

Streamlining Operations

By implementing the Starlight solution, U-LOAD-IT Dumpsters Inc. has not only improved overall morale between all the customers and drivers, it has also empowered the company to double their operations.

U-LOAD-IT Dumpsters Inc. is a Kansas City, MO-based dumpster rental company offering service to a metro population of roughly 2 million residents. The company was founded in 1998 by Warren Stienstra Sr. and his son Warren Jr. In 2007, Sr.'s youngest son Aaron joined U-LOAD-IT after receiving his Bachelor's Degree from Central College in Pella, IA. In 2017 Warren Sr. fully retired and brothers Warren Jr. and Aaron became co-owners. Since 2014 Aaron and Jr. have been achieving significant growth by implementing new operational efficiencies, nearly doubling their dumpster count, and adding new vehicles to their fleet.

Adapting to Change

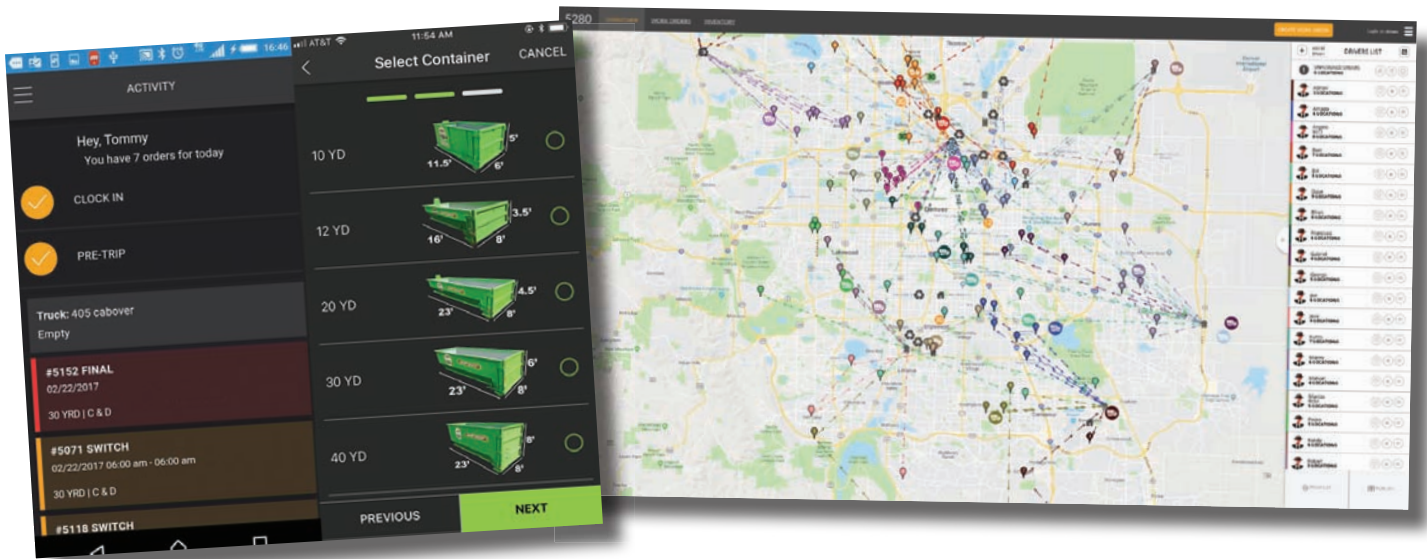
In 2017, Aaron and Warren Jr. began looking for a software solution that would streamline communications between their drivers, dispatchers and customers. "We were using a software that was designed for fixed route optimization, but we really needed a software that could quickly adapt to the dynamic nature of a roll-off business," Aaron says. "For example, if we started the day with 20 deliveries and ended up with 35, we needed to adapt to all the

changes quickly and the software that we had was not built to do that. It was a huge challenge to constantly be updating our drivers with new information." Aaron and Warren Jr. felt that the company was being held back from its full potential due to communication issues and inefficiencies. The drivers would have to be called on a constant basis to get information about a new order. "In a given day, our drivers were spending about an extra hour writing down new orders, finding addresses in a GPS and completing their daily paperwork. We were looking for a more efficient way to handle all of the above so that we could have higher productivity."

Thinking about how the company could tackle the problem, the brothers started looking for a solution that was more user friendly. They took a trip out to the Waste Expo in New Orleans that year to see what they could find. With an eye out for a software solution that was fully functional as both a dispatching module and accounts receivable, while having the potential to integrate with QuickBooks, Aaron came upon Starlight's booth and he says it was like a moth to a flame. "We visited several booths at the Expo but couldn't find a complete system built for a company like us that is

Real-Time Dispatch from Starlight. Images courtesy of Starlight.





