

THOMPSON BROTHERS TRANSPORT

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Tom Peters, Accountant

THE CLIENT

Brothers Harold and Noel Thompson established their livestock freight business in 1962, as “HR and NK Thompson” and pioneered using two-deck cattle and four-deck sheep crates. They quickly developed into a diverse haulage company, carrying not only livestock but general freight, fuel and gas. Over the next two decades, company continued to expand, opening 7 terminals in Sydney and through regional NSW. In the 1990s, they sold the livestock and tanker divisions to focus on the core competency of general transport; these days they concentrate on forwarding freight.

The business, now known as “Thompson Brothers Transport”, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2012.



THE CHALLENGE

Thompson Bros had a highly paper-intensive con-note and delivery docket system, with the docket from every delivery filed in a pigeon hole. If a customer wanted proof of delivery (POD), staff would have to go through all the pigeon holes to find that individual con note number and delivery date to be able to make a copy.

The system was very time, labour and hence cost intensive. Thompson Bros wanted to reduce the high reliance on paperwork, free up staff for other tasks and speed up the time taken to answer customer queries.

THE SOLUTION

The transport company looked at different suppliers, initially thinking they just wanted a new photocopier. Tom Peters says, “When Viatek came in, we told them our problems, and they suggested scanning all the POD’s onto a computer. We’d had a look at a couple of systems, but chose Viatek because it suited us and was so easy to do.”

Using the powerful eCopy features as set up and leveraged by Viatek for Thompson Bros, staff scan dockets with up to 95% recognition. Those failing to scan are typically very dirty from the truck or ripped and are manually keyed in. All related paperwork is scanned at the same time and filed by POD number. Dockets are securely stored digitally and instantly searchable on date, number, or any other piece of information.

The system processes four different providers, with eight different workflows to handle single and/or multiple deliveries.

At the same time, Thompson Bros took the opportunity to update their POD’s, making them easier to read for customers. Viatek was able to easily adjust the program to make sure the new POD’s were accepted.

THE RESULT

The total solution has had a significant impact on labour use, cost and time.

Thompson Bros was immediately able to re-locate two junior staff to other duties, saving the business \$90,000 in administration wages. They are also spending less on the new multi-function device and print costs than with the previous photocopier.

Customer service response times have improved dramatically, with POD docketts being quickly found via a digital search then emailed directly to the customer. This has also saved on postage costs. Tom Peters says, "Being put away manually, quite often PODs would be filed in the wrong place. Now it's just a click, and we don't have to physically go right through all of them, which was just such a waste of time. In this industry, sometimes payments won't be made if we don't provide our proof of delivery - whether documents have been signed or not."

Space both on the office walls and in the warehouse has been freed up. The company was running out of wall space to house pigeon holes; every 12 months docketts would be moved into the warehouse, but they still needed to be easily accessible, with queries sometimes coming in 12-18 months post delivery. Docketts up to 18 months old have been scanned, while older docketts, retained in paper format, will be destroyed once past the legal filing term.



The transport industry has a lot of paperwork, but it just got to the stage where it was ridiculous. This has worked out very well. It has certainly saved us a lot of money, a lot of time and a lot of heartache. We'd recommend it to anybody.

CONTACT VIATEK

 enquiries@viatek.com.au

 www.viatek.com.au