DESCARTES™

Optimizing Capacity with Integrated Lane Scoring

SUNSET TRANSPORTATION

A Descartes MacroPoint™ customer since 2019, third party logistics (3PL) provider Sunset Transportation is using the combined Descartes MacroPoint Capacity Network and FreightWaves SONAR Lane Score solution to view carrier density and market conditions across more than 1 million truckload transportation lanes. This integrated solution enables the 3PL to prioritize lanes with tight capacity to protect load margins, minimize risk, and enhance customer service.

> "The Descartes MacroPoint system became even more powerful for us when combined with FreightWaves SONAR. The fact that users did not need to have multiple systems open to assess a lane status drew them INTO the combined solution. Team members who weren't currently using it saw the positive reactions from other users immediately, became interested and started asking for access to the combined solution. The understanding of capacity, demand, and the likelihood of a service disruption in the market helps us price more accurately, protect our load margins, and keep customers happy."

Connie Morgan
Director, Truckload Pricing and Procurement
Sunset Transportation

Company Profile
Sunset Transportation
Third Party Logistics Provider

Solutions
Descartes MacroPoint Capacity Network
FreightWaves SONAR Lane Score

About the Client
Sunset Transportation is a certified women-owned third party logistics (3PL) company with 2nd generation, family-style Midwest roots. Driven by the right-size fit for each customer, Sunset uses domestic and global supply chain resources to be the ultimate service provider for shippers looking to streamline their logistics programs.

Quick Overview

Challenge
Tight Capacity Impacting Profitability

Solution
Lane Intelligence Simplifies Decision-making

Results
- Enhance Customer Service
- Increase Productivity
- Protect Margins
- Strengthen Carrier Relationships

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Challenge: Tight Capacity Impacting Profitability

To keep pace with business growth, Sunset Transportation implemented the Descartes MacroPoint real-time freight visibility and automated capacity matching solution in late 2019. By leveraging the Descartes MacroPoint Capacity Network to view available carrier density across North America, the 3PL has been able to better select carriers for upcoming loads from an expanded pool—in a fraction of the time compared to traditional manual methods. While the solution has helped Sunset to boost productivity and increase load volumes, low freight availability over the past two years has called attention to the impact of tight capacity on rates and margins. To further simplify capacity sourcing decision-making, Sunset wanted a more automated means of evaluating available capacity and market pricing intelligence by transportation lane.

Solution: Lane Intelligence Simplifies Decision-making

Sunset Transportation uses FreightWaves SONAR Lane Score, as part of the Descartes MacroPoint Capacity Network, to view current market conditions across the North American over-the-road network. SONAR's scoring system represents how attractive (or not) it will be to cover open loads in each lane. This critical indicator of lane attractiveness, combined with the calculated inbound capacity score from the Descartes solution, enables Sunset to prioritize lanes where capacity is tight to proactively adapt to market rate movements and minimize risk.

"With the Descartes MacroPoint and SONAR integration, we're able to prioritize the effort made on loads, based on score filtering," said Connie Morgan, Director of Truckload Pricing and Procurement at Sunset. "By knowing which lanes will be hard to cover, we can manage by exception on the loads that will take time and need more attention to detail to maintain profit margins."

Morgan added, "Our team has more confidence taking higher rates to guarantee moving the load if the score is lower (harder coverage). Conversely, we're able to negotiate and emphasize carrier negotiations when the score is higher (easier coverage)."

The combined solution also enables Sunset to automate load coverage decision-making processes, using lane scores as automation triggers to send offers to the most appropriate carriers servicing the network. With critical data points at its fingertips, the 3PL can prioritize and execute load decisions in a faster, reliable, and more cost-effective way. "Seeing the score at a glance reduces the need for manual entry and review of lane data using external program sources (e.g., DAT lane scorecard)," said Morgan. "It's been a huge time-saver for us."

Results:

Enhance Customer Service

Armed with carrier density and lane-level intelligence, Sunset can easily convey market-level changes to customers and prospects. The 3PL can respond to shifting market conditions on the fly, find the best fit carrier, and ensure competitive pricing that reflects current lane conditions.

Increase Productivity

Sunset can view lane scores for the entire Descartes network of 1M+ lanes, increasing efficiency by eliminating the need for time-consuming manual review of lane data status. The combined solution simplifies capacity decision-making to boost load volume and drive growth.

Protect Margins

The combination of available capacity data and lane attractiveness score for each transportation lane helps Sunset prioritize lanes with tight capacity to adapt to rate fluctuations, mitigate risk, and protect the bottom line.

Strengthen Carrier Relationships

Deep insights around rate volatility and available capacity enable Sunset to determine which lanes will offer the greatest opportunities to capture revenue, helping to build out more lucrative, mutually-beneficial relationships with carriers. Plus, Sunset can onboard new carriers based on current data.

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