

# WHITE PAPER:

## 5 Solutions Major Companies Can't Do Without



*GTG Technology Group, LLC helps to build software to manage global transportation management systems (TMS) for all sizes of intermodal and drayage transportation companies. GTG is dedicated to providing TMS solutions designed to provide end-to-end visibility and connectivity. GTG's software was engineered to help businesses in the transportation industry overcome challenges faster, cheaper and more efficiently.*

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## Introduction

Small businesses starting out can often get away with limited resources and a “fly by the seat of your pants” mentality, but well-established corporations and organizations don’t have the same luxury. Businesses do not run themselves and you cannot operate effectively without help and assistance. But with so many tools, where do you turn?

Many choose to hire talented and experienced human capital. While the heartbeat of a business is certainly dependant on good employees and thinkers, there are other needs. The answer? Software solutions. Unless you plan on spending 24 hours a day running your business you cannot succeed without software.

# The Value of Software

How important is software? Well, think about it this way. You can have an exceptionally well-developed piece of hardware with thousands of unique features and capabilities, but it cannot come to life without software. Software is to hardware what the heart is to the human body.

According to Bob Savar of 3W Communications, “Every business searches for opportunities to increase exposure in the marketplace and increase profit potential without exhausting resources.” He claims that as a business owner, it is important to understand the value of “investing in quality software that will not only benefit you now, but also give you a platform on which to build your business. Not all software systems are alike, however, and if the wrong programs are installed, even the most basic tools can create management nightmares.”<sup>1</sup>

Savar’s belief is that choosing the right software is as important as choosing to use software in the first place. His answer is highly customized software that fits your business’ unique issues. As he writes, “By customizing and integrating software, all your programs work together to provide you with the most efficient tools with which to run your business. When systems work together, numbers and data need only be entered once and are accessible from any program.”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://blog.3wcommunications.com/2011/10/06/the-importance-of-custom-software-to-every-small-business/small-business/>

## Solutions Every Company Needs

While you can probably find software capable of doing anything, not everything is useful. Instead, you will want to focus on a few key areas of your business and search for software solutions that meet those specific needs. Regardless of the industry you are involved in or how large your business is, there are five software solutions every company should consider:

# Disaster Recovery Software

You have to start somewhere, and that somewhere should probably be disaster recovery. For anyone who has ever suffered significant data loss, you understand how damaging it can be. In some situations, large amounts of data loss can force a business to close shop. In other cases, it requires hours, days, and weeks of work to recover a fraction of the missing files.

While you may be able to get away without protecting some of your personal devices, your IT infrastructure is not included in this category. You need high quality protection; you're risking everything if you operate without it.

According to the Data Center Post<sup>2</sup>, "Data loss and system disasters are becoming increasingly widespread, as more and more businesses rely on increasingly complex transaction and customer relationship software." So, what are the main causes of these system disasters and failures?

- Software corruption. Software corruption is one of the major causes of data loss. It's hard to prevent these corruptions because they usually happen without rhyme or reason, but disaster recovery software can help you retrieve what was lost.
- Computer viruses. The larger your IT infrastructure is, the bigger a target you are for computer viruses and malware. There are new viruses launching every day and the hackers behind these complex codes represent one of your biggest threats.
- Human error. Employees with good intentions can at times cause data loss. In fact, it is estimated that around 32 percent of all data loss is the result of human error.
- Server failures. When servers go down, crucial data can be lost. This is one of the primary reported causes for data loss.
- Natural disasters. While only accounting for roughly 2 percent of data loss, natural disasters can have devastating effects.

While it is important to have preventative measures in place to ensure data loss doesn't occur, some things cannot be prevented or prepared for. It is here that backup and disaster recovery software becomes valuable.

When seeking a backup and disaster recovery software, there are certain things to look for. These include:

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<sup>2</sup> <http://datacenterpost.com/2012/09/the-importance-of-disaster-recovery.html>

- Reliability. Disaster recovery software must be reliable, period. When your company's livelihood is at stake, sub-par software won't do you any good.

## Disaster Recovery Software cont'd...

- Simplicity. Believe it or not, disaster recovery software can be simple to use. There's no point in using software that is confusing and challenging. Look for solutions you can easily manage and operate.
- Value. Pricing for disaster recovery software varies quite drastically. Do your research and find a reliable, simple solution that is also price-friendly. However, don't make your purchase decisions solely on price. You usually get what you pay for.

