

ACTIVANT DISPATCH

AND DELIVERY SYSTEM IS INDISPENSIBLE AT SOMERVILLE LUMBER



PROFILE

Headquarters: Bridgewater, New Jersey

Annual Sales: not disclosed

Sales Breakdown: Contractors 75%,
Retail 25%

Number of Employees: 100

Locations: 1

Founded: 1938

Affiliation: None

“The most indispensable application to add to POS or business management software is without a doubt, Activant Dispatch and Delivery System.”

KIRK MORRIS

IT OPERATIONS MANAGER

Executive Summary

Somerville Lumber is a full-service lumber yard, millwork and rental shop that built its business for more than 70 years with outstanding customer service. With the building industry slowdown, customer service is more important than ever before. Even with today's fuel prices, the company offers free delivery for orders greater than \$500 and \$20 delivery fee for orders under \$500. Somerville Lumber

believes that its Activant Dispatch and Delivery System (DDS) is critical for maintaining its position as the customer service leader.

Delivery as a Competitive Advantage

About three years ago, Somerville Lumber replaced its dispatch wall with DDS and hasn't looked back. Instead of pinning orders on the wall, employees now have up-to-the-minute delivery tracking on their desktops with DDS and Nextel GPS phones. Somerville Lumber uses that knowledge to win and keep customers.

“It's still common for our competitors to quote delivery estimates in four- or five-hour windows, like ‘we'll be there between 12 and 5 on Wednesday.’ Instead, we offer a much narrower window and have the ability to call the next delivery site as we are leaving the previous site,” explains Kirk Morris, IT operations manager. “Customers are impressed when we tell them the exact location of our truck and its approximate arrival time at their site, accurate within minutes. It's a huge advantage to our customers because they can better schedule their crew and don't sit around waiting for us to arrive. Our customers regularly compliment us on our unprecedented delivery service. We've set a bar for others to meet.”

Insight from DDS Data

A real benefit is Somerville Lumber's ability to analyze delivery times, assess the efficiency of its pullers, loaders, drivers and delivery routes. They often see that a delivery backlog may not be the fault of their drivers.

“One interesting realization came from seeing some delivery trucks sit at their first stop for more than an hour. We were able to determine that contractors were often reluctant to arrive and help our drivers unload deliveries. At times, our drivers would see a contractor drive past the job site if they saw our delivery truck waiting,” describes Kirk. “We now educate our customers that if we deliver their order first thing in the morning, they can have it installed by 4 p.m. as is the case with a van full of Andersen windows. By educating our customer

base, we are also instituting a new policy, if a customer requests first delivery and makes a truck wait repeatedly, they may not get another first delivery slot.”

DDS data, combined with GPS mapping is even more powerful in assessing detail. There have been several instances when Somerville Lumber was accused of not making a delivery. With DDS, the conversation doesn't become a “He Said. She Said.” Instead, the dispatchers refer to DDS, look at the delivery time stamp, pull the exact GPS location for that delivery, and obtain a 3D map from Google Maps from that exact time, showing the truck at the customer location. The same holds true for validating claims made that Somerville Lumber trucks may, or may not, have been involved in fender benders.

“With today's high fuel costs, it's important to streamline delivery routes and minimize unnecessary trips. DDS helped us to eliminate meandering routes and understand the exact cost for every delivery, which allows us to keep our delivery prices well below the competition,” asserts Kirk.

DDS Offers Value Beyond Delivery Scheduling

After working with DDS for a short while, Somerville Lumber realized that DDS, with its robust database engine, had capabilities far beyond delivery scheduling. The company and its employees now rely on DDS as the tracking database for all its orders, whether delivered or not.

At any point in time, anyone in the company can see status of a special order in DDS. Orders may be searched by PO number, order number, invoice number or customer name. A sales person can be on the phone with a customer and instantly answer an order status question. “What could take a salesperson up to 45 minutes to resolve by leaving their desk to dig through paper files, now takes under five minutes. With the addition of Activant Document Management, we can also instantly send the customer any needed document copies. With the sales person at his desk, other customers don't have to leave messages,” explains Kirk. “The productivity and customer service benefits from this capability are literally too great to measure.”

“The most indispensable application to add to POS or business management software is without a doubt, DDS. If you use DDS simply for your dispatch and delivery, you are missing the full power and potential of the solution. Highly customizable to suit your needs, it becomes a one-stop lookup for determining the status of all your orders. It has extraordinary power throughout your business,” says Kirk.



DDS has capabilities far beyond delivery scheduling and can be relied upon as a tracking database for all orders, delivered or not.

ABOUT ACTIVANT

Activant, a leading technology provider of business management solutions serving small and medium-sized businesses, offers customers tailored proprietary software, professional services, content, supply chain connectivity, and analytics. Activant's systems are designed to help customers increase sales, boost productivity, operate more cost-efficiently, improve inventory turns and enhance trading partner relationships.

To learn more about this or other Activant products and services, please call 888.463.4700.



Activant Solutions Inc. • 7683 Southfront Road • Livermore, CA 94551
Phone: 888.448.2636 • E-mail: industry.marketing@activant.com • www.activant.com

© 2008 Activant Solutions Inc. All rights reserved. Activant, and the Activant Logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Activant Solutions Inc. All other company or product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.

03SSSOMER