

CALARK PUTS THE BRAKES ON COMPETITIVE AND ECONOMIC PRESSURES

OPERATIONS

Headquarters: Little Rock, Arkansas
Terminals: Locations across the United States and two in Mexico

MANHATTAN SOLUTION

Manhattan Carrier™



CHALLENGE

During the recession, larger trucking companies became serious competitors to middle market leaders, such as CalArk, vying for any and all for-hire carrier business. In response, CalArk needed to sharpen its operations to retain market share, maximize driver utilization and maintain profitability, all with a decreased fleet size.

SOLUTION

To meet these competitive challenges, CalArk opted to upgrade Manhattan Carrier. The solution's 2010 release includes En-Route Assignment (ERA), which combines the matching functionality of the Driver&Load® module, and the efficiency evaluation capabilities of Drop&Swap®.

PROGRESS & RESULT

Despite the down economy and increased competitive pressures, CalArk has leveraged Manhattan Carrier to successfully maintain its pre-recession market share with 25% fewer trucks. The company has also avoided increasing its 6% empty mile ratio while running a leaner operation.

“Companies like ours are trying to squeeze as much functionality out of their systems to stay profitable and eliminate wasted miles. Fortunately we’ve already invested in the most optimized solution— Manhattan Carrier.”

MATT BRASLAVSKY, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

RUNNING A LEANER OPERATION

at CalArk

“Many for-hire companies have seen a reduction in loaded miles and an increase in empty miles, yet we’ve remained pretty consistent to where we were pre-recession. That’s a testament to the power of Manhattan Carrier.”

CALARK REVS UP EFFICIENCY AND DRIVES DOWN EMPTY MILES

Since the mid-1970s, family-owned CalArk International has built a strong reputation for on-time, reliable service as a for-hire truckload carrier. Based in Little Rock, Arkansas with terminals throughout the United States and Mexico, CalArk is a mid-sized company that operates a fleet of 600 trucks, including dry van and refrigerated trailers. The company has maintained its growth and success by recruiting superior employees and leveraging the latest technology.

When CalArk sought a real-time carrier management solution to automatically optimize driver-to-load assignments in 2004, it implemented Manhattan Carrier from Manhattan Associates. “To turn a profit and stay competitive, we have to constantly watch rising fuel prices, monitor driver utilization, and keep empty miles to a minimum,” said Matt Braslavsky, director of information technology. “Manhattan Carrier has helped us gain remarkable efficiencies in all of these areas.”

CALARK KEEPS ON TRUCKING WITH MANHATTAN CARRIER 2010

Although the company has enjoyed growth and success for more than 30 years, like many other organizations, it had to make adjustments as the economy began to slow down. “Downsizing our fleet and running the most efficient operation possible was the responsible road to take,” said Braslavsky. “Even so, we had to maintain our revenues, keep an eye on our rate per mile, and provide the high level of service our customers have come to expect.”

Keeping profit margins and service levels up with a reduced fleet wasn’t the only challenge CalArk faced. Larger trucking companies were dipping into the mid-sized market trying to find new freight lanes. Determined to hold on to its customer base, CalArk upgraded to Manhattan Carrier 2010. In fact, CalArk is the first Manhattan client to implement the new release, and the first to experience its new functionality. “Companies like ours are trying to squeeze as much functionality out of their systems to stay profitable and eliminate wasted miles,” Braslavsky said. “Fortunately we’ve already invested in the most optimized solution—Manhattan Carrier.”

The 2010 release includes En-Route Assignment (ERA), which merges two highly functional Manhattan Carrier modules:

- Driver&Load®—helps CalArk dispatchers look at each driver’s load assignment and attributes in real time, and matches specific drivers to the best possible load combinations.
- Drop&Swap®—improves the company’s efficiency by evaluating trucks on the road and determining optimal load swaps to eliminate empty miles, improve utilization and protect service. It also helps CalArk identify pending problems or service delays that could occur.

“Manhattan Carrier’s ERA solution provides the tools and information we need to execute smarter on a day-to-day basis and make the best planning and dispatching decisions,” said Braslavsky. “That not only helps us hang on to our clients and keep our drivers happy, it enables CalArk to pull ahead of the competition.”

In addition to ERA, the company also uses other Manhattan Carrier modules, including:

- Fuel&Route®—to provide drivers with street-level directions and a fueling plan to reduce the overall cost for fuel, taxes and tolls.
- Profit Analyzer—which assesses all factors that impact profitability and provides a P&L statement for every customer and every load.

MANHATTAN CARRIER HELPS CALARK TRAVEL AT A STEADY PACE

Since the original implementation of Manhattan Carrier, CalArk dropped its deadhead (empty) miles by approximately 50%—from nearly 12% to 6%. That number hasn’t changed—even in a more challenging economy. “Many for-hire companies have seen a reduction in loaded miles and an increase in empty miles, yet we’ve remained pretty consistent to where we were prerecession,” said Braslavsky. “That’s a testament to the power of Manhattan Carrier.”

As the company moves forward, Braslavsky and his IT team plan to stay on top of technology developments—particularly those from Manhattan Associates. “We have faith in the Manhattan products, which is why I sit on the company’s client advisory council,” Braslavsky explains. “Our requirements have lent insight into the development of Manhattan solutions and I believe the benefits of that type of relationship are a two-way street.”

