

Routing Solution Serves Up Transportation Efficiencies & Cost Savings



As a full-service wholesale distributor for convenience stores, grocery stores, restaurants, food service and institutional customers, Brenham Wholesale Grocery required advanced route planning to drive greater delivery efficiencies for over 12,000 products to customers across the states of Texas and Louisiana. The company combined Descartes' strategic and dynamic route planning and execution solution to create a better delivery experience for customers, improve on-the-road efficiencies, and reduce overall transportation costs.

"With the Descartes routing solution, we've saved approximately 10-15% in transportation costs. We're also delivering to 25% more stops without having to add more drivers or more trucks. It's definitely helped to give me more of my fleet back to support Brenham's ongoing growth."

Bradley Trochta, VP, Brenham Wholesale

Company Profile

Brenham Wholesale Grocery Co., Inc.
Grocery Distribution

Descartes Solutions

Strategic Route Planning
Dynamic Route Planning
Route Execution

About the Client

Located in Brenham, Texas, Brenham Wholesale Grocery Co., Inc. is a full-service wholesale distributor for convenience stores, grocery stores, restaurants, food service and institutional customers. We pride ourselves in delivering quality products at the right price with excellent services that enable our customer partners to succeed. For more information, visit www.brenhamwholesale.com.

Quick Overview

Challenge

Optimizing Last Mile Delivery

Solution

Automating Static and Dynamic Route Planning

Results

- Enhanced Customer Experience
- Increased Accuracy & Efficiency
- Transportation Savings
- Greater Business Insight

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Challenge: Optimizing Last Mile Delivery

Traditionally, Brenham had made use of the basic routing capabilities that were part of the enterprise system supporting the company's full operations. The majority of its routing practices, however, were still handled manually. To drive more in-depth efficiencies out of its Central Texas distribution center, and provide customers with fast and reliable deliveries, the company looked toward more sophisticated functionality that would provide the ability to manage both master routes as well as dynamic daily routes, visualize and track driver activity on a map, and maximize available capacity on trucks.

Solution: Automating Static and Dynamic Route Planning

Brenham deployed the cloud-based Descartes solution to optimize route planning and execution across its customer base. Approximately 80% of the company's customers have regular, or static, deliveries throughout the year while the remaining 20% place non-routine, or dynamic, orders that need to be scheduled daily for delivery.

"Our primary focus is to use the solution to set static routes," explains Bradley Trochta, VP at Brenham Wholesale. Using route modeling capabilities, Brenham can analyze territories, service levels and routes to develop a customer-centric and cost-effective distribution plan. Trochta adds, "We perform a re-route annually to make sure our master route plan remains well-tuned to changes in our customers' needs and our own business growth."

When customers don't qualify for a set route, Brenham uses the solution to schedule deliveries into available gaps in the master route plan. "It's much more hands on than the previous system allowed," explains Trochta. "We now have a tool to manage non-routine orders, or excess orders that need to go out." On any given day, Brenham has only one person routing, but three different people have been trained on the system and can handle the job.

Real-time, map-based visibility into distribution operations is another important benefit. "Throughout the day, we can visualize where our drivers are and how efficiently we are performing based on expectations," notes Trochta. Variances between planned vs. actual delivery times are easily pinpointed. This helps the company not only to better manage customer expectations but also to reward or discipline drivers for on-the-road performance.

The solution has also helped Brenham to increase route density. "By optimizing our master route plan, drivers are making more deliveries on their routes. On average, we've moved from 7.5 stops/route to 12 stops/route, which means we're delivering products to our customers more quickly and reliably while realizing efficiency gains as an organization."

Additionally, with more effective route planning and execution, Brenham is making better use of truck capacity; vehicles are fuller, more often. At minimum, a vehicle is may be on the road at 75% capacity, but the majority of the fleet is upwards of 95% full routinely.

It's also meant the company has reduced the overall number of routes on the road daily, which has translated into a significant 10-15% savings in transportation costs. "We estimate that, with the same fleet, our overall mileage per month has dropped from ~325K/month to ~250-260K/month. As a result, fuel usage has also dropped—by approximately 20%," elaborates Trochta. "It's definitely helped us take distribution to a new level!"

Results:



Enhanced Customer Experience

Brenham's customers appreciate that delivery time frames are more consistent, and deliveries are much more routine. Customers can better manage resources to take deliveries as planned or react quickly to exceptions that Brenham can communicate in real-time.



Increased Accuracy & Efficiency

With the Descartes solution, Brenham ensures the right products are loaded onto the right trucks and that trucks operate at higher levels of capacity. Throughout the day, the company can monitor planned vs. actual delivery performance and dynamically adjust routes for new orders as required.



Transportation Savings

Since deploying the Descartes solution, Brenham is delivering to 35% more customers with 25% fewer routes. By optimizing delivery resources for both static and dynamic routes, the company has realized overall transportation savings of 10-15%.



Greater Business Insight

By leveraging logistics data provided by the Descartes solution, Brenham has greater short-term and long-term visibility into key transportation metrics, on-time delivery performance and overall distribution operations