# Transportation Management Systems

If you are in the business of shipping and delivering goods all across the map, your best friend will be a Transportation Management System (TMS). From monitoring shipments and increasing efficiency to developing routes and collecting invoices, TMS can do it all.

According to one definition<sup>3</sup>, “A Transportation Management System (TMS) is a subset of Supply Chain Management (SCM) software focused on transport logistics. TMS systems facilitate interactions between an Order Management System (OMS) and the Warehouse or Distribution Center (DC).”

More specifically, TMS software usually includes the following features:

- Route planning and optimization features
- Inventory and load optimization
- Delivery execution
- Freight audit and payment options
- Carrier management
- Warehouse and inventory management
- Total order visibility

While these are the basic features, many TMS solutions include dozens of other highly-customizable features.

From a business point of view, TMS offers a number of advantages to its users. The overarching benefit is the reduction of costs through more accurate route planning, better carrier selection, and improved load optimization. Secondary benefits include improved visibility and accountability through the supply chain, greater flexibility in shipments, and resource savings.

Despite the clear value in TMS, not every company is taking advantage of it. According to Geoff Milsom of enVista<sup>4</sup>, “Currently, only about 40 percent of qualified shippers are using a TMS. This means that there are a lot of companies out there that have not yet unlocked the value of using a TMS.” He goes on to say, “Shippers need to understand how they might benefit from a system, and not every shipper has the same needs. It’s really better to understand what current problems there are in the sourcing, planning, executing, and payment process that might best justify the investment in a system.”

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<sup>3</sup> <http://searchmanufacturingerp.techtarget.com/definition/Transportation-Management-System-TMS>

<sup>4</sup> <http://info.envistacorp.com/blog/faq-transportation-management-systems>

But how practical is implementing a TMS, and how will it affect everything else? Milsom estimates successful implementation takes 12-16 weeks on average. However, he notes that phased implementation or smaller-scale systems can require shorter or longer periods.

## Accounting Software

Ask any business owner what his or her biggest headache is and you are bound to hear the word “accounting” at some point. Accounting is one of those things every business needs but few enjoy managing. While new startups can often get away with using an accountant or two to balance ledgers and monitor cash flow, the larger a company becomes the more detailed and intricate the process gets.

At a certain point, paper ledgers and rudimentary programs can only do so much. You need things to be accurate and streamlined. Thanks to well-developed, highly-technical software solutions, accounting doesn’t have to be the headache it’s been in the past. Some of the major benefits of accounting software and systems include:

- **Speed.** Manual entry of data requires careful attention to detail and slow, monotonous procedures. With accounting software, data entry takes place in pre-formatted forms and automated databases. This allows for quick entry and faster retrieval.
- **Accuracy.** Most importantly, your accounting must be accurate and precise. When using a system that is designed to accept only valid entries, there is less room for error.
- **Automatic documentation.** One of the most used features of accounting systems is the automatic document production. With this automation feature, you can print statements, invoices, and payroll documents with very little effort.
- **Increased efficiency.** Imagine what your accountants could get done without having to focus on small issues and setbacks. With accounting software, time and resources are used more efficiently and cash flow improves as a result of better inventory control and debt collection.
- **Less frustration.** From a practical point of view, effective accounting software will reduce the overall level of frustration in your organization. When account managers are able to stay on top of their accounts, there is less stress and better focus.

According to one qualified accountant with more than 18 years of experience<sup>5</sup>, “I am continually amazed when I come across a business either not using a computerized accounting package or using spread sheets to do their accounts.”

As Business-Software.com<sup>6</sup> puts it, “Financial and accounting processes are among the most mission-critical activities an organization conducts, serving as the backbone of core business

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.itseducation.asia/computerized-accounting.htm>

operations across the entire company. Therefore, an accounting software package, which is designed to streamline, accelerate, and enhance accounting related tasks and procedures from end-to-end, can deliver dramatic and measurable value to firms of all types.”

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.business-software.com/article/how-your-business-can-benefit-from-accounting-software/>

# Customer Relations Management Software

For successful companies, there are some downsides to having so many customers and clients. While the cash-flow is certainly desirable, it often comes at the expense of poor customer service, interaction, and engagement. Eventually, this will result in dissatisfied customers and lost business. So, what's the answer? For many organizations, it's customer relations management (CRM).

Successful business is all about satisfied customers. Without satisfied customers, it's hard to develop repeat business and long-lasting relationships. According to Linda Banks in her article on SmallBusinessChron.com<sup>7</sup>, "Many years ago, it was not uncommon for a business owner to know the majority of his customers. With the advent of global business practices in the 1990s, along with an increase in stored data, major organizations practice CRM as a matter of survival." In other words, CRM enables large corporations to develop personal relationships with customers, regardless of their resources.

