Sonoco

A Completely Automated Dock Scheduling Solution

An AppointmentPlus Case Study
About Sonoco

Sonoco is a multi-billion-dollar global manufacturer of consumer and industrial packaging and provider of packaging services. Headquartered in Hartsville, S.C., the Fortune 500 company produces packaging for a variety of industries, including many of the world’s most recognized brands. It serves customers in 85 nations.

Sonoco has been a stable, growing business for more than 115 years.
The Challenge

Sonoco operates 300 locations in 35 countries, including receiving docks in Devens and Andover, Mass., and Irapuato, Mexico. The Devens site experiences an average of 20 to 25 deliveries daily, while the Andover location sees an average of three to five each day. The Mexico site will eventually operate 45 docking doors, which will result in a considerable amount of daily drop-offs. Prior to using AppointmentPlus, the company scheduled its deliveries over the phone and recorded docking details in an Excel spreadsheet. This process proved tedious, and Sonoco looked for a way to eliminate the administrative time associated with scheduling its docks and deliveries.
The Discovery

Automating its dock-scheduling and delivery procedures was critical for Sonoco to improve its internal operations. One way to achieve this is to allow or require inbound drivers to schedule their deliveries online and in advance of their arrival. This would lessen or eliminate the administrative role in managing deliveries.

Doug Crossman, inventory analyst at Sonoco’s Devens site, and his colleagues learned about AppointmentPlus online scheduling software from a senior manager familiar with the product. After conducting a demo on the AppointmentPlus website, Sonoco determined it was the right fit for its delivery and dock-scheduling needs. Mr. Crossman says the company looked at several other transportation management systems for their scheduling needs, but the programs were far too expensive and difficult to configure.

“The system paid for itself in the first month.”

Doug Crossman,
Inventory Analyst, Sonoco
The Results

“The system paid for itself in the first month.” That's how Mr. Crossman describes the impact of AppointmentPlus on Sonoco’s delivery-and dock-scheduling processes. The sites now require inbound drivers to schedule their own delivery times and choose docks prior to their arrival, up to five days in advance. New carriers receive instructions and a quick tutorial on how to use the AppointmentPlus system; Mr. Crossman adds that most need only a few minutes to learn the software, given its ease-of-use.

Dock staff also appreciate the convenience of quickly checking the status of inbound trucks. Because drivers now book their deliveries in advance, the sites can more efficiently schedule workers as needed. This ensures that labor resources are not wasted.

Another benefit of AppointmentPlus to Sonoco’s operation is its record-keeping capabilities. Mr. Crossman states that dock staff enters the arrival and departure time of each delivery in the Notes section, which serves as a record in cases where the carrier claims the site held its truck at a dock door for more than two hours. This feature helps the company avoid the $150-$200 hourly fees carrier companies typically charge in these instances.

Overall, Mr. Crossman and his colleagues are “very pleased” with AppointmentPlus and count on it to prioritize their operational tasks.
About AppointmentPlus

AppointmentPlus® scheduling software is a configurable, rules-based, pure SaaS product. Our software — combined with our deep product integration knowledge, customer experience focus, and ability to both analyze synergies and synergize analogies — has made us the vendor of choice for more than 50 of the Fortune 500 companies.