Shorter lead times challenge industry

Leading UK temperature-controlled operators predict that shorter lead times and more frequent deliveries will take centre-stage in 2014. Mike Rice, business development director at ACS&T, says: “Consumers want choice, and retailers and manufacturers need to provide smaller volumes across a broader spectrum of products. This requirement, coupled with the pressure to reduce lead times, means adapting services to provide a just-in-time distribution facility for customers. Collecting smaller quantities across a wider range of products more frequently, and providing flexible warehouse space to meet suppliers’ more complex demands, is absolutely key.” Alistair Brown, commercial development manager at Culina, echoes Rice’s cry: “The trend is certainly for shorter lead times, as retailers and wholesalers look to get closer to customer demand.” Tim Moran, Yeasley logistics director, agrees: “I think that the sector will only see marginal growth this year. Warehouse rates are still under pressure and overcapacity in the industry facilitates this. Transportation is a key issue with retailers calling for shorter lead times and more frequent deliveries delivered just in time, in full loads to reduce inventory and labour costs.”

Reed Boardall says that despite the continuing challenging times, the current climate is favourable for larger operators “who use scale to capitalise on the flexibility, agility and customer service opportunities it can offer”.

Air powered refrigeration

A zero-emission engine that runs on liquid nitrogen will undertake full-on vehicle testing this summer. The engine, designed to provide the power for refrigerated trailer applications, could be in production by early 2015. Mike Rice, business development director at ACS&T, says: “The liquid air engine completed its ‘shakedown’ testing last year at Imperial College, London, and is moving into a three-month test programme by Mira.

The concept for the new technology includes a diesel hybrid application. By harnessing the low grade waste heat of the ICE cooling loop, the Dearman engine can deliver 25%+ reduction in fuel consumption for a diesel heavy duty engine.

NFT has a new livery: over 45 of the new eye-catching cabs are now on the road, 25 of which were launched in time for peak Christmas volumes. The livery coincides with NFT’s launch of innovations in vehicle fleet environmental engineering.
Yeardley bespoke double-decks

Yeardley Continental has added another three bespoke Krone Mega Dry Liner trailers to its Buddley and Evesham transport division. The trailers double up to carry both frozen and ambient goods and are controlled by an in-house fleet management system. The 10 cubic metre trailers with 21 pallet capacity carry 10 insulated or 9 freezer pallets. The 300mm insulated side panels, roof and end doors are easy released and PVT coated on the panels, while the floor is components 20mm plastic ply with a 7-tonne forklift side load.

Ardo expands frozen store

Ardo is expanding the frozen food store in Hythe, near the port of Dover. The new fleet will increase storage capacity from 1,9,000 to 23,000 pallets in addition to the increased freezer spaces. The development includes new back-pulling kits able to accommodate double-deck trailer units.

World Cup goes Euro Fleet

World Courier is expanding the fleet in Europe. It proposes Macquarie Asset Manager's insurance-controlled core holding of Euro pallets and refrigerated ULP vertical, Etra-Crates from Hylte, near the port of Dover. The new division has temperature probes offering real-time information, plus extra security and extra features that have also been added to the existing warehouse.

Van offers service

Direct Service for Business has launched Driver Van Hire, its new vehicle hire App for van owners. Free to download, the App enables van owners to share their driving behaviour, with the potential to boost up to 15% on van insurance. It gives van owners and their operators who want a cost-effective method of managing the risk of operating their vehicles. See more details can be found here.

Promoter Track Hire adds to fleet

Promoter Track Hire has taken three insulated box bodies from Cryo G Adams. The single compartment insulated box bodies with high rear doors, single side doors, and Carrier Transicold units, over 12 hours, 1.6m.:

Morrison's home delivery starts

Supermarket Morrisons kicked off its new online delivery service in Goole on 10 January. It has teamed up with specialist group Ocado, using a fleet of Morrisons’ own device temperature-controlled Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans. Morrisons will not reveal how many vans will be used for the service but, for a real-life comparison, the best at SANDFORD'S online company 1,890 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter based vans. Order will be picked from a distribution centre rather than from store.

