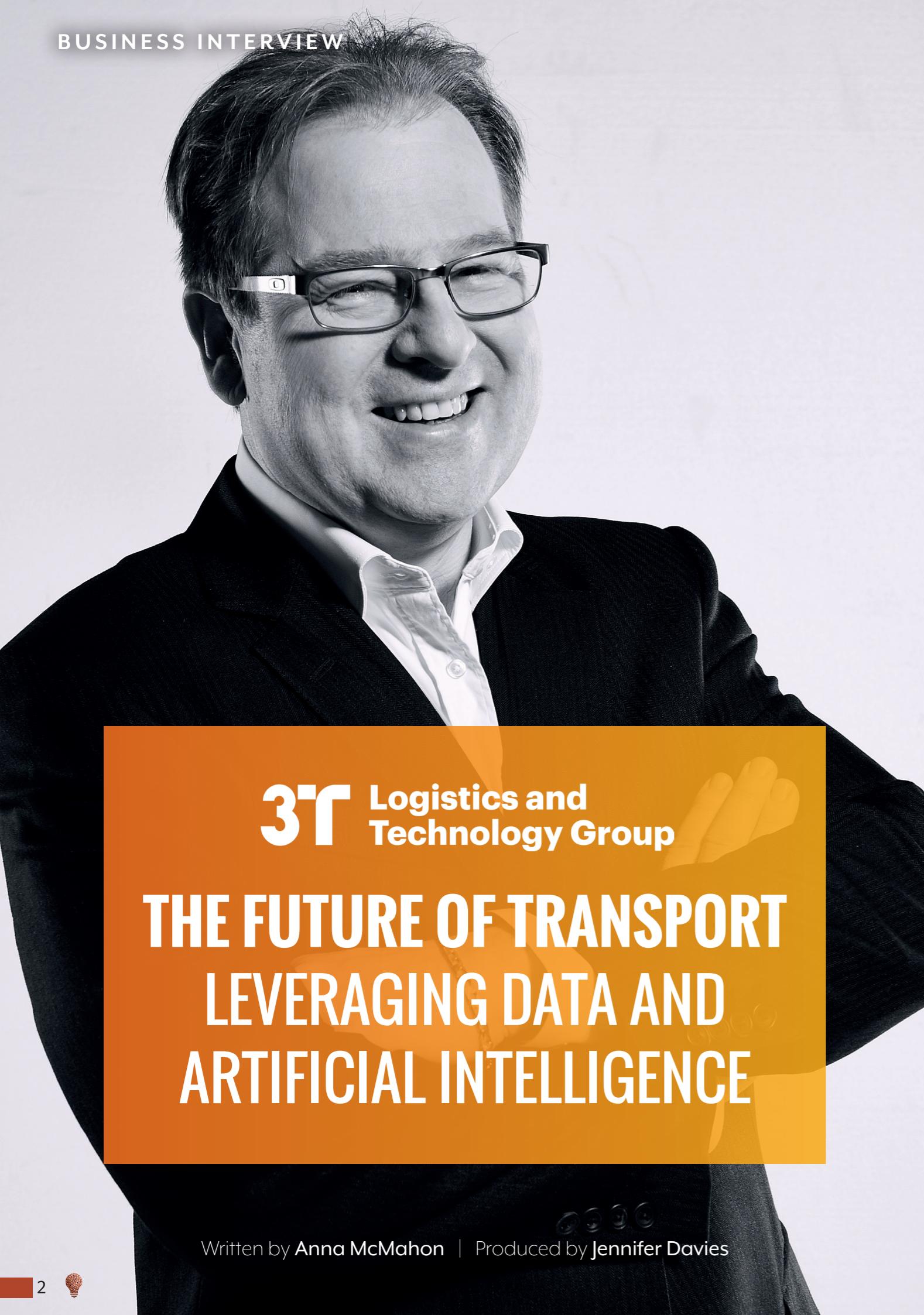




THE FUTURE OF TRANSPORT LEVERAGING DATA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE





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STEVE TWYDELL, CHAIRMAN AT 3T LOGISTICS, CELEBRATES HIS COMPANY'S OVERWHELMING SUCCESS OF THE LAST 20 YEARS. LOOKING AHEAD, HE SAYS LEVERAGING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING THE OPTIMISATION OF VEHICLES.

