

Seamless service for growth

Pace Motor Lines investing in technology, people to continue success of LTL operation

Pace Motor Lines Inc. is a well-known, family-owned and -operated business based in Stratford, CT, that is now managed by the family's third generation. For over 40 years, the carrier has provided less-than-truckload (LTL) service in the Northeastern United States.

In this ever-changing and demanding industry segment, however, operating throughout the Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Metropolitan New York City area can present some unique challenges.

"In Connecticut and the New York-New Jersey metro area," said Patrick W. Pacelli, vice president operations & revenue, "traffic congestion presents daily operational challenges for our team to meet our overnight-before-noon service commitments to clients, especially on air and ocean freight.

"We're investing in technology to help address some of these challenges," he added, "and to streamline our internal business processes so clients have a better customer service experience."

After evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of products from numerous software providers and meeting with other clients to get a look at each system, Pace implemented the FACTS freight management system from Carrier Logistics Inc. (CLI). A key part of its decision is the system's capability to handle all aspects of an LTL operation.

"We're in a very competitive market, so the advanced EDI and API capabilities and web tools in FACTS are a value-added service we can offer," Pacelli stated. "We're using the fully integrated solution to optimize our route planning, automate rating, and improve billing accuracy. Over time, we anticipate it will help us realize a measurable reduction in operating costs by improving our business processes."

The FACTS system is designed specifically for use by LTL fleets to manage administrative and operations



Pace Motor Lines has Volvo, Freightliner and Mack trucks in its fleet.

functions. The software features a complete financial suite as well as a pricing and rating module.

Another challenge Pace is forced to address is the rising cost of equipment, Pacelli noted, especially new tractors that meet emissions standards.

Currently, the company fields 71 power units, including 62 Volvos, and six Freightliner and three Mack models. Together with recent additions to the fleet, the carrier has 127 trailers, over half of which are 2018 and 2019 model-year units with liftgates. The entire fleet is maintained in-house at the company's shop.

"We always look for the best equipment for our operation," Pacelli stated, "but as a family-owned business, we also believe in supporting our community, so we try to buy locally whenever possible. That includes tractors, trailers, tires, and parts."

The competition for drivers has also had an impact on Pace. "We advertise locally and rely on referrals from our 97 drivers to bring in new prospects on a regular basis," Pacelli said. "What sets us apart from competitors when it comes to attracting a new generation of drivers are a number of valuable amenities.

"For example," he continued, "one benefit of our operating territory and services is that our drivers can be home every night. We also provide a generous compensation package, including paid time

off, a 401(k), and low cost medical, dental, vision, and life insurance."

Managed by a full-time company director of safety, Pace has an extensive in-house training program to teach new hires and less-experienced drivers about all the aspects of an LTL operation. Drivers also receive continuous updated training in best practices using online defensive driving tools and in daily small group meetings. Tractors are also equipped with DriveCam in-cab video systems to help analyze incidents, including reportable and preventable accidents.

"We track safety performance closely," Pacelli stated. "Since the implementation of our updated safety program, our occurrence rate has dropped significantly."

As a logistics provider, Pace is focused on turning supply chain challenges into cost-efficient, flexible blended solutions for customers. That includes providing LTL, drayage, and truckload services as well as warehousing and distribution capabilities from its 210,000-sq.-ft. facility.

"Our reputation for excellent service is driven by building solid relationships with our clients, investing in our people as well as technology that improves business processes and enhances customer satisfaction," Pacelli stated. "With that approach, we can continue to foster continuous improvement and ongoing success." ■