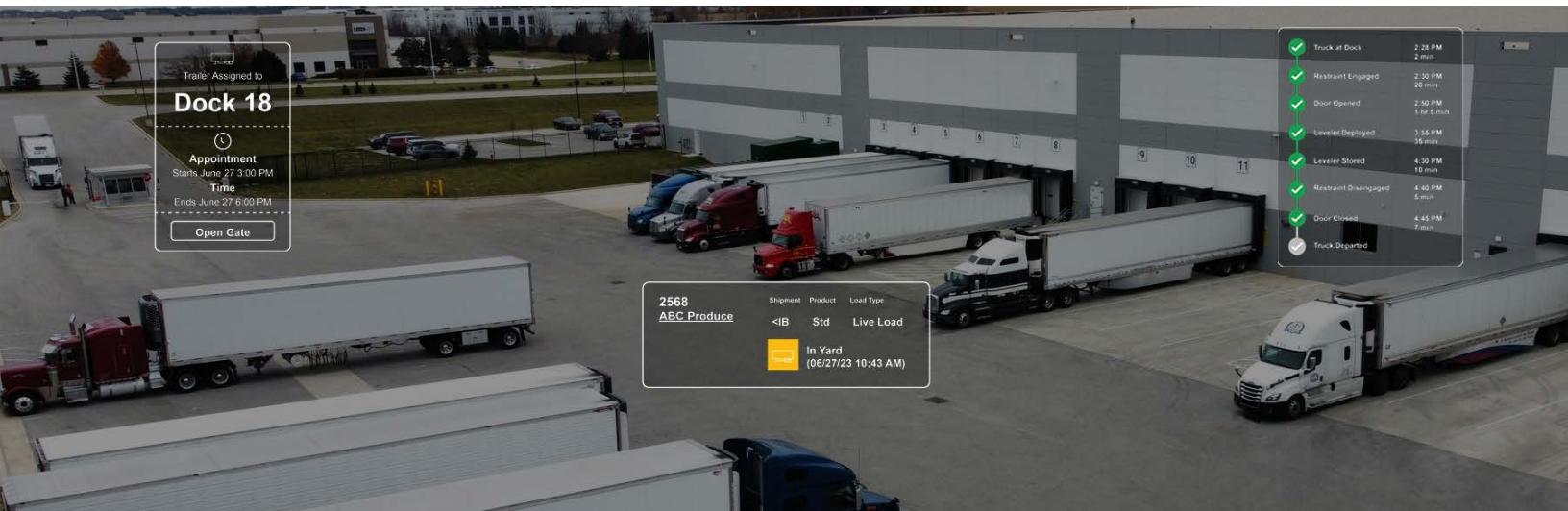
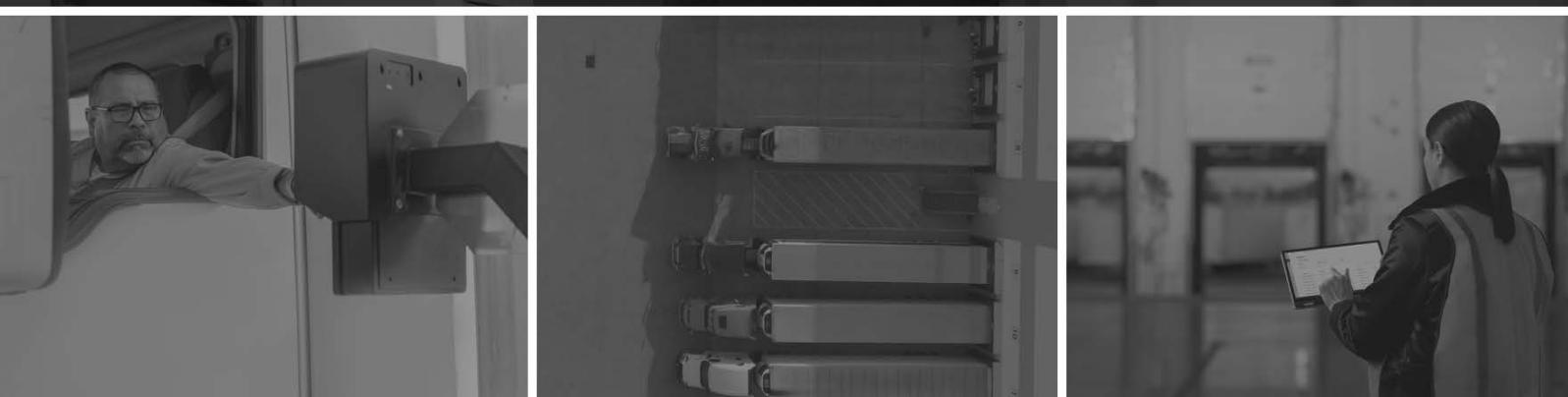


