



AirClic Helps CD&L Track Tens of Thousands of Packages Each Month

Delivery of time-sensitive financial documents requires accurate, real-time status on chain-of-custody

[The Company] CD&L, one of the nation's leading providers of customized, time-critical delivery and logistics services.

[The Challenge] Provide accurate, real-time status of in-transit interoffice mail, including financial-services instruments such as non-negotiable checks.

[The Solution] AirClic MP for Nextel phones, the low-cost, low-risk solution for wirelessly capturing, tracking, and reporting information from mobile workers.

[The Results] Each month, CD&L couriers track thousands of packages containing financial instruments and documents. The company achieved an excellent ROI and faster training times.

Carving a niche in time-sensitive delivery solutions, CD&L has grown into a national leader in the customized full-service, same-day ground delivery industry. Today, CD&L is a \$200 million, publicly traded company with more than 90 locations in 69 cities and more than 3,500 contractors and employees serving 11,000 customers with “last-mile” distribution and delivery.

Through its integrated network, CD&L provides customers with varied on-demand distribution and logistics solutions. The company has invested heavily in technologically smart, cost-effective transportation solutions that enable it to partner with customers who want to receive the considerable benefits of outsourcing, while maximizing cost containment and improving service quality.

According to David Kronick, vice president and chief information officer for CD&L, the package-delivery industry has long placed an emphasis on technology. “As a smaller niche player, we compete with the investments that the larger overnight couriers make—and the customer expectations that they set,” he said. “Our customers expect to see online signatures and proofs-of-delivery. And, in certain segments, the ‘chain-of-custody’ is foremost in their minds. We needed to provide an accurate, real-time trail that is auditable.”

Real-time chain-of-custody for financial services

After making a name for itself in pharmaceutical and office-supply markets, CD&L was approached by a major financial services company with multiple retail-banking and check-processing locations. This company was seeking a reliable courier to move, retrieve, and deliver interoffice mail and thousands of cancelled, non-negotiable checks—representing considerable float income in the bank each month. But there was one critical requirement.





“They told us we had to have a solution to scan the bags of checks so that we could provide them with real-time information and an audit-caliber chain of custody,” Kronick explained. “We had used bulky scanning devices with 64-key keypads, but they were expensive, complex to use, and didn’t offer real-time information. Those devices simply collected information and stored it locally. We began to look for a different device that would be simple, inexpensive, and flexible. That’s when we turned to AirClic and Nextel.”

Couriers and other CD&L personnel use a standard Nextel mobile phone equipped with a small scanner (based on a proprietary AirClic design) to scan bar codes and transmit them to a central server. Those bar codes represent different steps in the delivery process (such as package pickup or delivery). At CD&L headquarters, customer service reps have immediate access to accurate delivery status for any package en route at any given time.

Tracking thousands of packages each week

“We need to have certain information at different points in the business process, so we designed a business flow that matches the actual activities we needed to perform for our client,” said Kronick. “Then, we gave our drivers a clipboard with a series of bar codes representing their different activities: starting the route, arrival, scanning bags, delivering, and leaving.”

Today, 55 CD&L drivers make 3,000 stops each week, collecting thousands of packages containing interoffice mail and non-negotiable checks for one financial-services customer. Each day, at each stop, a CD&L driver records the events by scanning each bag along with the appropriate event bar code.

“We harvest that data and use it to populate our logistics system,” Kronick said. “That gives our internal operations and customer-service people access to that data. Who’s driving a specific route? When did he arrive at his fourth stop? What activity is he completing there? What items did he pick up or deliver? When did he leave? With AirClic, we know all this in real time.”

Kronick also noted that adoption and training have been easy and straightforward. “We can train a user in just a couple of hours,” he said. “It’s easy to explain and people ‘get it’ very quickly. We liked that the AirClic/Nextel solution transmits voice and data on the same device—there’s only a marginal cost for the scanning attachment and added air time. In fact, the AirClic/Nextel device is significantly less costly than the older batch scanning devices. As a result, our payback period is short. Best of all, our customer has been very impressed with our reliability and service.”



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