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## TNT Express and fleet telematics

Jan 2, 2013

**Greg Nichols talks to Erik van Duin, manager of fleet and subcontracting at TNT Express Benelux, about how his firm uses telematics to improve efficiency and reduce emissions**



Cutting fuel expenditure and streamlining delivery routes is good stewardship—and smart business. Few fleets have taken the commitment to environmental sustainability farther than TNT Express, an international courier delivery services company based in the Netherlands.

TNT Express, which employs more than 10,000 drivers worldwide, has launched several initiatives to showcase its commitment to environmentally sound practices. These programs, in turn, have become proving grounds for the latest fleet analytics and driver feedback tools and excellent platforms to spark discussion about the future of fleet management. (For more on driver feedback, see Benchmarking with fleet telematics, Managing driver behavior with fleet telematics and The role of feedback systems in fleet telematics.)

### Logistical challenges

In the last few decades, companies like Walmart have shown that a logistics-centered approach is crucial when it comes to the commercial distribution infrastructure. "Walmart's concept is what we have now in the US and much of Europe: Large trucks, large distribution, moving many vehicles just in time to particular locations from a central distribution point," explains Michael Sena, president of Michael L. Sena Consulting, which works with vehicle OEMs on navigation and service infrastructure solutions.

If Walmart has figured out long-range commercial distribution, debate persists worldwide about how fleets can best operate in complex city environments, where conditions and legislation vary from place to place and a poorly planned turn can mean the difference between a speedy delivery and a traffic jam.

"Environmental issues are high on the agendas of governments around the world," says Erik van Duin, manager of fleet and subcontracting at TNT Express Benelux. "With rising urbanization, local governments are trying to reduce inner-city congestion, noise, and pollution by introducing incentives for 'clean' distributors and increasingly stringent regulations for 'polluters,' such as congestion charges and restricted access to key areas."

When it comes to the local pick-up and delivery (PUD) sector, where routes change daily as new points of delivery are added, managers are tasked with reducing inefficiencies and congestion wherever possible, a prospect that often requires advanced analytics and new distribution models. If someone figures this out, a Walmart-type revolution may be in the offing.

### Inner-city emissions

TNT Express is piloting a number of programs aimed at addressing the barriers to efficient city delivery. "Our City Logistics solutions will help us to secure crucial access to inner-cities, where about 6% of our shipments are delivered today, to enable us to grow in the future," says van Duin. "Ultimately, reducing our inner-city emissions will enhance our commercial proposition to our customers, who are also concerned about their environmental footprint." (For more on fleets and the environment, see Fleet telematics: Balancing commercial and environmental concerns and Why green means 'go' for fleet telematics.)

Partnering with the European Union's CITYLOG program, TNT Express is experimenting with mobile depots. In this model, shipping units are loaded with parcels in depots outside the city. The units are put on a heavy truck and driven to a strategic location in the city center, where last-mile deliveries can then be performed with zero-emissions electric vehicles or human-powered tricycles. This model eliminates the need for package trucks and vans, significantly reducing road wear and relieving city congestion.

Telematics technology also plays a big role in TNT Express' urban strategy. "Different entities from TNT Express use telematics technology," says van Duin. "TNT Express Benelux has been using onboard computers since 2010. The drivers have an onboard screen to assist them in driving efficiently. Fleet employees analyze the data and reports out of the reporting Web portal for the drivers and the management."

TNT Express is also testing pre-trip planning and dynamic navigation systems. Pre-trip planning tools determine the best routes for pick-up and delivery, taking into account physical constraints and access limitations for large delivery vehicles. Onboard telematics units, communicating with traffic control centers, then adjust routes with up-to-date information on traffic conditions.

To eliminate unnecessary idling and double parking, a last-mile parcel tracking system automatically informs package recipients of imminent deliveries via SMS. This level of navigation and traffic alert integration can shave precious minutes off delivery routes, which add up to huge savings in fuel and vehicle wear.

### A race for efficiency

The Drive Me Challenge, which pits TNT Express' top drivers against one another, is a race—sort of. To promote its efforts at increasing fuel efficiency, reducing accidents, and streamlining customer service, TNT Express began holding this innovative competition for its drivers and sub-contractors six years ago. Drivers don't compete with speed alone, but with ecologically sound driving techniques and customer service.

This year's Drive Me Challenge culminated in October on a rain-soaked track in Grevenbroich, Germany. The track was designed to recreate routine PUD sector tasks, such as collecting and delivering parcels on deadline or delivering fragile packages.

Lysanda, an automotive solutions company, partnered with TNT Express by providing onboard Eco-Log Lite™ technology. Eco-Log™ solutions combine driver behavior analysis, wasted fuel and idle identification with Web-based driver feedback. In the competition, driver behaviors like braking, acceleration, and coasting time, along with vehicle indications like engine load, were measured and used to calculate driver scores.

The Drive Me Challenge illustrates the difficulties of city transport, where stop-and-start driving kills MPG and congestion makes routes unpredictable. It also points to the growing importance of telematics technology in the PUD and local service and delivery sectors. "A clean driver has been proven to be also a safe driver," van Duin points out, highlighting another benefit of promoting clean driving techniques.

Greg Nichols is a regular contributor to TU.

For more on fleets, see [Industry insight: Fleet telematics](#).

For the latest in fleet telematics, check [Telematics for Fleet Management Europe 2013](#) on March 19-20 in Amsterdam.

Coming up: [Consumer Telematics Show 2013](#) on January 7 in Las Vegas, [V2X for Auto Safety and Mobility Europe 2013](#) on February 19-20 in Frankfurt, [Insurance Telematics Europe 2013](#) on May 8-9 in London and [Telematics India and South Asia 2013](#) on June 5-7 in India.

For exclusive telematics business analysis and insight, check out TU's reports: [In-Vehicle Smartphone Integration Report](#), [Human Machine Interface Technologies](#) and [Smart Vehicle Technology: The Future of Insurance Telematics](#).

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Fredrik Callenryd, senior business analyst with Scania fleet management, on how automated driver assistance systems can improve fuel efficiency
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TU catches up with Nate Bryer, usage based insurance general manager at Allstate, about the insurance telematics field and Allstate's DriveWise solution

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