## From Gate to Dock: Automation drives productivity outside of the warehouse's four walls



### Intelligent Gate-to-Dock Management



Most companies have invested in warehouse automation and transportation systems, but have largely left their docks and yard to fend for themselves. Here's why this is a problem and what you can do about it.

**C**ompanies have been pouring resources into warehouse and DC modernization for years with a fairly narrow focus on adding automation, robotics and advanced technologies within the four walls of those facilities. They've also been investing in software that streamlines their transportation networks, speeds up deliveries and saves money.

Where companies haven't placed much emphasis are the loading dock and yard—two critical areas that have remained largely unchanged and untouched in recent years. This oversight is surprising, given the critical role that yards and loading docks play in the end-to-end supply chain. Companies that have invested in these areas not only enhance overall supply chain performance, but they also reduce costs, improve the driver experience, improve safety and enhance customer service.

*"A company may be using an advanced transportation management system (TMS) for freight scheduling, tracking and reporting, but once a truck arrives at a facility it basically hits a time warp where processes have stagnated for many years,...In other cases, an entire operation may rely on a single person who 'knows everything.' It can be a real nightmare."*

*— Melissa O'Keefe,  
director of product  
management at  
Chamberlain Group*

"Companies have definitely been paying more attention to their warehouses and DCs over the last 10 years or so, with automation and robotics as key focus areas," says Melissa O'Keefe, director of product management at Chamberlain Group, which includes LiftMaster gate and door operators, and dock leveler brands Poweramp, McGuire and DLM. "Unfortunately, the process of getting trucks in and out of facilities quickly, safely and efficiently has remained largely unchanged."

### LEVEL UP YOUR LOGISTICS OPERATION

Companies use a variety of dock and yard management approaches, but for the most part these aspects of a fulfillment or distribution operation are still "very manual" for most facilities, according to O'Keefe.

The scheduling of specific trucks for certain dock doors, for example, is generally handled via email, phone calls and/or spreadsheets. Some companies use online scheduling applications, but in most cases those solutions don't integrate with any other software, which means any data stored in them is siloed and difficult to access.

Incoming trucks are directed in a similar manner, but generally involve a manned guard shack that drivers interact with as they make their way onto the facility's premises. Drivers hand over the necessary paperwork and are either directed to a receiving office or another specified location. In the background, guards use two-way radios to communicate with team members who are working in the warehouse or out in the yard.

These manual, cumbersome approaches aren't generally seen on either side of the yard, where warehouses are being stacked with automated tools and specialized software is used to manage and track transportation networks.

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Facilities that don't have guard shacks rely on even more rudimentary yard and dock management procedures. In most cases, they'll just "open the gates" in the morning and let drivers pull in, park their trucks and go in search of the receiving office for further instructions.

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These largely manual, time-intensive processes are ripe for a technology overhaul that can automate the many different steps that have to happen as vehicles enter, navigate and exit a warehouse or DC yard.

Once that automation is in place, the warehouse or DC itself also begins to reap rewards in the form of improved efficiency, better productivity, less confusion and better safety records. By optimizing operations and reducing downtime, automated yards and docks can also drive higher throughput, faster order fulfillment and improved customer satisfaction, all of which contribute to a more profitable operation overall.

### DOCK AND YARD MANAGEMENT, REIMAGINED

*"There are sensors on the doors, levelers and truck restraints... The system uses them to automatically capture timestamps and data throughout the process, and then provides data that companies need to be able to run their operations more efficiently, productively and safely."*

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Knowing that warehouse docks and the yard are still "black holes" where all visibility and control is lost for a while as trucks and drivers try to navigate the premises, Chamberlain Group developed an intelligent dock management solution that solves this problem by automating functions that would otherwise be handled manually.

