



Distribution Center MANAGEMENT

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Managing people, materials and costs in the warehouse or DC

Transportation

Use technology, communication tools, and improved processes to become a transportation-friendly facility

Is your warehouse transportation-friendly? If not, it could be costing you money, says Michael Del Bovo, senior vice president of logistics and transportation with Saddle Creek Transportation.

Reduce wait times by investing in new technology

Too many warehouses measure delivery time when the truck arrives at the dock door, Del Bovo says. If the truck arrives at the dock door on time, it must be on time. But that's not the case from the carrier's perspective.

For carriers, the moment their truck stops at the security check-in point is when the truck arrives. If that is two or three hours before it reaches the dock door, you can bet the carrier builds that into the price, Del Bovo says.

There is plenty of new technology available today that can help eliminate some of that dwell time between the truck's arrival at the gate and its arrival at the dock door. Web-based online scheduling systems can streamline the inbound scheduling process, giving you flexibility to stay in constant communication with the carrier and get them to the dock door as close to the scheduled time as possible.

How will that save you money? "You have no idea how much a half hour reduction in a driver sitting on a dock can improve your pricing," Del Bovo says. If your facility does 2,000 loads a day, he says, you can see annual savings of \$1.5 million to the supply chain, just by increasing the velocity of trucks through your yard.

Offer drivers help and explanations

You can also improve your facility's relationship with carriers by treating their drivers properly — which can reduce the time it takes to unload, in turn affecting supply chain costs.

Start by having good signage in the yard, Del Bovo says. If you clearly mark your buildings and provide a number of signs pointing drivers in the right direction, you'll reduce the amount of time drivers spend looking for the right location.

You should also clearly explain any rules to drivers so they know what is expected. For example, Del Bovo knows of one company that has an idle-free facility. That company requires drivers to turn in their keys as soon as they get to a delivery point. What the company failed to do was explain to drivers why they had to turn in their keys (to stop them from idling). Drivers quickly

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circumvented the rules by bringing a spare set of keys. Del Bovo says if the company had just explained that the policy was to prevent idling, it could have eliminated that problem.

Finally, try to make the drivers' experience as pleasant as possible. Allow drivers the use of company break rooms and washrooms so they are not stuck in their trucks the entire time. Del Bovo says that

at Saddle Creek's campus in Florida, drivers are able to purchase fruit at a discounted rate. And Saddle Creek employees use a small handbook with common Spanish phrases to help them communicate with some drivers, ensuring that the drivers have what they need while waiting at the facility.

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