel and an ISO-approved quality system.

Around the millennium ADR-Haanpaa expanded its operations to Sweden through an acquisition as part of a strategic growth program. They needed a system that would connect the trucks to the company's business systems. The company was not unfamiliar with fleet management systems, but they had used vehicle-mounted terminals in their trucks in Finland for two years. ADR-Haanpaa looked for a powerful, versatile computer, which would support the new operation control system called Freight®, developed by Procomp Solutions, that was planned to be used in Sweden.

The centralized freight tracking system allows drivers and other personnel at the office to communicate freight information quickly and consistently. In Sweden, the trucks typically deliver the load during a single trip to various locations – they dip the load -, while in Finland the truck is usually loaded and fully unloaded at a single customer location. A complex distribution chain required an upgraded operation controls system and newer technology to support future computing needs.

After determining that a rugged, mobile computer system was optimal, the company evaluated various computing devices. *"Ease of use, durability and reliability were the key factors that influenced us to choose Xplore's iX104RD tablets*", summarizes Petri Tirkkonen, the technical director from ADR-Haanpaa. The company wanted a compact computer with a display size that would interact well with the new software. As soon as the haulage reaches the destination depot, the driver communicates this information to the office by using the tablet. *"The software tailored for us has icons for loading and unloading which the driver simply clicks with his finger. The touch screen and a display size with ease of use for the driver are important features for us*", clarifies Tirkkonen. As the locals know, the weather can be extremely cold during the winter time, when -20° C is not unusual and the temperature fluctuates considerably. Xplore's MIL-STD 810F tested tablets are a reliable choice for such an environment.

The Freight® operation control system is used to transfer orders received centrally directly to remote drivers and track the delivery process in real time. It allows fast and accurate communication across the company's internal network, between the office and driver, and also between the individual drivers. In addition to the truckers' schedules and fleet management, the Freight® system is used for the drivers' payroll service. The system records the freight deliveries, the time when the truck is loaded and unloaded, and sends the information to the central system where the payroll clerk will access it. The new version of the Freight® system allows location tracking of the fleet and more importantly geographic information systems from mapping software by Global Positioning System (GPS).

Currently ADR-Haanpaa has deployed 150 units of Xplore's iX104RD tablets and active xDock vehicle docking stations. The tablets are mounted to the trucks and have a USB keyboard and external modem connected to the docking station. When using the Tablet PC the drivers primarily use the touch screen for inputting information and the keyboard is used as a secondary input device. The computing system can be also used for voice communication, as the drivers have the ability to use the external modem as a phone.

ADR-Haanpaa refer to themselves as a liquid link between producers and users of chemicals. In addition to transportation services in Finland, where the company is a market leader in its industry, Sweden and Norway, ADR-Haanpaa connects Scandinavia to pan-European markets by providing transportation services to the Baltic countries. The majority of the customers come from the forest & paper, chemistry and oil industries. The company transports chemicals such as gas, acids, sodium, hydrogen, water purification chemicals and latex.

The major benefits the company has achieved with the Freight® operation control system and Xplore tablets are control of the company's assets and high levels of accuracy through the process. *"When the information is entered into the system once, it is available there for the driver, the office or whoever may need it and leaves no room for errors that could occur if no such centralized system was in place. Details such as whom the driver should contact at the destination, possible special safety considerations and equipment needed is all recorded into the system. Also, we have achieved considerable efficiency with the payroll process, as itemized details of the work each driver has completed is sent to the office from the in-vehicle computer",* states Tirkkonen. By upgrading to a rugged, mobile computing system, the company has eliminated problems that result from a manual or less capable automated system.

Instant communication has proven valuable. The company can directly communicate with the drivers to efficiently adjust routes, schedule additional pick-ups and be alerted to emergency situations. In a case of long-haulage when drivers are on the road for extended periods of time, it is crucial to be able to track the progress of trucks and shipments and to communicate real-time with the drivers whenever needed. Drivers also enjoy the benefits of being able to transmit shipment details and status immediately.

The system not only provides some clear benefits to the company, but improved operating effectiveness and quality of service to the customers.