Its myQ Enterprise handles appointment scheduling to streamline the assignment of trailers to docks; digital check-in/check-out to speed up truck entries and exits; real-time updates for drivers; and smart dock management via a holistic view of the entire yard and dock operation. It's the only connected hardware-software solution that streamlines driver scheduling, simplifies check in and provides real-time communication.



The solution also gives companies access to actionable data that they can use for good decision-making—something most have never had for their docks and yards—and end-to-end visibility across their logistics operations. The solution works side-by-side with existing team members, who are freed up to focus on more strategic work than simply checking drivers in and out and directing traffic.

One of myQ Enterprise's biggest differentiators in the marketplace is the hardware-software connection that's enabled by the fusion of Chamberlain Group (a long-time manufacturer of intelligent access solutions) and dock brands Poweramp, McGuire and DLM (which specialize in commercial loading dock equipment). The company blends its hardware manufacturing background with software that controls that hardware and provides visibility into what that equipment is doing.

"There are many software companies in this space, providing solutions that can coordinate movement and traffic in the yard," says O'Keefe. "We take a different approach by providing both the hardware that does the work and the software that automates the processes, tracks the activity and provides the data analytics."

For example, when a truck driver arrives at the facility to check-in, myQ Enterprises not only controls the self check-in process itself, but it also assesses the characteristics of the scheduled appointment; provides a broad view of the state of all docks and the whole yard at that moment; and knows exactly where to send that driver. This eliminates the need for phone calls, emails and two-way radios—the system completely automates the process.

And if there's no dock available at the time, the driver will be notified to wait in the yard until one opens up (at which point they'll be automatically assigned and alerted to take their truck to the specific door). Sensors keep the system informed about the exact status of every dock at all times.

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#### AUTOMATE YOUR WAY TO EFFICIENCY

Once in place, myQ Enterprise's comprehensive suite of features helps companies modernize their inbound and outbound logistics operations, eliminate paper and reallocate valuable labor to more strategic projects. The solution takes the manual work and paper out of the truck entry and exit process and gives drivers and dock personnel a level of visibility not attainable using disparate applications, two-way radios and paper documentation.

According to Chamberlain, customers using its system report an annual savings of \$250,000 on each site where the system is installed, an 8% reduction in outbound labor hours and reduced security headcount of up to three full time equivalent (FTE) employees per day. Other key benefits include faster loading times, reducing wait times for shuttle drivers and an average 3% increase in inbound truck throughput.



Heartland Produce of Kenosha, Wis., is one growing company that's realized substantial benefits from its myQ Enterprise implementation. The company had always relied on manual scheduling and phone calls to manage its yard and dock traffic. As the family-owned produce distributor grew, these processes were breaking down and contributing to backups at crucial access points throughout the facility.

For example, drivers had long wait times at the entry-gate to check-in and receive dock assignments; trailers were sitting at the dock waiting to be loaded resulting in increased dwell time; and Heartland was regularly asking its security and receiving crews to work overtime.

As productivity decreased and labor costs increased, key decision-makers at Heartland knew it was time for a change. The company implemented Chamberlain Group's myQ Enterprise and connected its existing loading dock equipment to the cloud and added digital kiosks to the gate for a simplified digital check-in process for drivers.

Instead of looking for paperwork or calling Heartland's receiving office, drivers now check in digitally and automatically receive their dock-assignment right at the kiosk or on their phones. The company no longer needs a security guard to assist drivers entering the facility around the clock. Heartland also has 360-degree visibility of dock activity, which means it can monitor truck restraints, leading to fewer unnecessary bypass interactions during loading and improved overall dock safety.

#### **TAKING THAT FIRST STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**

Labor constraints, rising business costs and supply chain disruptions continue to make life difficult for warehouse operators, many of whom still rely on traditional methods of managing their docks and yard. Even as more automation is placed within the four walls of the DC, the area surrounding those facilities has been largely neglected when it comes to technology, automation, robotics and other innovations.

Companies that tear up their existing dock management playbooks now and adopt solutions like myQ Enterprise can gain an advantage over competitors that prefer to stick to their "old ways" of managing this aspect of their supply chains.

With Chamberlain's white glove onboarding process, organizations get the full attention of an experienced implementation team that provides support throughout the entire process, followed by a period of hyper-care post go-live.

"We understand the challenges companies face when they replace existing processes and procedures with a fully-digitalized system," says O'Keefe. "We're there to help ensure that our customers are ready and that their new solutions meet expectations and deliver the intended return on investment."

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