If you don't currently have CRM, here are a few warning signs<sup>8</sup> that it may be time to invest in an effective software solution:

- Your company can't handle issues quickly. Regardless of the quality of your products and service, customers are going to complain. It's often your ability to swiftly and effectively respond to these inquiries and complaints that determines whether or not you lose their business. CRM software tracks customer interactions and lets you discover the source of your issues.
- Multiple employees interact with a single customer. If you've ever called into a customer support hotline, you understand the frustration of explaining your problem over and over again. CRM software tracks and records all customer interactions so that anyone in your organization can quickly pick up where someone else left off.
- High turnover in customer service positions. Companies often experience high turnover rates in customer service positions. While there is probably a bigger underlying issue if your company struggles with this, CRM software can help ease these transitional periods. When an employee leaves, all data and interactions are stored within the system for seamless introduction.
- You can't discover the source of the problem. When something is going wrong, you should be able to find the source of the issue. Whether it's a loss in customers, declining sales, or increasing complaints, you need access to the issue. With CRM software, you can quickly identify problems and implement solutions.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/should-value-crm-organization-5046.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.contactcenterworld.com/view/contact-center-article/9-warning-signs-your-company-needs-crm-software.aspx>

# Project Management Software

As Jeff Wuorio<sup>9</sup> puts it, “Not very long ago, project management meant three things - a pencil, pad of paper, and the space between your ears.” Thanks to developments in technology and access to incredibly sophisticated software, project management is more effective and easier in today’s business landscape. With hundreds of highly-customizable features and effective tools, companies everywhere are finding ways to better organize, collaborate, plan, and track projects from start to finish.

Some of the signs your company may need project management software include:

- Projects are consistently finished late, come in over-budget, and don’t meet the requirements or specifications of your clients.
- There is little or no consistency between project managers. Each follows his or her own set of rules and there are weak standards in place to monitor techniques and procedures.
- Your current project management techniques are purely reactive and provide no real value to the company.
- Successful jobs are usually completed at the last minute and cause unnecessary stress, anxiety, and overtime work.

While the value of project management software cannot be totally understood without firsthand experience, some of the major benefits include:

- **Timeliness.** Can you imagine what it would be like to get all projects in on time? Not only would you have more satisfied end-clients, but you would have time to add more work and focus on other areas. The main benefit of project management software is that you can plan and budget time to ensure jobs get done on time.
- **Accuracy.** While timeliness is certainly important, clients are usually looking for accuracy and precision. They want projects to live up to their expectations and meet their requirements. Project management software gives project managers and other employees a clear view of specifications, requirements, and stipulations. This enables everyone to be on the same page.
- **Savings.** Timeliness plus accuracy equals cost-savings. When you’re able to reduce the need for revisions and avoid wasted time, your overall bottom line will improve. Depending on the size of your company, this figure could be well into the four, five, or six digits.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.microsoft.com/business/en-us/resources/technology/business-software/project-management-software-benefits.aspx?fbid=CqKWrfy546V>

## Project Management Software cont'd...

- Smaller learning curve. Bringing new employees in often requires a period of adjustment. This learning curve can be greatly diminished with project management software. It enables employees to look at projects they know nothing about and quickly get a clear picture of the context and requirements.
- Better tracking. Ever wondered what processes are slowing you down and which you are proficient at? Project management software enables you to track particular objectives and measure your efficacy at microscopic levels. As a result, you can create benchmarks, develop goals, and encourage improvement.

# GTG Technology Group

At GTG Technology Group<sup>10</sup>, we understand what businesses need to compete in an increasingly crowded marketplace. That's why we have developed incredibly complex and all-inclusive Transportation Management Software Solutions<sup>11</sup> for our clients.

Our software allows transportation professionals in every area of the industry to effectively and accurately manage intermodal, rail, truck, and dray operations with incredible end-to-end visibility and success.

As a cloud-based solution, we offer complete IT management for your benefit. That means we take care of the heavy lifting and ensure you constantly have fully redundant power, fully redundant failover servers and databases, and offsite backups with under 4 hour disaster recovery.

Included in our TMS solutions are accounting systems, disaster recovery, and some CRM. If you are ready to implement the technology and software solutions your business needs, look no further than GTG Technology. We are your full-service solution for better business and more satisfied customers.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://gtgtechnologygroup.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://gtgtechnologygroup.com/tms-technology/>