

## Hall Fuels' IT investment

Hall Fuels has installed Outtrak in-cab software with favourable results. The company, which has depots in West London, Purfleet, Birmingham and Manchester, was experiencing some problems from the drivers wasn't coming back quickly enough," explains Andy Liddle, operations manager. "So invoices weren't going out fast enough, creating cash flow problems." With Outtrak in place, once a delivery is made, the system creates a ticket, "We don't have to worry about drivers bringing that information back to us. It downloads straight into the company system so invoices can be raised immediately, aiding cash flow."

Outtrak has eliminated the need for drivers to make calculations and now don't need a work book. "The system also collates stock and has a real time view on the office

dash board viewer so we can take a look at the delivery progress at any time. It produces defect reports which can be emailed to our service provider to action and sign off," says Liddle. The software has provided many benefits: "It has forced drivers to do things differently, such as physically check things - it won't let them continue if certain checks aren't carried out. We are ISO 9000 and ISO 14001 accredited and we have been praised by our auditors for this system which is helping us work towards a paperless system." Customers will eventually be able to log into their own account via Hall Fuels' website to view delivery information and print their own invoices.

The software is popular with drivers - two days' training is needed on it. "We have been trialling it since June and it has integrated well into the company," says Liddle.



Positive action: Halls Fuels reports many advantages from installing the Outtrak system including smoother cash flow

Driver trainer, Craig Harrison is training Hall Fuels' 22 drivers. "Delivering fuel is now a lot easier. The customer signs for the delivery electronically and the office is immediately informed of details including the amount of stock left on board. If a driver notices anything amiss when doing a vehicle check, details can be sent through to

the office enabling them to immediately contact the garage. We were impressed by the feedback from our parent company Jones Oil - drivers said they would not go back to the old system." The system also allows a driver to access fuel figures in the truck - useful when a driver is on holiday, as there is no need to dip."

## How Refined at Wessex

Established over 40 years ago, Wessex Petroleum is about to go live with Refine, a complete IT solution for distributors in the fuel oil/lubricants sector. A family-run distributor for Esso and ExxonMobil with a thriving domestic customer base, the company operates from two depots and serves the commercial, agricultural, marine and automotive markets.

Mark Hodgetts, procurement & facilities director, explains: "We have been using a system with a long track record in the oil industry. However, as our business changed and we moved into lubricants, our needs altered. Five or six years ago, we developed a small add-on in-house to deal with the lubricants side of the business. We also had a stand-alone planning package plus a system purely for planning lubricants." Having four

different platforms to manage, data had to be keyed in separately and with no direct communication between them was time-consuming, disastrous for data translation and caused errors. "We required real-time data. The oil industry is fast moving, with prices changing daily. To retain our competitive edge the management team required more current information. We needed to improve our efficiency and access to critical management data, with as many functions as possible integrated into a single system."

Refine offers functionality plus a readily upgradable integrated and standardised solution. Wessex was able to work with the system's developers to tailor the product to its business. Applications can be added when needed. Refine offers many benefits - it ensures

procedures are carried out, checked and approved. In fact, says Hodgetts, planning the implementation has made Wessex find better ways of working and it has used it as an opportunity to optimise processes.

In trials, the system has proved user-friendly. Once live, it will increase efficiency.

Single-entry data means time savings for staff and management information can be extracted daily, so immediate action can be taken. It also shows how much the company has made each day. Wessex is also planning systems for its lubricant warehousing and storage and delivery vehicles.



Making refinements: Family-run Wessex Petroleum has installed Refine and is delighted with the results