



ADMIN ON THE RUN

Constant paperwork, phone calls, invoicing dramas – one couple accidentally discovered a solution to the administration work keeping operators out of the truck

WORDS COBEY BARTELS

New Zealand-based farmers Sara and Sam Osborn decided to help out a mate who bought a transport company and had taken interest in the paperless system the couple were using to run their stockfeed business.

"My husband and I are running the family stockfeed business, as well as farming, but about 10 years ago some mates of ours bought a livestock transport company," Sara Osborn explains. "My husband Sam had built a basic system to

run our stockfeed business, right from the ordering through to the dispatch and into our accounting program.

"Anyway, our mate said, 'Let's come up with something similar to get rid of all this bloody paper I'm dealing with.'"

That fateful day marked the early beginnings of the now thriving transport management system – MyTrucking – but back then the couple had no idea how far the idea would go.

"We got out a whiteboard with them and they mapped out the five steps most

transport companies have," Sara says. "Traditionally, they were taking a phone call and writing it in the diary, and then the second step was to write out a manifest or run sheet for that truck for the day.

"The third step is that the driver wrote out a docket, and the fourth step is they wrote on that docket the price.

"Finally, the fifth step was manually entering that information into their accounting program, so in total five steps."

Together, the couple were able to combine Sam's technical know-how and Sara's marketing expertise to take their mate's business needs and build a program to handle the day-to-day scheduling and accounting. "Sam came up with a basic system that would do it all from one step and then import into their accounting program – so really it all started from just helping some mates out and that was it."

TIME SAVER

Sara and Sam went back to running their stockfeed business, while, in the background, news of their time-saving program spread by word of mouth.

"Another transport company here in New Zealand saw it and were running their business using a diary with a highlighter and pen and they said, 'Hey, we want that'," Sara recalls.

"So we replicated the software and they started using it."

It wasn't long before another company approached the couple, but this time they figured it must be a product the industry really needs.

"A few years later, another company enquired about it so we thought, 'There's a bit of an opportunity here.'

"Sam and I did a bit of research to see what other programs were out there, and while there are a lot of fantastic programs that do amazing things, there is actually nothing specifically for the rural transporters. So we saw an opportunity and thought, 'Right, let's do this!'"

In 2014, an early cloud-based version of the program officially became MyTrucking, an endeavour that all started with Sam and Sara helping out a mate.

"We redeveloped the software and put it into the cloud in April 2014; that's when MyTrucking really came about," Sara says.



Top: The ever-growing MyTrucking team. Left to right – Jane Cruickshank (support), Dave McKinley (developer), Alex Hoogerden (developer), Sara and Sam Osborn, Craig Weir (support), Sally Smith (admin), Mick Campbell (support) and Anatoly Kazantsev (developer)

Above: The MyTrucking app stores it all in one place and, most importantly, it's simple

APPLICATION EXPANSION

A move into the Australian market was inevitable after rapid success in New Zealand. "An accountant in Australia was looking for add-on solutions for their transport clients and they found us," Sara explains. "From there it's grown through word of mouth, which has been fantastic for us."

"That's how the whole business has grown, and, in this industry, everyone seems to know everyone."

The aim for MyTrucking in Australia, Sara says, is to offer small-to-medium fleets a time-saving system that allows them to focus on driving rather than burdensome administration.

"There are so many small-to-medium transport companies that are run on paper, which is still a great system, but we can make things run more efficiently."

"It saves a lot of that admin paperwork as well as phone calls and, if you add all that up, it saves a lot of time and money."

The basic principle from the beginning for the MyTrucking team has been to provide a single-entry solution, which means you enter a job when you get it and it flows right through the invoicing.

"There are a lot of programs out there but they're all quite complex and you need a lot of training to get up to speed, whereas ours has replicated the good old diary or spreadsheet," Sara says.

"And really, the spreadsheet and the diary aren't broken ... we're just making it easier and making them run more efficiently."

The mobile app is constantly being improved and updated to offer more features, but Sara says the real benefit lies in the portability of the entire system for operators.

"If you're out of the office and running all your drivers and other trucks from your truck, you can add jobs and simply make changes and update the mobile app for drivers as you need."

"It saves a phone call to drivers and it helps the smaller guys who don't necessarily have an allocator in the office at all times."

"You can even ring directly from the mobile app, so you're not trying to find phone numbers; you or a driver can call from the app and all the contact details for jobs are in there."

Record keeping is kept simple with the program, something Sara and Sam intended to achieve from the start, adding to time-savings but also freeing up the mounds of paper records you typically find at a transport company.



Carpendale Transport drivers Ashley Wade and Dave Grey on a run in their Super-Liner road trains

MYTRUCKING SOFTWARE IN OPERATION

Goondiwindi-based Carpendale Commodities & Transport, an 18,000-acre grain farm with commodities and transport arms, took on the MyTrucking software in July 2017 and now swears by it.

ATN caught up with two of the company's drivers, who rolled up in two of Carpendale's double road train Mack Super-Liners, during the recent grain harvest.

Ashley Wade and Dave Grey were both pretty stoked about the MyTrucking app simplifying their job, which means more time behind the wheel and less time messing around with a pen and paper.

"We get receipt printouts at jobs; we used

to have to then re-write half of them but now we just take a photo with the app and it's sorted," Wade says.

Back at the Carpendale office, logistics coordinator Nathan Jorgensen reckons MyTrucking has halved the administration workload, which frees up time to build the transport operation.

"It's cut the workload by 50 per cent around the office, especially at harvest time," Jorgensen says. "When we enter a job, the information pre-fills a lot of the time and isn't double handled."

The big benefit for Carpendale and its drivers, Jorgensen says, is having everything in one

place within the app – from the address of a farm through to contact details.

"On the logistics side it's just as good as the invoicing. Because contact details and farm details are all there, it saves so much time and mistakes. I can also do things remotely, which saves everybody time."

Sara and Sam set out to offer the best service in the game, something Carpendale Transport can confirm they live up to.

"The service has been great, I can't fault them," Jorgensen says. "We've had that much help getting it all set up, and the moment you have a question you've got someone calling you to answer it."

SINGLE ENTRY

The software is compatible on Android and iOS devices, and the company is a Xero and MYOB partner, so from initially entering the job on whatever system you choose, right through to accounting, it remains single entry.

"You've got all that information there in one place, and one thing people really love is the history," Sara says. "As soon as you click the job you instantly see all your previous jobs, and so you might not have done a job for a client

for years but straight away there is the last pricing exactly as it was."

"The big thing is the time savings; it's cost-effective, you know there are not folders of paperwork, and you can log in anywhere on holidays or anywhere and check what's going on and check what's happening."

Nowadays MyTrucking is used by 180 businesses across Australia and New Zealand, meaning Sara and Sam had to enlist the help of some committed support and tech staff along the way.

"It started with Sam and I and one developer, and we were doing everything and anything," Sara says.

"Now we have three more in our support team and three full-time developers. We have an office here on the farm and I've got a young family, so the key is having a great team around us."

"We want to be the leading transport management program across New Zealand and Australia; that's where we want to end up." **A**