3T Logistics started life as a tech-enabled 4PL logistics company at the turn of the new millennium, and every solution delivered had its foundations in 3T in-house developed technology. Steve Twydell remembers, “Even at that stage, we knew technology was the direction in which we were heading. Although we started as a solutions provider, we partnered with a software company and quickly acquired it because we knew we had to own the IPR and develop the system ourselves to be in total control. For the first few years, every time we won a new piece of business, we developed the system to support that business. So, our system has developed from providing logistics solutions to solving our customers’ issues.”

The TMS product was very sophisticated and required 3T employees to use it on behalf of the customer. Steve continues, “We provided organisations with a combined package of systems and expertise. As the business grew, we enhanced the system, adopting web-user interfaces and cloud technologies. In 2012, we started asking, ‘How we can

optimise transport and take it to the next level?’ What made us different to other software and logistics companies is that we focused on optimising the skills of our employees, rather than the process. It is essential to optimise the human element first, and that was one of the key reasons why we were so successful.

“By 2010, we switched to optimising the process to develop the ultimate solution. To do this, we needed a very different systems architecture, so we spent almost three years of concentrated R&D determining a strategy. The outcome was not just pure cloud and pure web technology, but a different set of algorithms to run a multi-site, 21st century solution, which is all about optimising vehicle utilisation and automation.”

The other key aspect of 3T Logistics’ business is that it provides the full gambit of solutions, from small consignments such as parcels and pallets, to full truck loads, air and sea, and specialised equipment. The mix of different transport modes meant 3T needed to automate the complete end-to-end (Order to final delivery) process. Steve

PFF Group invests in transport management technology to reduce carbon footprint



Food packaging manufacturer PFF Group has invested in a new transport management system to improve deliveries to customers and reduce its carbon footprint.

PFF is one of the UK's largest independent food packaging manufacturers, supplying packaging products to supermarkets and food manufacturers across the country from its Keighley and Washington sites.

The company also manufactures disposable PPE aprons, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. They are despatched from PFF's Washington site to Department of Health and Social Care depots and distributed for use by NHS frontline health and social care workers.

The new transport management system – delivered by 3T Logistics and Technology Group – is web-based software which enables PFF to plan its logistics more efficiently for the benefit of customers. It enables the consolidation of loads to similar locations, reducing vehicle journeys and therefore carbon emissions.

Lee Wilkinson, group supply chain manager at PFF, said: "We work with a pool of hauliers and the software enables us to select the best carriers for locations where we can do multiple drop deliveries."

"By making sure we have filled the vehicles, we are reducing costs and the environmental impact as the amount of carbon per pallet delivered is reduced."

"The new system also tracks delivery lorries to ensure they arrive on time and manages proof of delivery. This means we are improving service to customers who are increasingly seeking suppliers with reduced carbon usage."

PFF will use the data drawn from the system to set targets and monitor its carbon emissions.

Rob Hutton, sales and marketing director at 3T Logistics and Technology Group, said: "We see the introduction of our TMS solution as a critical step in PFF's digital transformation. Our solution will automate and optimise PFF's transport operations, giving them full control of transport management and bringing greater levels of transparency and visibility."

"The collaboration between 3T and PFF showcases two fast-growing British businesses with a global outlook that are using technology to drive efficiency and innovation. We look forward to working with PFF and providing the logistics solutions they need to scale their business and further accelerate growth."