Big data is the new logistics tool

Big Data and logistics are made for each other with the logistics industry positioning itself to put this information to better use, says a new report from DHL. “Big Data is a relatively untapped asset that companies can exploit to help them adopt a shift of mindset and apply the right decision-making, says project director, Dr Markus Rickelmann. “The report, ‘Big Data in Logistics’, a DHL perspective on how to move beyond hype, published in December 2013, is jointly developed with T-Systems and DHL Consulting. In the logistics industry, Big Data analytics can provide competitive advantage because of the fixed properties, the report says: “Companies are learning to turn large-scale quantities of data into meaningful information, and use it to drive strategic decisions, optimise processes and discover new opportunities. This transformation requires a change of mindset and a deeper understanding of the value of information. In turn, this requires a change in the way logistics is viewed: a delivery service but, for a real-life comparison, the potential for Big Data in the logistics industry has already been highlighted in the ‘DHL Logistics Trend Radar’. “It also goes way beyond the heat inside to offer real world value, preventing what’s happening now, and what’s likely to happen in the future. This trend starts with an introduction to the concept and definition of Big Data, provides examples drawn from many different industries, and then presents logistics case cases.” Big Data has much to offer the world of logistics. Improved data analysis and analytics can be of specific interest, and these new capabilities put logistics providers in pole position as a “search engines in the physical world.”
Industry leaders forecast challenges and growth

Nagel-Langdons £5.5m warehouse

Nagel-Langdons is spending £5.5m on a new chilled and frozen warehouse for its Scottish operations. The site, located in the Eurocentral Business Park, near Motherwell in Lanarkshire, contains a 5,016sq metre ambient warehouse which will be converted to include chilled and frozen Sections.

It will have a 200-pallet capacity and incorporate a 500 pallet capacity freezer. The 150,000 pallet capacity warehouse will be operating illegally. This also applies if a new partner is brought into the business.

The composition of the business. For the UK and the rest of Europe, there is an overall shift towards British produce which in turn has helped the temperature-controlled sector. There appears to be more confidence in the marketplace. For 2014 we’re predicting the same in terms of projected growth in the sector.

The recession is over but growth will only emerge in detail in the coming months as shorter lead times – the tried and tested means of gaining electoral success – will become more resilient and reliable in the coming year in order to better manage more volatile demand as well as pressures on margins.

UK temperature-controlled operation express mixed views on growth potential in the sector during 2014. Feed Boardall believes that those continue to be challenging, in some of the Christmas-period figures from retailers demonstrate. “For the UK and the rest of Europe, there is still an economic lid to two to three per cent but we believe we are exceptionally well-placed to meet the challenges,” said Feed Boardall, chief executive, Reed Boardall.

Nagel-Langdon’s £5.5m warehouse for latest news see: www.globalcoldchainnews.com

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Main changes for 2014 predicted by operators

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The challenges in 2014 for the temperature-controlled logistics sector are the economy, changing distribution patterns, information technology, the green agenda, and Euro 6, says Cold Chain News editor, Dean Stiles.

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One of the biggest challenges for the temperature-controlled industry in 2014 is increasing costs and decreased pressure on margins. However, there is optimism of growth within the chilled sector. Alistair Brown, commercial development manager, says: “Several retailers (specifically Asda and Lidl) have publicly announced their 2014 store investment programmes, with more than half of their core space. We provide warehousing and transport solutions for most of the chilled sector and our customers are optimistic of modest growth, which will hopefully be reflected in our global volumes. Clearly, our job is to translate any growth into margin, but that is largely dependent on how the volume looks.

Nagel-Langdowns £5.5m warehouse

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Tom Rental takes Schmitz trailers

Schmitz Cargobull has delivered 27 S.KO Cool tri-axle reefer trailers to Tom Vehicle Rental, with four more to be delivered to the Andrite-based firm in the next few weeks.

The trailers, which are expected to be in service with the company for the next seven years, will be leased to users. These are the first Schmitz trailers in Tom’s 5,000 fleet ranging from vans and vans to trailers and trucks. Robert Sheevey, group commercial director, Tom says: “We are confident that the trailers will retain a strong residual value as the used market has excellent desire for trailers carrying the Schmitz Cargobull name.” The reefer replaces an existing fleet of several hundred reefer trailers, including the Schmitz Cargobull Rotos running at more than 500 units following its acquisition of Radmore’s fleet in November 2013. The reefers have Schmitz Cargobull Rotos running dual-temperature fridges, side doors and tail-lifts.

