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THE ELD MANDATE: ARE COMPANIES TOO LATE TO SUCCEED?

Walmart Carrier of the Year John Christner Trucking points to past five years of eLog experience as a case study, emphasizing the challenges trucking companies face leading up to the December ELD mandate.

SAPULPA, Okla., July 21, 2017 – Five years after implementing eLogs and less than six months from when the federally mandated electronic logging device (ELD) rule change takes effect, John Christner Trucking (JCT) is still among a minority of trucking companies that are fully eLog compliant. JCT COO Danny Christner views the company’s eLog adaptation as a case study for the industry.

“I’m not sure anyone can accurately estimate the impact this mandate will have on the industry,” says Christner. “We believe the immediate effect will reduce capacity and send disruptive ripples through the supply chain. This is mainly because of the significant number of vehicles that have not yet adopted the mandate, which is estimated by some to be greater than 75 percent. The challenges those companies will experience when they are forced to start using eLogs will be significant.”

JCT’s decision to switch to eLogs in December 2011 negatively affected mileage production, service, and driver retention. As a result, JCT recognized a critical need to optimize the company’s network and identify load planning inefficiencies. At the time, JCT’s fleet was already equipped with Qualcomm satellite tracking devices, but the company had not yet made the switch from using paper logs to using the electronic logging module.

“Having a device already installed in the truck was an advantage,” says Quek Song, vice president of information technology. “It saved a lot of time and allowed us to focus on the operations and backend support needed for a smooth transition.”

After a three-month process of upgrading the device’s software, every truck in the JCT fleet was utilizing ELDs to track hours of service. However, the change left JCT contending with an eight percent loss in mileage production and a 15 percent reduction in fleet size.

“When we started this process, we prepared ourselves for a hit in driver retention,” says Christner. “A lot of our drivers preferred paper logs and that option was legal and readily available at the time — as it still is today. However, in December of this year the mandate will require all drivers to operate with ELDs.”

After the initial productivity loss in 2012, JCT partnered with Add-On Systems and Manhattan Software to implement enhanced load planning tools throughout its operational platforms. This

solution contributed to the re-optimization of JCT's network and subsequent recovery of lost production.

"It's taken us a while, but through significant investments in software, training, and cultural refinement, our production and service are comparable to what they were with paper logs," says Christner. "It's been a constant learning process, but our efforts have set us up for success well in advance of the December deadline and beyond."

JCT's successful implementation efforts are evidenced by the fact that JCT was recently named Walmart Platinum Carrier of the Year for the second consecutive year. Christner believes JCT's initiative and company infrastructure were critical for making the successful transition to eLogs.

"When JCT made the switch to eLogs, we already had scale, lane density, and a large trailer pool," says Christner. "Even with these inherent advantages, it was a difficult undertaking. Smaller providers could face even greater challenges, which positions JCT as a viable option to aggregate capacity in the refrigerated market."

In an effort to help trucking companies throughout the industry successfully transition to eLogs, JCT recently launched an online ELD learning program. This free resource provides companies with information to effectively prepare for the federal mandate and determine potential production losses through the use of a mileage calculator. This online learning program can be accessed by visiting johnchristnertrucking.com/elog.

About John Christner Trucking:

John Christner Trucking is an irregular route freight company specializing in temperature-controlled truckload services. Founded in 1986, John Christner Trucking is a family-owned and operated business that strives to provide drivers and support staff a quality work environment and unlimited opportunity. John Christner Trucking currently operates a fleet of 750 vehicles with equipment yards in Oklahoma City, Fort Worth, and Phoenix, as well as drop trailer pools at several shipping locations throughout the U.S. www.johnchristner.com

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Notes to the Editor: 1) Any publication or reproduction of the above content should always include the following URL for the eLog Implementation Guide and Calculator website: johnchristnertrucking.com/elog

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