

## Jack Richards & Son drives growth with Equator software

When national road transport service company Jack Richards & Son started out with just one lorry in 1956 the directors would not have dreamt that it would one day become a national company with a multi-million pound turnover and a customer base that includes many of the country's leading household names. Key to managing the company's significant growth over the past few years has been an equator payroll solution from software solution providers K3.

Jack Richards is a privately owned and independently run business operating road haulage services across the UK, palletised load distribution across Europe and localised warehousing and storage services. When a company like Jack Richards grows, so too does its staff and fleet numbers. These increases have been managed by an Equator payroll solution for the last 16 years.



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### At a glance

#### Company

Jack Richards & Sons

#### Industry sector

Transport

#### The challenge

- Holiday and absenteeism management for large staff numbers
- Complicated pay structures
- Time consuming payroll process
- Spreadsheets being used for payroll
- Labour intensive for timesheet processing

#### Solution & services

- Equator
- Time and Attendance
  - Payroll
  - Personnel

#### The benefits

- Reduced time spent on payroll, down to a number of hours reduced from days
- Management of staff holidays and absenteeism
- Manual labour time reduced on timesheet processing
- Integrated solution
- Reducing need for paperwork



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Hauliers have two options when pursuing a policy of expansion. One option is to contract out work to hire drivers and their vehicles on a freelance basis and the other is to grow organically and recruit extra drivers as employees, providing them with the tools they need to outperform in their roles. Jack Richards has always favoured the latter approach.

HR Manager Claire Williamson explains: "Our approach to recruitment and expansion can be more expensive at the front end but it pays dividends. It's a way of ensuring that our drivers are buying into our company philosophy and working hard because they believe in our future vision. They are as dependant on us to make a living as we are on them to help us fulfil client obligations. Managing staff payroll, benefits, bonuses, working hours and training is always the biggest challenge when expanding, but Equator helps us to manage all of this."

According to a recent report from logistics awareness campaigners 'Delivering Your Future', the UK logistics industry is worth over £96 billion to the UK economy and employs 2.2 million people - eight per cent of the country's working population. Jack Richards currently employs 380 staff with 220 vehicles and 300 trailers across nine different sites. The company's Equator software makes sure that every employee is paid on time, holiday leave is calculated correctly and absences recorded.

The company has a complicated pay structure which calculates pay differently for drivers, office staff and maintenance workers. This follows a Performance Related Pay (PRP) bonus framework. Before Jack Richards implemented Equator from K3, the payroll process would typically take three to four days each month to calculate and was done using a mixture of spreadsheets and a smaller, payroll solution that was not capable of calculating PRP. Today, equator handles the procedure in a matter of hours ensuring that all staff are paid accurately, with any bonuses included, and on time.

Key to this streamlined method of payroll has been a bespoke timesheet system that K3 has developed specifically with the needs and requirements of the business in mind. Timesheet processing is a procedure that used to take up considerable labour time, but this has all been automated by K3's bespoke solution.

"We told K3 exactly what we needed in order to automate this process and allow for easy access to staff information at the click of a button and they developed an additional module for Equator to allow for automated timesheets, It has become a real time saver for us and enables us to better manage our staff working time."



Claire Williamson continues: "Although we have had Equator implemented for the last 16 years, we are continuously finding new ways to use the software to make the tasks associated with payroll and HR much easier. We wanted a better paper trail for staff timesheets. Timesheets are an old fashioned method of measuring how much time staff work and how much holiday they take in line with their annual entitlement. The danger with doing all this manually is the sheer amount of paperwork that can build up.

"We told K3 exactly what we needed in order to automate this process and allow for easy access to staff information at the click of a button and they developed an additional module for equator to allow for automated timesheets. There was already a basic template for this process but K3 tweaked it and developed it to make sure it was a bespoke solution to our specific requirements. It has become a real time saver for us and enables us to better manage our staff working time."



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Another major benefit of Equator software for Jack Richards is the way that it tracks staff development rates. As of 2009, it has been a legal requirement for truck and lorry drivers to complete at least 35 hours of training towards gaining a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC). As a compulsory requirement, the company needs to ensure that each member of its 320-strong driving staff is completing the expected 35 hours of training every five years. Drivers that do not complete the expected training time can be fined up to £1,000 by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) and even lose their livelihoods when their licences are stripped away. For the staff at Jack Richards, this worry is not theirs to bear because Equator calculates the training time of each staff member and reports to HR personnel whenever a member of the team is due further training.

Claire Williamson says: "Since CPC training was introduced to lorry drivers in 2009, we have always been conscious that we need to make sure every member of driving staff completes their 35 hours training by 2014. We do all our training in house and equator is really helping us to manage this process. To date, we already have 40% of drivers who have completed all of their training and we are fully on target to have the other 60% fully trained by 2014. We are able to record all of our progress in equator and can access full training reports on demand so we always stay on top of this issue. We make sure that all our drivers are fully trained to industry standard to guarantee that all our customers consistently receive the very best professional service from us."

Along with Jack Richards' initial Equator investment is automatic updates and a wide range of adaptable modules. Most importantly to Claire and fellow HR staff, is easy access to the K3 team who they have called on a number of times for additional functionality.

Claire comments: "It is always reassuring to know that K3 is only a phone call away should we ever need any additional functionality within equator. The software is constantly evolving as we grow as a company and it has been a really integral part of helping us get to the size we are now. There is a worry whenever you buy software as a business, that it will quickly become outdated and your total cost of ownership will become very high but this is not the case with equator. Already we are working with K3 to start better utilising other

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modules in Equator like pension auto-enrolment and improved reporting functionality. The possibilities with Equator are endless and as we have continued to expand to become the £30 million company we are today, equator has been supporting us at every turn."