Cool Pavilion at the CV Show

The Commercial Vehicle Show this year again includes a dedicated show area, the Cool Pavilion, for the temperature-controlled transport sector. At the show, of special interest to cool chain operators, are bodybuilders Solomon Commercials, Paneltex, Gray & Adams, Coolertech, Carliseen Baltic, and Quinn Vehicles; vehicle component makers Lamilux and Production Glasfishe; refrigeration system suppliers Thermo King and Frigoblock; tail lift maker Anteo.

Together with the rest of the industry’s suppliers exhibiting, they make the CV Show the largest and most comprehensive road freight transport, distribution and logistics event staged in Britain attracting over 18,000 visitors last year.

The show caters for every operator’s requirements from truck, van and trailer manufacturers through to fork lift trucks, insurers, tyre, telematics and training providers, fuels and lubricants suppliers.

A visit to the CV Show at the NEC Birmingham, will fulfil all your sourcing needs and help grow your productivity and profit, say the organisers. And entry is totally free: simply apply for your ticket at www.ceshow.com and put 29 April – 01 May 2014 in your diary now.

* Cold Chain News will preview the CV Show in the April issue.

New body for Sprinter chassis

Coolertech has designed a new body for the Mercedes Sprinter chassis cab featuring a narrower, streamlined body which follows the lines and width of the vehicle’s cab. The AiroSprint Box Body range is aimed at home shopping operations where deliveries may take drivers to restricted, tighter areas, with little margin for error. The slimmer body helps limit body accident damage where the vehicle is used in such conditions, says Coolertech. For operators the body provides an increase in capacity – both physical space and payload – over a standard van.

A lightweight body styling kit has also been designed to complement the shape, colour and form of the cab’s bumper section and door detail trim. The kit has formed wheel-arches that have no significant weight increase to the vehicle.

Switchenbank new depot cuts mileage

Foodservice distributor 3663 has opened a purpose-built, multi-temperature depot for its specialist produce and fine foods business Switchenbank to support growing customer demand in the southeast. The new modernised depot, which began trading in Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire at the beginning of January, increases Switchenbank Fresh & Fine Foods’ capacity for the southeast threefold. 3663 says that it will enable Switchenbank to cope with the rapid expansion of fresh meat which is “seeing phenomenal growth.”

The new depot, for fresh and chilled products, has a five-temperature regime capacity along with nine loading bays, and thirty vehicle docks. Andrew Tiplady, managing director, Switchenbank, says: “This is a very part of our expansion plans which will see more facilities come on stream over the next 12 months.”

“The desire for customers to maximise purchasing by consolidation is growing. To accommodate this, our new depot will be a multi-temperature facility, meaning customers need only place one order, receive one delivery and one invoice, yet still have the specialist skills at hand. This ‘consolidated’ approach is also more sustainable, with fewer food miles being accrued.”

Vans boost Cool rental fleet

Rochdale-based van hire company Rentruck’s temperature-controlled division, Cool Running Rental, is taking another 15 vehicles into its fleet in a half million pound deal.

GFP Leeds will handle the conversions with the vehicles due for delivery in March. The order consists of Volkswagen Crafter, Cadys and Transporters, and Mercedes-Benz Sprinters.

There are five medium wheelbase Craffers to a pharmaceutical, dual-compartment specification with Thermo King fridges and Transcan readers; seven medium wheelbase Sprinters, with GAH freezer spec fridges, single compartment and standby; and a Caddy also with GAH freezer spec fridge, single compartment and standby.

Rental and short-term contracts with nationwide delivery and service contracts are available. “We now have a fleet of well over 150 vehicles used predominantly for short-term hire, but also for long-term lease throughout the country,” says Richard Cotton, managing director, Rentruck.

“We specialise in temperature-controlled vans, capable of heating or freezing to plus or minus 25 degrees C, to supply the food and pharmaceutical industries, all fitted with electrical standby, and mostly dual-compartment.”

“All vehicles are fully valeted prior to delivery, and as they are typically very late models, you can be sure they are in good mechanical condition,” Cotton says.

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