DESCARTES™

Visibility + AI-Based Capacity Matching Key to Customer Satisfaction

SUNSET
TRANSPORTATION

A privately-owned, award-winning third-party logistics (3PL) provider, Sunset Transportation implemented the Descartes MacroPoint™ solution for real-time freight visibility and dynamic carrier sourcing to elevate customer service, increase operational efficiency, and support growth. The automated Descartes solution enhanced load visibility throughout the shipment lifecycle and expanded load capacity with advanced carrier sourcing and capacity matching capabilities, including the Descartes MacroPoint™ capacity co-op, an opt-in capacity sharing network.

"The Descartes MacroPoint capacity tool has been the biggest factor in keeping us ahead of the game, given the changes in the current carrier environment. We've had wins finding carriers that were not set up in our system that turned out to be wonderful assets to use on big projects that we wouldn't have otherwise known existed."

Connie Morgan
Director, TL Pricing and Procurement
Sunset Transportation

Company Profile
Sunset Transportation
Third Party Logistics Provider

Descartes Solution
Descartes MacroPoint for Freight
Visibility & Capacity Matching

About the Client
As a third-party logistics (3PL) company, Sunset Transportation provides professional, reliable transportation solutions. Sunset serves customer needs with sophisticated systems and processes to support multimodal logistics and all sizes of freight spends while remaining committed to its roots with personalized, dependable service.

Quick Overview

Challenge
Inefficient Manual Processes
Hinder Growth

Solution
Automation Drives Growth

Results
- Elevated Customer Experience
- Reduced Costs
- Increased Productivity
- Stronger Carrier Relationships

READ THE FULL STORY →

Challenge: Inefficient Manual Processes Hinder Growth

Today's volatile market has challenged 3PLs like Sunset to become more agile, simplify the load visibility workflow and find available capacity quickly. As Sunset continued to grow, its labor-intensive manual load tracking practices were unable to meet rising customer expectations for frequent status updates on the 30,000+ shipments moved by the organization per year. Similarly, with tightening capacity, load coverage became exceedingly difficult and time-intensive to manage with phone calls, emails, and load boards, compromising revenue opportunities and impeding growth. The company wanted to replace manual practices with technology to provide real-time freight visibility, strategic carrier sourcing, and automated capacity matching to boost productivity, unlock growth potential, and build stronger customer and carrier relationships.

Solution: Automation Drives Growth

In alignment with the five customer promises underpinning its success—savings, visibility through technology, data-driven decisions, continuous improvement, and relationships—Sunset implemented Descartes MacroPoint, a real-time freight visibility and automated capacity matching solution.

Fully integrated with the company's McLeod Transportation Management System (TMS), Descartes MacroPoint enables Sunset to view, analyze, predict, and communicate the status of any shipment in real-time, dramatically improving its ability to manage exceptions, minimize detention charges, and keep customers happy with frequent automated alerts and ETA notifications.

"A critical part of order lifecycle management is the ability to get as much information as possible about a load's status at a glance. This is where Descartes MacroPoint really shines," said John Sutton, Manager, Business Analysis at Sunset Transportation. "We've been able to reduce time-consuming check calls by 60% and are able to provide customers with updates as frequently as every 15 minutes, a sizeable improvement over our previous communication efforts."

The solution's AI-driven capacity matching tool also automatically matches open customer loads with available forward-looking capacity in Sunset's existing carrier network to help Sunset increase productivity, build stronger carrier relationships, and protect margins in competitive lanes. With visibility to capacity two to five days out, Sunset relies heavily on the Descartes solution for longer-term projects, bids, and loads with 48+ hours' notice.

In addition, Sunset expanded its carrier sourcing capabilities using the solution's capacity co-op, an opt-in network to find capacity when trucks in a 3PLs existing carrier network are not available. Advanced visualization and algorithms unlock readily available capacity, enabling the company to better select carriers for upcoming loads from an expanded pool in a fraction of the time.

"By exponentially expanding our trusted network through the carrier co-op, we're using Descartes MacroPoint to cover as many as 12 loads per day and have activated approximately 4,500 carriers to date. We save time and money through better rates, fewer deadheads, and more backhauls," said Sutton.

"The Descartes solution has helped us ramp up volumes to drive bottom-line growth. We've grown from handling about 200 loads per month in late 2019 using the tool to more than 670 monthly loads in June 2020," Sutton added.

Results:

Elevated Customer Experience

In response to customer demands for more frequent status updates, Sunset now updates customers every 15 minutes instead of every four to eight hours by using Descartes MacroPoint to send automated departure, pre-arrival, and arrival notifications.

Reduced Costs

Using location data and geofencing, Sunset has a system of record of arrivals and departures to help monitor wait times, minimize detention charges, and reduce customer penalties. Automated alerts minimize labor costs, reducing check calls by 60%.

Increased Productivity

With the Descartes solution, Sunset covers more profitable loads faster. Leveraging AI-driven freight capacity matching and an expanded pool of carriers through the capacity co-op, the 3PL increased volumes from 200 to 670 loads per month.

Stronger Carrier Relationships

Sunset increased carrier utilization by booking more consecutive loads and reducing empty miles on pickups. With visibility into carriers' historical lane performance, Sunset can select the best carriers for open loads, building mutually rewarding relationships.

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