

Streamlining the Delivery of 'Everything but the Food'



For close to ten years, Don had been using the Descartes Routing, Mobile and Telematics solutions to manage its delivery operations. The company engaged the Descartes team with the goal to identify opportunities to optimize the current processes and at the same time uncover any gaps where changes needed to be made. By upgrading to the enterprise version of Descartes Route Planner™ On-demand to centralize the management of its delivery operations and adding the Descartes Mobile™, Don staff now have greater control over activities on the road and can ensure business continuity. Using best practices, staff can now also plan their routes more effectively and understand the business impact of the route planning decisions they make.

"We are still meeting customer standards, but can now do it with fewer drivers who are working more efficiently."

Tom Wydra

Corporate Fleet Manager, Edward Don & Company

Company Profile

Edward Don & Company
Distribution Foodservice Equipment

Descartes Solutions

Descartes Route Planner™ On-demand
Descartes Mobile™

About the Client

Edward Don & Company is the world's leading distributor of foodservice equipment and supplies. The company offers nationwide distribution of over 50,000 items from its six full-service distribution centers, using a fleet of over 100 delivery trucks plus a network of national carriers. Each driver makes about 20 stops each day.

Quick Overview**Challenge**

Comprehensive Evaluation
Finds Gaps in Efficiency

Solution

Embracing Technology and
Business Strategies that Work

Results

- Better Asset Utilization
- Implemented Contingency Plans
- Generated Cost Savings
- Positioned for Growth

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Challenge: Comprehensive Evaluation Finds Gaps in Efficiency

For close to ten years, Don has been using the Descartes Routing, Mobile and Telematics solutions to manage its delivery operations. When Tom Wydra - responsible for corporate fleet operations, joined the company, he made it a top priority to evaluate the way in which the logistics management solution was being used. He discovered a few areas where the implementation could be extended to provide greater value to the organization. For example, the logistics technology had been implemented across Don's six distribution centers as standalone deployments. If power was lost in a building in New Jersey, routers in other centers were unable to manage the routes in that particular location. Don needed to have a contingency plan in place for business continuity and disaster recovery. Wydra also recognized that Don required greater visibility into driver activity on the road and a more effective way to reduce the number of miles driven and hours that drivers spend on the road.

Solution: Embracing Technology and Business Strategies that Work

Don's first step was to upgrade to the enterprise version of Descartes' Routing software. With this solution in place, Don can now centralize the management of its delivery operations and prepare its staff to respond to unexpected situations. "With a main server situated in our primary distribution center in Chicago, we can now provide routing services for any office as a contingency plan for disaster recovery."

Next, the company extended its implementation to include the Descartes Mobile solution. This cost-effective wireless application provides dispatchers with greater visibility into deliveries on the road by enabling drivers to transmit messages using a rugged device to capture events such as arrivals, departures, and delays. Dispatchers can also dynamically adjust routes based on actual performance and order changes. According to Wydra, "We now have better control over activities on the road, and can even determine whether planned routes are the most efficient ones to take. The more productive we are, the easier it is to increase our margins and keep costs down." If a customer calls to find out a more accurate estimated time of arrival, this information is now readily available. "It even keeps our drivers accountable, and ensures they don't make unplanned stops and take unnecessary breaks along the way."

As part of the extension to its Descartes implementation, Don upgraded to a national map package and also began using Navteq digital maps. "With urban and metropolitan areas changing so rapidly, we did not have an accurate picture of how many miles drivers would have to go to make a delivery, which meant we couldn't hold our drivers accountable. The new maps provide us with a lot more detail and we can see what routes are easier and more efficient to take for each client."

Finally, Wydra and his team realized that by implementing best practices, Don had a tremendous opportunity to further optimize its delivery operations. Staff members were signed up to participate in a comprehensive training course focused on teaching dispatchers how to best utilize Descartes' Routing and Planning solution to maximize productivity.

Results:



Better Asset Utilization

With more effective route plans in place, Don dramatically reduced the amount of backtracking that drivers were doing; increased the amounts of stops per route from 16 to 20; and increased cube capacity from 365 to 450.



Implemented Contingency Plans

A main server situated in Don's primary distribution center can step in for any office when needed for disaster recovery. A number of backup routers from each center are now also trained and ready to respond to ensure business continuity.



Generated Cost Savings

Just by creating smarter routes and ensuring drivers are held more accountable for their deliveries, Don saved about \$100,000 in the first year alone by reducing distances traveled and the associated costs of fuel.



Positioned for Growth

Don is now positioned to handle the growth they are striving to achieve without paying more. New volume can be managed without adding drivers.