

Uberize your industrial gas deliveries



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Most of us have experienced the benefits of using Uber ride service at one time or another. Uber has revolutionized an age-old transportation service and made it seamless and transparent to both company and customer. Uber shows you the GPS location of available drivers on an interactive map, calculates the total cost of the ride upfront, sends you a text message or phone call when the driver will arrive, lets you pay for the ride using a credit card, and when the ride is over Uber emails you a receipt of the driver's name, charges, payment method, service time, and driver rating.

Today's leading software ERP platforms offer Uber-like capabilities to industrial gas distributors that seamlessly connect your back office, customer service reps, dispatchers, and drivers into one unified service for you and your customers. Here are a few examples how software platforms and smartphone mobile technologies can help Uberize industrial gas delivery operations:

1. Utilize dynamic scheduling & routing software. Using interactive maps and real-time delivery status updates, dispatchers can make quick and smart routing decisions with new delivery requests or existing route changes because truck locations and delivery statuses are updated in real-time. Customer service reps can use this same information to quickly answer customer calls about delivery statuses.

2. Mobilize truck inventory. Use a mobile device to scan every cylinder

that's loaded, delivered, picked up, and unloaded to maintain a perpetual truck inventory. Having real-time access to truck inventory availability and truck capacity puts you and your driver in a position to schedule additional deliveries or pick-ups.

3. Mobilize ERP software pricing, invoicing, and payment functions. The ability to calculate order totals and process the payment with a credit card at the point of delivery eliminates traditional invoicing and A/R collection processes which are time consuming and labor intensive. It's also a great way to reduce the order to cash cycle from days down to minutes.

4. Eliminate paper. Email the customer a copy of the invoice and proof of delivery instead of using snail mail in order to eliminate mailing, paper and printer costs.

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5. Record delivery times. Use this information to help educate customers on the value of your delivery services and fees. Measuring service times also helps optimize route capacity planning because both drive times and service times are recorded, analyzed, and incorporated into ongoing route planning activities which leads to greater routing efficiencies and on-time deliveries.

6. Incorporate GPS tracking and interactive maps. GPS saves you time

and money by providing drivers with turn by turn directions. Calculating drive times between stops allows drivers to communicate arrival times directly to customers by text or phone. Customer service reps can utilize the same information to field customer delivery status inquiries because delivery updates are transmitted back to the office in real-time thanks to the seamless integration of mobile technologies and ERP software systems.

7. Mobilize customer information. For example, the ability to review existing cylinder balances with the customer is a great opportunity to identify aging cylinders to pick up and process. This is a simple way to improve cylinder utilization, strengthening customer relationships, and empower drivers to be champions of mobile customer service.

8. Capture additional delivery information. Mobile devices are great for gathering additional useful information, for example: recording customer comments about the delivery using the smartphone's microphone (speech to text), taking a picture of a damaged cylinder (arc burns) to avoid cylinder disputes, utilizing electronic forms to take customer surveys or capture additional customer attributes for sales and marketing activities, or, creating a new order for a future delivery.

These are just a few examples how industrial distributors can implement Uber-like capabilities to improve delivery operation efficiencies, “Uber” new life into the customer service experience and do more than just deliver! 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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