

# Going Paperless Heightens Delivery Performance



As a wholesale distributor of building materials serving 12 states with 60 locations, Homer Glen, IL-based Richards Building Supply (RBS) invested in route planning and delivery software to help ensure consistent, on-time delivery to its growing customer base. Using the Descartes route planning and execution solution, the company has been able to automate delivery route planning, and proof-of-delivery (POD) to heighten the delivery experience and improve delivery performance—especially critical during the peak summer season.

“The new Richards Building Supply proof-of-delivery is great for our business. It assures us that materials were delivered in a timely fashion and provides reassurance that, when my crew shows up to the job site, all materials are there and ready for them to begin the project. Great addition to an already exceptional customer-service based company.”

**Eric Shaffer**, Archway Restoration

## Company Profile

Richards Building Supply  
Wholesale distributor of building material

## Descartes Solution

Route Planning, Execution and Mobile

## About the Client

Founded in 1978 in Chicago, Richards Building Supply is a family-owned, wholesale distributor of building material serving 12 states with 60 locations. Richards stocks a comprehensive line of products such as residential and commercial roofing, siding, windows, decking, soffit, doors, moulding, rainware, cabinets, and more.

Visit [www.richards-supply.com](http://www.richards-supply.com) for more information.

## Quick Overview

### Challenge

Optimizing Processes for Improved Customer Satisfaction

### Solution

Making Last Mile Delivery a Priority

### Results

- Real-time Delivery Route Planning
- Enhanced Customer Service
- Paperless Proof-of-delivery
- Updates on Mobile Devices

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## Challenge:

### Optimizing Processes for Improved Customer Satisfaction

Contractors' delivery expectations have changed. Lead times on orders are often less than 24 hours. Some orders need to go out the same day, and others to specific delivery windows. Lack of real-time visibility meant there were limitations in adapting to external conditions requiring urgent response. Plus, paper-based proof of delivery is fraught with illegible details and lost paperwork meant claims could become an obstacle to delivering outstanding customer service .

## Solution:

### Making Last Mile Delivery a Priority

RBS is deploying the Descartes route planning solution on a branch-by-branch basis throughout its operations. The Descartes solution combines scheduling, delivery route planning and execution, proof-of-delivery, automated pre- and post-delivery notification services, and imaging functionality into a comprehensive platform that can transform distribution operations.

"With the Descartes solution, we now have real-time visibility into deliveries as they are made—and proof of delivery when customers receive their orders," explains Nicholas Chesna, Fleet Assistant Manager, RBS. "We are in a much stronger position to drive realistic and reliable delivery schedules, increase the number of deliveries we can make each day, and ensure delivery windows are tightly coordinated with customer requirements."

Real-time updates from GPS-tracked vehicles provides visibility into driver availability, the status of deliveries throughout the day and the ability to notify customers of delivery progress. "It's far easier to keep customers informed during the day and we can easily change orders if needed. This has been instrumental to us and to our customers when weather interferes with planned work and the associated planned deliveries."

By optimizing scheduling and delivery processes, RBS is also getting more capacity out of its vehicles. "We can better manage customer orders for our diverse product mix in vehicles of appropriate sizes and with appropriate capabilities," notes Chesna. By ensuring the right product is loaded onto the right truck—and unloaded properly at the job site—the solution is also helping RBS to reduce the number of delivery challenges. "Going paperless for delivery has been a win for our company and, more importantly, for our customers."

## Results:



### Real-time Delivery Route Planning

By replacing traditional paper-based route planning with technology, RBS can now plan deliveries, optimize routes, and communicate with drivers and customers in a completely paperless environment. With more intelligent route planning, RBS has improved on time delivery performance.



### Enhanced Customer Service

By implementing technology that helps the company run more efficiently while better serving customers, RBS has enhanced on-time delivery performance for commercial and residential customers alike.



### Paperless Proof-of-delivery

With mobile devices, Richards' drivers now use digital pictures to verify that the right materials, in the right quantities, in the right condition, were delivered at the right place and time. It gets drivers back on the road quicker to meet other delivery windows and helps drive up the number of deliveries per day.



### Updates on Mobile Devices

Richards' drivers access delivery schedules using a mobile device. GPS information is received every few minutes to provide RBS with full visibility into vehicle locations to monitor delivery times against customer expectations. With mobile technology, contractors also know exactly what material has arrived and when so they can keep construction projects on track.