

Imaging for the Transportation Industry

An imaging system tuned for the transportation industry will enable dramatic improvements in your office efficiency. You will lower your labor cost, reduce cash float, speed-up collection of overdue accounts, and improve customer service.

Imaging systems offer the unusual opportunity to improve your business and lower costs at the same time! The Safekeep® system, from Acordex® Imaging Systems, has been specifically tuned to meet the requirements of the trucking industry. Specific examples of real customer feedback are included in this article summarizing how Acordex has applied imaging technology to help trucking companies.

LABOR SAVINGS IN FREIGHT BILL MANAGEMENT

Imaging will significantly reduce the labor required to manage a safe and secure archive of documents. Paper files require significant labor to collate, file, copy, refile, and physically maintain boxes of paper. At the same time, paper is exposed to the risks of fire, flood and vandalism. Safekeep addresses all of these issues.

Bills of Lading (B/L), Proof of Deliveries (POD) and Freight Bill attachments (e.g. claims or correspondence related to a shipment) represent the largest volume of paper in a trucking company. This is the first place to start imaging. Installing Acordex's Safekeep imaging system will make the following tasks more efficient:

- These documents are archived by just entering the Pro number. B/Ls and PODs can be bar

coded, so no data entry is needed. All sorting and collating labor is eliminated

- Safekeep will automatically index and safely store all documents. Filing the paper into customer folders is eliminated.
- Safekeep retrieves an image of the original documents by just entering the Pro number. Pulling paper from boxes or filing cabinets is eliminated.
- Images can be printed if a paper copy is desired. Running copies is eliminated.
- Images can be faxed directly from Safekeep. Trips to the fax machine are eliminated.
- Re-filing is eliminated. Just retrieve the next document when you need it. Other people can view or print the same document you have open on your computer.
- Secondary storage locations (warehouse or other out of the office paper storage) are eliminated. The CDs used to store the images take up less than three feet on one shelf to store one million pages!

IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE

Imagine instant access to B/Ls and PODs. When you need to answer questions like, "Who signed the Delivery Receipt? Does the carton count on the original Bill of Lading match the printed Freight

Bill?" A click of a button displays images of all of the documentation related to the freight bill. You can see the signature. You can check the number of cartons on the customer's original B/L.

Previously, questions of this nature meant you had to call the customer back. While the customer waited, you had to go to the paper records, find the document, bring it back to your desk and call the customer. Industry averages are that it takes 2.5 calls to complete a call-back, since the customer contact is often not available the first time you return the call. By the time you successfully contact the customer, his issue is no longer fresh in your mind, creating further inefficiency. When you're finally done, you have to re-file the paper documents. This is very labor intensive and exposes the documents to misfiling, which is the equivalent of losing them for future reference.

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE

"We have happier customers," explained Anthony Bruzzese, CFO of AMA Transportation. "This is the single greatest improvement caused by the imaging system from Acordex. It's helped us get PODs out to the customer a lot quicker. Of course we're also saving space in our office and spending less time finding documents, but the benefit to our customers is the most important."

**Bottom line:
five minutes for four calls vs.
fourteen minutes for one call.
Safekeep facilitates better customer
service with one tenth the labor!**

One of the owners of Cape Cod Express, Vincent Greene, recounts a specific case when he handled five customer service calls late one Friday afternoon. All five required reference to

information on the B/L or POD documents. "The first four calls were handled by requesting images from Safekeep. They took a total of five minutes. The fifth call referred to a POD that was a little older, and just barely pre-dated Safekeep's installation. As an experiment, I timed how long it took me to handle the customer request the old way," Mr. Greene continued. "It took 14 minutes to handle that one call, including the time it took to go get the paper POD, call the customer back and re-file the paper."

Bottom line: five minutes for four calls vs. fourteen minutes for one call. Safekeep facilitates better customer service with *one tenth* the labor!

OVERDUE ACCOUNTS COLLECTION

When invoices become overdue, Accounts Receivable (AR) must call the customer, explain the situation and request payment. Very often, the customer wants to see a copy of the POD before they pay. This is especially common for interlining. Without imaging, this means a manual task of getting the paper records, faxing them and then re-filing. Labor increases substantially if the POD is misfiled, and collection can be nearly impossible if the paper is lost.

With Safekeep, a fax can be sent directly from the AR desktop. A simple command faxes the POD directly to the customer's fax machine. Since the fax is prepared digitally from the scanned image, the outgoing fax is actually clearer than a fax of the original paper placed in a fax machine.

Charles Masiello, owner of Crystal Motor Express, stated that Safekeep "definitely made an impact on our Accounts Receivable. The time spent on Accounts Receivable is less than half of what it was before imaging. The ability to directly fax out a POD without leaving your desk makes a big difference."

Charles Severance, President of Severance Trucking Company, explained how Safekeep makes his collections more efficient: "Before, our AR manager went to each book of signed Pros, pulled out the Pro he needed, copied or faxed it, put it back in the book and then refiled the Pro book. He was spending a good four and a half hours each time he went through the overdue accounts. Now he takes an hour, tops. He just types in the Pro numbers and the imaging system faxes both the B/Ls and PODs."

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Some shippers require copies of signed Delivery Receipts (or PODs) and B/Ls to support each invoice in their billing statement. Several days after a shipment can elapse while you wait for all of the PODs to come in from all of the drivers, then sort and collate the PODs and then stuff copies into envelopes. The job is tedious, lengthy and dreaded.

"You wouldn't believe how many people want both the B/L and the POD," Charles Severance said. "The B/L might have a PO number or project number that is not on the freight bill. And they don't give us an extra copy of the B/L. The carrier must make a copy or the shipper won't pay. They just send the invoice back with a note, 'Need shipper's B/L.' This is one of the biggest benefits of imaging. We just go to the imaging system and print the B/Ls and the PODs we need. It's much less work."

