

map&guide planner streamlines transport operations

Thalhofer optimises its wood and lumber transports with PTV's map&guide planner

The Thalhofer Group is a supplier of lumber, wooden doors and parquet flooring. Two employees at Thalhofer's headquarters in Ellwangen, Germany, are responsible for transport scheduling. Twelve 18-tonne lorries deliver the wood products to up to 18 places of unloading on a daily basis. Thalhofer wanted to streamline its scheduling process and therefore introduced map&guide planner, the map-based trip and vehicle scheduling solution. However, the company's wood products department will not be the only division using this helpful tool. Thalhofer's aim is to coordinate additional business units with the new software solution after its successful implementation.

User: **Thalhofer Group**, founded 1928, specialises in wood products. The company has several branch offices that run their own fleet of vehicles.

Task: Efficient daily scheduling of 12 vehicles located at the headquarters in Ellwangen, taking account of 18 places of unloading.

Solution: Professional route planning with map&guide planner linked to the AS/400 ERP system.

Fast workflow

The map&guide planner software eliminates the complex and time-consuming process of coordinating the transport orders by producing spreadsheets that are manually allocated to each vehicle. The company used to display the delivery routes by adding pins to the map. map&guide planner now enables Thalhofer's dispatchers to generate vehicle and route schedules within an hour instead of four hours.

Excellent Return On Investment

The investment costs were amortised after 12 months. Björn Baumgartl, Head of Inventory Management in Ellwangen, says: "We have been able to substantially improve our planning processes by linking map&guide planner to our AS/400 ERP system."

The dispatchers coordinate the entire process on two monitors - from incoming orders and transport order management to route planning. Using simple drag'n'drop technology, they can create trips with the collection points. The software tool assists the user in optimising lorry loading, time slots and in taking spe-

cific customer requirements into account. Additionally, it calculates driving costs, toll fees and handling times, if required.

More accurate planning and greater flexibility

"Everyone doing scheduling work appreciates a system that offers flexibility", says Björn Baumgartl. In addition to the system's automatic programming features, it is also possible to exactly visualise company-specific workflows. The dispatcher can therefore easily add short-term appointments.

Problem-free transition to new system

Less paperwork and faster order processing - two major advantages for Thalhofer employees in Ellwangen. Only a short time is needed to learn how to work with the program. "It took me a week to become familiar with the new tool," explains David Greb, one of the transport schedulers. No training is required as all steps are self-explanatory.



David Greb at work

Thalhofer's existing IT infrastructure was another important prerequisite for a smooth workflow. map&guide planner runs in a CITRIX environment and is linked to the AS/400 ERP system. Incoming orders are immediately processed. The system updates the complete amount of transport orders every 30 minutes and then generates trip suggestions.

Björn Baumgartl concludes: "The map&guide planner software solution was an extremely worthwhile investment".