Informative essay on management

Business, Management

In a world overrun withtechnology, management information system plays a key role in all industries including global intermodal freight transportation. As international competition is vital, the competitive advantages associated with this globalenvironmenthave become more pressing for transportation companies. To succeed on a global scale, freight transportation companies have placed an emphasis on consistently upgrading their hardware and software tools.

The diversification of firm resources and capabilities has led to a renewed interest in financial resources, technology, transportation, data control, EDI, and human-datacommunication. Fundamentally, management information systems is defined as " a system that generally contains comprehensive data about all transactions within an organization." In the freight, business monitoring pertinent data boils down in finding ways to manage fleets, and data easier. Without MIS, freight companies were hard pressed to depend solely on abstract physical reports, figures and quantitative data versus concrete calculations or information from an accurate reporting system (Drucker, 1973, p. 681)

For instance, truck tracker software has become a means towards regulating maintenance tires, potential repairs, fuel intake and costs, log books, state-by state laws and tags, inventory checks, and an overall management of the freight system. Furthermore, information systems now have enterprise resource planning software systems which collects, processes, inventories, and forecasts demand. In addition, hand-held computers help organize information and any information stored in the PDA.

This information can easily be transferred to a PC using a ' cradle' attached to alaptop computerwith a wireless connection. Such wireless connections allow for mobility and eliminate the annoyances associated with network wiring. Emery Air Freight was one such company that management took the opportunity to determine that show that informative data could show how many drop-offs a driver had planned to on his route and then planned out how many he actually made. (Drucker, 1973, p. 269)

These freight carriers typically have laptops or wireless connections which enable management to determine the location of the cargo at point in time. The power supplies in the notebook computers are a utility power for outlets and a battery power for when mobile such as in an airplane. This supply regulates the voltage going to the computer (Rosch, 2003, p. 1012). In addition, as mobility is vital in the freight business it is sometimes necessary to link more than one network together. For example, with a laptop you might wish to have both a wired and wireless network in a certain location; therefore, a bridge called a router must be in place to link or signal from one system or another. (Rosch, 2003, p. 445).

Speed or time can be monitored and varied based upon GPS signals and contractual agreements on delivery times. Pertinent data also includes who brought in the freight, who owns the freight, where a particular shipment is located at any moment in time, what inventory might be on the shipment, when and where a shipment is supposed to be, along with other such data which a business or client might be interested in monitoring to gauge one companies performance over another's. Management of this data requires a

certain amount of mastery, discipline, willingness to use ever-evolving tools and communicating the information to top management (Grant, 2002, p. 214).

In order for a business to be successful, management of the freight transportation system requires constant communication between imports and exports often using both an intranet and extranet to give access either to employees or key partners, suppliers, or customers. This linking between companies reduces communication lapses, cuts costs, improves customer relationships, and increases efficiency. As the linking between companies can differ, software used typically by freighting businesses requires a certain amount of compatibility with various operating systems.

As this software is enhanced on a monthly or annual basis company must be updating their software or upgrading their operating systems to take advantage of new tools and methods for monitoring the inflow and outflow of data between different corporate locations. This development of integrated circuit has increased the amount of information being stored and processed and the networks using the internets has allowed electronic sharing of information to pass swiftly from one location to another. As timing and cooperation is required for global companies, the internet has joined transport companies and insured a competitive and effective environment. (Matteson, 1999, p. 10)

Multinational companies have theresponsibilityof ensuring that it remains a mercantilist and diversified organization versus a political one. This means that such companies became used to having unification and computer

understanding between the different branches. (Drucker, 1973, p. 359-360, 694-695) Furthermore, freight companies have included TQM, total quality management, statistical components into software to enhance that business-to-business exchanges and cliental responsibilities are being meet. This high regard for quality has presented quality results and structural improvements to companies which aim to continue meet efficiency levels and competitivegoals(Matteson, 1999, p. 625-626).

MIS divisions in freight companies have actively provided that corporate profits increase as the company invests in rapid information retrieval systems that can integrate data across various global divisions. (Kerzner, 1998, p. 35) Management in freight companies has also found that data should be collected and stored from such transactions via a data warehousing process.

This process continuously updates data and links this data to freight software which can enable management to analyze the data and produce helpful reports for executives. This data allows for patterns and relationships to be made which determines best practices or new strategies. For instance, we can consider a freight company with one shipment of clothes for Company X and three shipments of shoes from Company Y. Companies X and Y desire the shipment to be transported to Germany within 1 week. If the freight company also has a request from a Company Z located in Germany to transported cargo to the States, then it is practical to take the initial shipment to Germany then return with Company Z's cargo; versus returning the ships empty.

Such data can be mined to show routes which aid in managerial decision making which are cheaper, company's which can have combined shipments, or cost analysis of timing for completion of such shipment. (Daft, 2001, p. 241-251) This data is then presented via information reporting systems to mid-level managers to report to executives on potential new cliental orders, inventory levels, and availability of open cargo holds. Decision support software allows users to then pose ' what-if' scenarios to see what other alternative freight routes or shipments produce the best revenue.

It has become increasingly important in ties with businesses and suppliers to incorporate this electronic data exchange (EDI) process into everyday freight interactions. As a strategic use of information technology, EDI has also lead to a decreased cost across the freight industry while creating a higher efficiency level in analyzing data and maintaining a competitive edge on the global front. As technology and software is forever altering, companies are forced to adapt to the every changing environment or become lost in the competition: The freight industry is no different.

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