# Taking Performance to the Next Level

## Priefert Logistics Jumps Ahead with LoadMaster® and PowerBroker™ Upgrade

*Priefert Logistics, based in Mount Pleasant, Texas, is an asset-based and third-party logistics provider. The asset division specializes in flatbed and step-deck transportation, and the brokerage division books both vans and flatbed loads. The company handles freight throughout the 48 contiguous states and some of the brokered loads reach into Canada and Mexico. A decision was made to upgrade from their current version of LoadMaster and PowerBroker products to the latest version.*

**Garland Hutson, Priefert Logistics' general manager, explains how the upgrade has helped the business.**

### Why did Priefert choose to upgrade?

The upgrade promised to deliver a number of features that we thought would be effective in controlling costs and facilitating time management. We saw possible advantages in terms of our accounting processes, our dispatch operations, our revenue analysis, and our brokerage business. Overall, we felt the expenditure on the upgrade was justified.

*Let's look at some specifics. First, how did the LoadMaster upgrade help
with accounting processes?*



Some of the capabilities that we gained with the upgrade made it possible to decrease the days-of-sales-outstanding by around seven-to-ten days. By itself, that boost in our cash flow was important. The upgrade also allowed us to send payroll settlements through e-mail to the drivers and personnel, which pleases our drivers and saves us money on postage. The settlements go out on a weekly basis. There are sometimes issues that arise around driver payment concerning details about the settlement. Now that the settlements are sent out by e-mail, drivers can see them right away. Most of the drivers have e-mail accounts that they can access while they're out on the road. If there are issues, drivers can contact payroll right away and get the problems cleared up in time for corrections to be made in the next pay cycle. The drivers are very happy about this change.



*You mentioned advantages for your dispatch operations.
What are some examples in that area?*



We establish credit for each customer, as well as set a credit limit. In the past, it wasn't easy to track current loads against those limits. Now with the credit limit warning feature, the dispatchers are alerted any time that a customer is getting close to the limit. The dispatcher can then decide to decline the load or request an updated credit report on the customer to ensure that we're not putting ourselves in jeopardy by accepting more freight from that customer. So, it's helped us tremendously in our receivables.

Another example is the ability to tie loads together within the system before any of the loads are assigned to trucks. Here's how this works. Say that we have a load in the system that was not preplanned, and we see another load that the same driver could pick up with an acceptable deadhead. We can tie the loads together so that the dispatcher knows that we want those two loads picked up in sequence. Since the upgrade, I now don't have to wait for a preplan on the driver; any loads in the system can be tied together. So, now when a driver gets a load assigned, the dispatcher can instantly see any other loads that have already been tied to it. And, there's no limit on the number of loads that can be connected in this way. This really helps the efficiency of our dispatch planning process.

# T H E   A B I L I T Y

**How about revenue analysis? Has the upgrade helped your ability to make business decisions?**
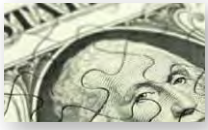
Very much so. The upgrade, along with the addition of the Profitability Analysis module, provided us with some very valuable analysis and reporting capabilities. We can look at customers lane-by-lane to review profitability of those lanes. Since we break our revenue down into specific categories, we can now look at each category, each customer, or each receiver and determine the profitability of that lane. We can also review the deadhead percentage that we have with each customer and can identify any problem areas or problem lanes where we might have to make rate adjustments. This information is critical, because you have to know which lanes are profitable.

**It sounds like the upgrade is helping you get the right information into the hands of the people who need it.**

Absolutely. Dispatchers and brokerage agents can view their gross and net per-mile rates, their overall deadhead and their deadhead on specific lanes. This information has helped Dispatch make better decisions on which loads to take and which customers should be given priority on capacity.

**Does this take much work on your part?**

No, and that's one of the great advantages of the upgrade. The auto-reporting feature has been a tremendous help to me as manager. Previously, I had to run individual reports and create PDF files and send them to the appropriate individuals, such as the dispatchers and the brokerage agents. Now I can set parameters for the automatic reporting and those reports are generated on a schedule. I also need to run a report on the first day of the month for tax reporting purposes, which includes all of the miles for all of our tractors. Before the upgrade, I would have to pull out the information and forward it to our CFO. Now that I've

got the auto-reporting set, it automatically sends that report to the CFO on the first day of the month. I didn't have to do anything other than set the parameters. Having these reports generated automatically is so much easier.

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### What has the PowerBroker upgrade done for the brokerage side of your business?

The upgrade has helped our brokerage side tremendously also. The upgrade allows us to set the target profit percentage on the shipment for all brokered loads. We can set dollar limits on rates to carriers, and the brokerage agent cannot go over that amount. This helps ensure that our brokerage margins are where they need to be on every load.

### How has your business benefited from these new capabilities?

Put simply, the upgrade has improved our bottom line. We have visibility into our operations that was previously not available. This allows us to make intelligent decisions in ways that we couldn't before the upgrade.

### Did the transition to the latest version go well?

Very much so. McLeod provided training sessions to all of our personnel, grouped by area of responsibility. They set up a system that we were able to train on thirty days prior to going live on the upgrade. Everyone had a clear idea of the changes between the old and new versions. It was a very smooth transition.

### How has the staff reacted?

Our staff loves it, both on our asset side and our brokerage side. We have fewer errors in planning. Everyone is aware of the additional tools available to them and they utilize them daily.

### Would you recommend this upgrade to other carriers and brokers?

I would definitely recommend this upgrade to other carriers and brokers. Anyone who's still operating with older versions is missing out on some very important features. The basics have been there all along, but the add-ons have proved to be well worth the expenditure. There are business opportunities that we have pursued that we would not have pursued without this upgrade. We're extremely pleased with the upgrade. It has given us the ability to control costs more effectively, control capacity more effectively, and improve time-management throughout the organization. McLeod has a really good product. I've worked in a number of dispatch software systems, and in my opinion, McLeod exceeds the quality of any other dispatch software on the market.