WEEK OF MAY 17, 2013 • VOLUME 44 / NUMBER 2

HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL
Strictly Houston. Strictly Business.

Brian Fielkow, owner and president of Jetco Delivery

CRAIG HARTLEY/HBJ

Driving into the digital age

Big data impacts trucking industry

Is there an industry that big data isn't invading?

Although the trucking industry may not seem like a data-heavy business at first glance, Houston-area companies are scrambling to produce analytics tools to increase cost efficiencies and improve customer transparency.

"Our customers are demanding (data)," said Brian Fielkow, president of Jetco Delivery LLC, a Houston-based transportation and freight brokerage firm. "They want more and more information, and we want to be able to give it to them in real time."

To appease customer demand, Jetco recently introduced a new technology, TransPortal, which allows customers to track shipments from start to finish. TransPortal uses GPS technology, and it gathers information about each shipment that customers can print out in reports.

"Customers can dissect the data however they like," Fielkow said.

PHH Arval, a Maryland-based commercial vehicle fleet management firm, which just opened its first Houston office this week, has a slew of products that both collect and analyze data from customer vehicles.

PHH Arval, a subsidiary of New Jersey-based PHH Corp. (NYSE: PHH), sells technology products that can pinpoint what types of driver training programs companies need based on accident records, when vehicle parts need to be replaced based on usage and mobile apps that allow administrators to track their trucking fleets.

"We've been (collecting data) for a lot of years," said Jim Halliday, senior vice president and chief business development officer of PHH North America. "We have the ability to tailor recommendations at the asset level based on data."

Although Halliday said PHH has offered data products for some time, he noted that there is an onslaught of competition from trucking and logistics companies just getting into data management.

Both Halliday and Fielkow said customers are driving the change toward more data — they want to integrate information from logistics data with other company data, such as financials and customer records. In turn, they said that is putting pressure on trucking companies to not only invest in the best vehicles and improve driver training, but spend more money on the best analytics software to grow their customer base.

▼ HOUSTONBUSINESSJOURNAL.COM

Keep up with Molly Ryan's daily reports and her Nuts & Bolts blog

This article appeared in Volume 44, Number 2 of the Houston Business Journal on May 17, 2013 on page 12. It has been reprinted by the Houston Business Journal and further reproduction by any other party is strictly prohibited. Copyright ©2013 Houston Business Journal, 5444 Westheimer Road, Suite 1700, Houston TX 77056