Left: Contractor Mobile App customers can order from their phone.

Right: Driver App screen shot from Starlight.

exclusively a roll-off service. Starlight was the complete system we were looking for. Their product wasn't limited to dispatching and container tracking, it was a full-service accounting program that sent orders to cloud based dispatching, which allowed us to more efficiently manage our orders, inventory and communications. The report menu was extremely relevant, which wasn't a surprise after we learned that the program was developed by a roll-off company looking for a better software solution," They wanted to find out more about the software system, so he says, "One of Starlight's customers that was in the booth invited us to check out their operations in Colorado and we were more than willing to take the trip to see the software in action."

An Efficient Solution

Starlight was developed by Bill Bradley, CEO, and the owner of 5280 Waste, a roll-off company based in Denver, CO. Several years ago, he bought a waste and recycling company that had eight trucks and 300 containers. He was new to the industry, but his background was in software. As a part of getting up to speed and running the business he purchased, he wanted to develop software that was better than using the traditional methods of spreadsheets and manual entries. He wanted to build functionality for his own company and have other roll-off companies use it as well. Since 2017, Starlight has been used at 5280 Waste with very good success—reducing miles per haul, increasing paid hauls per day, lowering overhead/overtime and creating a better experience for the drivers.

Starlight is an ERP system that roll-off companies can use to run their business. Entirely managing the whole revenue cycle, it has three specific features for operations. The heart and soul of the system is the integrated Order Entry & Dispatch Systems. It is here where companies can set up and manage orders, create new customer profiles, send out invoices, manage accounts receivables and more. Tightly coupled to Order Entry/Billing software is the

Dispatch System. Used by the company dispatcher, this module manages all customer orders and all of the company assets in real time—so that operations can be optimized and service levels maximized. This allows for interaction with drivers, assigning orders, re-routing (if necessary) for more productivity, filling just-in-time and rush orders, etc.

Finally, the Contractor App part of the system allows customers to place orders and make payments at any time as well as see their account, where the driver is on the order in real-time, outstanding invoices, detail on how much the load cost, weight tickets, etc. At the other end of the workflow, the Driver App guides company drivers step-by-step through each of their work orders, allows for notes on gate codes or photographs on can location, and automatic billing (including wait time and overweight charges).

Making the Transition

After the Waste Expo in May 2017, Aaron and his brother visited one of Starlight's customers in Colorado, and they were impressed by what they saw and signed up in July to implement the system. "With the size of our business and the composition of our customers, it was really simple to set up. By November 2017, we were up and running. We were able to transfer our data from our old accounts receivable software, make sure all of our customers were accounted for in the new software and then we were taking orders and producing work order sheets for our drivers," says Aaron. In phase two they started to use the dispatching module on a browser, which is when all of U-LOAD-IT Dumpsters Inc.'s drivers started doing all of their work orders from a smartphone. "Our average driver age is early 30s and most of them are very proficient with using apps on smartphones. As a result, we did not get a whole lot of grumbling or complaining; everyone was really happy that it was going to make their life easier." Since implementation, Aaron and Warren Jr. have seen a 15 percent increase productivity and revenue. "That is going to vary for each

company but for us, these are real numbers. It changed the way we managed operations and I am thrilled that we found it.”

“We’ve got an engaging and participative implementation process,” says Michael Adams, Starlight Implementation Manager. “From the very start, we work with each customer to identify the specific needs and patterns of their individual business—to make sure we deliver the results that their business needs. We are now so experienced in implementing new customers, the process generally only takes two weeks.”

A More Complete System

Like any software, Starlight is continuously making upgrades and adding more features. “We’ve been really fortunate to be part of that because many of the upgrades that they have made came from our suggestions,” says Aaron. “At Starlight they really value us as a client. They continue to tailor the software for the specific needs of their haulers. From the get go, it has been an amazing system for our business and with regular updates and improvements it continues on its journey to becoming the standard for the roll-off

industry. After years of looking for this type of solution, its finally here, and we are happy to have the relationship we’ve had with Starlight from the beginning.”

“We build and work to continuously improve Starlight working hand in hand with our customers. The goal of this project is to capture and reduce to code the very best practices in the industry, customer participation is the secret ingredient in our development mix,” said Bradley.

Aaron goes on to point out that he and his brother see the system as more than just a tool to track drivers, the fleet and inventory, Starlight has added value in his customer service as well. “Before we implemented starlight our aspirations to grow our business reached a head because we needed a complete software solution that didn’t exist. After the past year of using Starlight, we’ve been empowered to keep pushing forward and it seems as if the sky’s the limit.” | **WA**

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