

Service With A Purpose

Service Management solution from Ryder Fuel Services is designed to ease the burden on companies that must keep their fueling systems operating 24/7/365

By Peter J. Cochefski, Ryder Fuel Services

Imagine it's a cold day in January, you leave the house for work, get into your car and it won't start. Or, the temperature is approaching 100 degrees in July, you go to turn on the air conditioning and nothing happens. Let's say you sit down at your computer, ready to cruise the Internet, and it makes a loud popping noise before the screen goes blank.

The reality is that our daily lives are filled with a wide variety of machines and other pieces of equipment that we know how to basically operate, but couldn't fix in a pinch if our lives depended on it. When these breakdowns occur, often the only resort is to turn to the phone book, hoping that we can find a knowledgeable person who can fix the problem both quickly and cost-effectively.

Now, imagine you operate a company—it can be a waste disposal service, ready-mix concrete supplier, rental-car agency, or hundreds of others—that relies on a steady supply of fuel to keep your operations humming and on schedule. So, what would happen if any one of the various pieces of equipment that keep that fuel flowing—dispensers, storage tanks, level-monitoring gauges, overfill alarms, etc.—were to stop functioning properly? Sure, you know how your business operates and the amount of fuel that is needed on a daily basis, but like that malfunctioning car, air conditioner or computer, could you repair it in a timely manner?

The answer to that question would, in a vast majority of cases, be a resounding, “No!” So, what's the solution?

Don't Go By The Book

For many, the solution would be the least common denominator: reach for the phone book and find someone who can professionally address the problem. There is, however, a much better alternative: partnering with a company that can make Service Management a one-stop shop. An expert partner can remotely monitor your operations, receive notification of system breakdowns or alarm events and then expeditiously dispatch a certified contractor to fix the problem correctly, the first time, and in the most time-sensitive manner possible with no hidden costs.

For any business that relies on a fleet of vehicles, fuel is the lifeblood of its operation. Therefore, the number one focus is ensuring that the fuel island remains operational 24/7/365. If the ability to fuel vehicles is interrupted for even a few hours, the negative effects can be far-reaching.

Take, for example, a ready-mix concrete company. Let's imagine that a malfunctioning dispenser at the plant's fueling island has halted the flow of fuel. After a service call is made and the wait for the technician to arrive has begun, one of the alternatives to keep the fleet rolling may be to have the concrete mixers refuel at a retail facility. A potential drawback is that the retail fueling facility is inconveniently located, resulting in time-wasting trips to refuel. A second

potential negative is that the price of the fuel at the retail location will likely be higher than what the ready-mix company is paying through its fuel-supply contract.

On top of that, having to go off-site to refuel can throw production and delivery schedules out of whack. This could set back the concrete-delivery schedule to the point where the delay will push back the completion of the project. These delays will reflect negatively on the concrete provider, who will suffer through loss of reputation that can result in decreased business opportunities in the future.

At Your Service

Companies who provide Service Management have designed their programs to limit downtime, costs and headaches for their customers. If service of the fueling system is needed, the customer needs to make only one call—to the Service Management provider. From that point, the service provider uses its expertise to diagnose the problem, plot a solution and make every effort to ensure that it is resolved in a timely, non-intrusive, cost-effective manner.

Once the problem is diagnosed, the service management provider will, through its contractor network, find the right person to complete the repairs. This also means only one trip by the contractor to the site, rather than the two a phone book-initiated service call would take as the contractor would first need a site visit to assess the problem, then schedule a return visit with the right tools and parts to rectify it. The service provider will also have a keen idea what the final cost to the end-user will be for the repairs, while a trip through the phone book leaves the plant operator paying whatever price the repairman quotes them.

Then, after the actual repair work is done, the Service Management company will review all invoices to ensure that the labor rates, travel time, travel costs and parts costs were all reasonable and customary (and even make payment to the contractor) and then note which parts are under warranty, should the need for repairs arise again before the warranty expires. The service management provider will also make certain that any environmental regulations are being adhered to throughout the entire process.

And all of this is done with the express goal of ensuring that the maximum amount of fueling-island uptime is achieved.

One company that is currently setting the pace in providing Service Management programs for its end-users is Ryder Fuel Services, based in Houston, TX. Ryder Fuel Services has designed a Web-based system—what it calls “white glove” service—that allows a company’s fuel-system needs to be monitored off-site, which also enables on-site personnel to focus their time and efforts on their actual core responsibilities within the business. Working closely with the customer, Ryder Fuel Services establishes a unique service protocol for each client, in which it attempts to have a problem diagnosed and a contractor dispatched within a four-hour window.

This is possible because Ryder’s Web-based approach to Service Management enables around-the-clock:

- Active system polling and integrity testing that ensures data reliability and accuracy;

- System status monitoring by trained Support Center experts that ensures equipment and systems reliability; and
- Real-time oversight by personnel that monitor system status for repetitive or false alarms and chronic conditions that may prevent compliance.

This Web-based system also allows for more efficient compiling, tracking and review of past service calls, eliminating the need to log information in a notebook or sift through a drawer of old invoices in order to locate past histories. Ryder also monitors its contractor database to ensure that every vendor is up-to-date on its certifications, and will never send a contractor to a customer location if the personnel does not have the proper training on the equipment in the customer's fueling system.

Conclusion

It's simple, really: why would a business owner or facility operator try to perform a job that he or she can't do, or ask an employee to do the same?

That's why it makes nothing but sense for a business that has a fueling component to partner with a company that can take all of the headaches and hassles out of the fueling system's Service Management. That's why savvy businesses are contracting with professional companies that have a Service Management solution in their product offering. Outsourcing Service Management to a third party not only eases the burden on the facility operator, but also provides the peace of mind that is inherent in knowing that you are partnering with a company that has taken ownership of that business segment within your operation, and also has the best interests of your company's overall fuel-management system in mind.

About the author:

Ryder Fuel Services (Houston, TX) is a subsidiary of Ryder System, Inc., and a provider of fuel-management programs that focus on Compliance Management, Remote Monitoring and Alarm Management, Service Management, Fuel Management and Supply, and environmental Best Management Practices. These programs help Ryder Fuel Services customers, depending on their specific needs, improve operating efficiencies, reduce costs and minimize negative environmental impact.

To find out how Ryder Fuel Services can help you, please contact:

Peter J. Cochefski, Director

(281) 647-8900 ext. 222

pcochefski@ryderfs.com