With Safekeep interfaced to your trucking database software, this whole process can be automated. When billing statements are being printed, POD copies are automatically printed from Safekeep in

the correct order for each customer requiring supporting documents. Most of the labor is eliminated.

REDUCED CASH FLOAT IN THE BILLING CYCLE

Equally important, your cash flow is improved by getting bills out sooner. Once you have delivered a shipment, your cash has been spent for the equipment, fuel and labor. You are floating that money until the time that you receive payment from your customer. Safekeep makes that time span a little shorter.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Occasionally, a needed paper document is missing from the filing cabinets. The average for well managed paper archives is 2% to 10% of the documents are missing. With paper, there is no way to know whether a missing document is misfiled, or someone else has it or if it never came into the office at all.

With the document archive computerized, nothing gets lost. Once a document is scanned, it's in the archive forever. Unlike paper documents, retrieving an electronic document has no impact on the completeness of the archive. All documents are always available to everyone in your organization. If access should be limited, a user name and password can be required for network retrieval.

Trucking customers are currently using Safekeep to manage the following documents:

- B/L - Bills of Lading
- POD - Proof of Delivery (signed DR)
- Freight Bill Attachment - Claims & letters
- Drivers' Manifests - pickup and delivery
- Appointment Manifests
- C.O.D. log
- Carrier free astrays
- Cartage Settlement
- Credit Memos
- Customer Files - Contracts, special deals

- Daily Inspections - driver's vehicle inspection
- Daily Trip Reports
- Deposit slips
- Freight Bill refunds
- Hand receipts
- Interline AR and AP - accounting statements
- Interline Manifests
- Interline Pros - Other carriers' freight bills
- OS&D Records
- Personnel records
- Vendor bills - incoming invoices

Easy access to all of the information documented on paper provides a new tool for management. Trend analysis, case study investigation, resolution of recurring issues are all facilitated by access to supporting documentation.

INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS CLEARANCE

DHL Airways uses the Acordex ViewTIFF for Java for delivery of document images to offices worldwide. Airbills and related customs documentation are scanned by a DHL facility in the United States, then forwarded to servers where Acordex software is used to distribute the images to foreign offices. The foreign offices print the documents and process them through customs before the package has left the United States. When aircraft land at the destination country in the early morning hours, packages are pre-cleared and go right through customs. This avoids waiting for customs offices to open, often saving one day in the delivery time of the package.

SYSTEM DEPLOYMENT PHILOSOPHY

Some imaging vendors claim that imaging will radically "change the way you do business." They can come in very heavy handed and try to install intrusive systems that require that you change your business. But forcing concurrent changes to many parts of a business is always risky.

The results are often well short of over-sold expectations and are occasionally disastrous.

Seth MacLean, Principal of MacLean Associates (a trucking software development company), investigated "a half a dozen imaging vendors before selecting Acordex. The other systems were unintegratable. They were in their own world and separated from ours." Mr. MacLean continued, "Acordex was the only vendor which took the time to understand the nature of my existing application and the roll I imagined imaging playing. I wanted an imaging system that would enhance my own application and increase its value. Because they understood my application, it was easy to integrate their imaging application in such a way that imaging became a natural and easy-to-use extension to my trucking application."

Safekeep does not require you to change your work flow, personnel in place, existing computer software or hardware. We fit into your environment. We avoid "changing the world." Investment levels are contained, risks are minimized and learning time is exceptionally short.

USER ACCEPTANCE

When asked if she felt Safekeep was helpful, a Customer Service clerk at Cape Cod Express actually said, "It's like a gift from the gods!"

"It's like having a dishwasher. Once you use it, you can't believe you ever lived without it."

"The imaging system is very easy to use," said Michael Toomey, Office Manager of Crystal Motor Express. "Training clerical staff to retrieve images takes a matter of minutes. Then they use the software on their own. They don't need much support." Crystal's staff quickly grew to depend on

Safekeep to keep up with their day to day work. Crystal's OS&D clerk enthused, "It's like having a dishwasher. Once you use it, you can't believe you ever lived without it."

Instant user acceptance is the result of extensive work in keeping Safekeep's user interface simple. All of the complexities are automated behind the scenes. Beyond the work on the software itself, a large measure of Safekeep's user acceptance results from our system deployment philosophy. The users' world is not upset by imaging. Imaging is introduced as a new tool that works along with all of the other tools they already have.

LONGEVITY

And Safekeep systems keep working for a long time – a critical attribute of a document archive. Acordex's first system was built in 1989 and is still in service today at Healthsource-CMHC. "It's been unbelievably reliable," explained Mark Sullivan, a Senior Analyst at the Safekeep site. "The systems are great. The first system is still running on the same 1989 computer. Nothing runs for ten years! But this system has scanned over twelve million pages into one index and the speeds have not slowed down. And it's Year-2000 compliant! We have much newer computers [bought in 1995] that *could not* be upgraded to Year-2000 compliance."

The computer industry seems dominated by vendors who tell you to plan on throwing out your hardware every three years. Acordex is proud that Safekeep systems provide a considerably longer productive life. This contributes to Safekeep's exceptionally low Total Cost of Ownership (TCO).

CONCLUSION

With Safekeep systems from Acordex, transportation companies are providing a faster response to customers' requests for information and spending less on labor. For regional trucking companies, the labor savings are expected to generate an ROI of 9 months to two years. The system is so easy to learn, user acceptance is quick and strong. Safekeep can very quickly become an integral part of your organization's long term success. □

For more information, contact Kenneth Rohr at Acordex Imaging Systems (978 352-5500), a product development and system integration company specializing in high performance document management systems. <http://www.acordex.com>

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