Find out more at www.pff.uk.com



explains, "We have done a huge amount of work on our new system. Key elements are the Carrier Store and Multi-Customer Collaboration modules. The system takes information from several clients, consolidates the data and builds dynamic routes and round trips to utilise vehicles optimally in any 24-hour period. It also offers significant environmental benefits because it reduces greenhouse gases by using fewer vehicles, and the system can measure with a high degree of accuracy."

Logistics companies are currently facing a crisis, with an estimated 20 to 30 per cent shortage in HGV drivers. Companies therefore need to be more creative in how they use transport to overcome this problem. Steve says, "The Road Haulage Association estimates that we have a shortage of about 100,000 HGV drivers in the UK. We left the EU, so we have lost about 15,000 EU drivers, and Covid stopped 30,000 HGV tests from taking place. It is the perfect storm. We have got to use technology to improve the utilisation of vehicles."

"TECHNOLOGY IS CREATING A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIVING, BUT, FUNDAMENTALLY, IT WILL CHANGE LOGISTICS AND THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY FOREVER"

Steve Twydell,
Chairman at 3T Logistics

So, how do you better utilise vehicles? Steve answers, "Currently, companies do not talk to each other and there is no real collaboration, and with the driver shortage, vehicles are running even more empty miles than they were before. Every company has its own agenda, so it's impossible for companies to collaborate without external help. It is only now, with our ability to analyse huge amounts of data, that we are able to put in systems that will enable the collaboration to utilise vehicles more effectively."



across internal and external customer networks."

As for the driver shortage issue, Steve says the problem will be solved within the next five years. He explains, "Driverless vehicles will happen and sooner than people think, once the commercial advantages are fully understood. The impact will be huge. There will be a period of time when you will have drivers in driverless vehicles, but they will not be drivers as such. They will be administrators, a different type of operator. The whole concept that vehicles can only be used when a driver is present and during drivers' hours will be overturned. If driver hours are not an issue, then vehicles could run 24 hours a

day, and you suddenly add in 50 to 60 per cent capacity into the network."

In recognition of its continued focus on technology and innovation, 3T Logistics has been included in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Transportation Management Systems for the last four years. Steve enthuses, "When we were first introduced to Gartner, we felt that they were very impressed with what we were trying to achieve with our TMS technology. We have been winning some major corporate deals because large global companies are starting to recognise that they cannot use the old 3PL model anymore. That model is built upon assets, fixed infrastructure and people, and it has been overtaken

by the flexibility that modern technology provides."

Steve describes 3T Logistics' TMS as an ecosystem, as he explains, "The mainstream adoption of API's means you can easily integrate with different applications, for any solution. You can use 3T modules, as well as linking into the best complementary applications that are not ours, which means a software one-stop shop."

For ease of use and administration, customers often go to one company that manages many different carriers. Steve says it was 3T's raison d'être to use a multi-carrier model and provide customers with the right carrier for the

right lane. This is the same one-stop shop mentality as per the software systems. He says, "There are huge savings in doing this, often 20 per cent plus. This thought process has always been in our psyche, and is the reason we have focused so much resource on developing technology that can handle multi-carrier, multi-lane and multi-mode complexity."

Steve argues that the traditional 3PL business model is so fragmented that it has had its day. He continues, "Everything is single-site, manual and human process-driven. If there are no holistic systems in place, you cannot analyse the huge amounts of data to optimise vehicles and reduce costs. That is the direction in which the technology is heading. It is all about AI, machine learning, and using the data to make better informed decisions and remembering what you have done in the past that works."

So, to conclude, can we expect workers to be replaced by the systems they have developed? Steve answers, "Technology is creating a different way of living, but, fundamentally, it will change logistics and the whole of society forever. It's not just about replacing workers, all our infrastructure is geared towards what humans can manage. The reality is that if you take away the human constraints, you will need to redesign the location of distribution networks and how they work. In essence, all logistics infrastructure will change, and then along comes 3D printing. Now that's another story..."

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recognised in the

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