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Here's a fun game to try: get your heads of Operations, Safety, Maintenance, and Sales on a conference call and ask them what your company's cost per mile is. After a few moments of silence you'll get some varied answers and virtually all those answers will include the words "about" or "in the neighborhood of".

Such a simple question about what is ultimately at the core of your business and its profitability shouldn't have a multitude of answers. The trucking industry is one of high costs and thin margins, several cents a mile in cost can be the difference between thriving or struggling to survive.

It is unsettling to find that the different segments of your company are not synchronized and working with accurate, validated data; however, it is exactly the place many companies in the transportation industry find themselves in right now. It is where R. E. West found itself several years ago. Trying to establish a true, measurable metric of our profitability was causing us tons of headaches. The problem led us to seek outside help and in that search we found TCG.

TCG and their analysis software stood out from other solutions we considered in several key ways. First, we felt they really understood the transportation industry. Ken, Jack, Bill and their co-workers bring many years of experience and knowledge of the industry to the table. They aren't trying to take a generic, theoretical model and apply it across several areas of commerce; instead they are focused on the unique and constantly evolving beast that is the world of trucking.

Next, we were impressed by their commitment to customize their existing software to our business. Some solutions we evaluated operated in the world of averages, approximations, and assumptions. TCG worked to customize their model to our business profile. They put in many hours of time with several members of our management team to make sure the numbers that were going in were accurate and that the data being returned by the software was of high quality.

Great customer service and a customized solution are important, but at the end of the day, it is the data that matters most. It is here that TCG truly excels. Their software ties back to our general ledger, dollar-for-dollar so there is literally no room for error due to approximation or guess-work. It provides a level of comfort and reliability that lets us take the data provided and use it as a basis for making decisions that affect our business in fundamental ways. Everyone from the CEO down to our CSRs use TCG in some way and trust that the data provided is accurate.

TCG allows us to answer that question about cost per mile but it doesn't stop there. IT allows us to evaluate virtually every facet of our operation in terms of cost and profitability on both a macro and micro level. We can consider the business as whole, look at a group of equipment or even break things down to a single load. We are able to focus on problem areas that are hindering our ability to excel in the market and not only work on corrective measures, but monitor those measures to make sure they are having the desired effect. We are much more agile as a company now and are able to recognize and react to trends and changes in the market far quicker than we were prior to working with TCG.

In this highly volatile marketplace that we make our livings, staying in business means controlling costs and maximizing productivity and capacity. Analysis tools like those offered by TCG are no longer a luxury or extravagance, they are as vital to success as any other part of the business. R. E. West has found a partner for success in TCG. They give us the knowledge, support, and tools that we need to survive and thrive in the transportation world. We highly recommend them to anyone who is ready to take control of their costs, get inside the true profitability of their business, and educate their personnel with the data need to make smart and informed business decisions.

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