

Automatic Dimensioning

Increase Productivity to Meet your Goals

Verifying dimensions submitted by customers is time and labour intensive. In a world of tight deadlines, high expectations and impatient customers, carriers must be swifter than ever. Transport companies face the problem of getting everything done - recording dimensions, weight and ID, sorting, loading and delivering - within a very tight time frame. And all the while, they must maintain a high level of service to uphold customer trust.

While carriers know that charging by dimensions rather than weight will increase their revenue, time restrictions won't always allow for this extra step in the process. Often the measuring of dimensions, and the extra revenue that results from this, is sacrificed in order to get a package out on time. Conversely, manual measuring is time consuming and prone to error. It doesn't provide accurate or repeatable results and can therefore lead to incorrect invoices. For optimum operational efficiency, an automatic measuring solution is the key.

Dimensions



Choosing the correct solution for optimum efficiency

Start by taking a look at your current operation. Make an evaluation based on your throughput. Consider how many parcels you process, what the volume is during peak hours and what the potential volume could be if you were able to increase productivity levels. Identify problematic areas in your operation. Where are the bottlenecks? What doesn't get prioritized? You should think about the type of objects that move through your facility – parcels, pallets, what shape? What size? Take into consideration the speed of your conveyors, the data you require. All of these things will have an impact on the type of system you should buy.

Weight



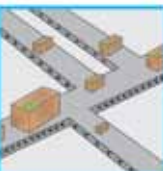
Automated processes

To optimize productivity on an automated conveyor line, a dynamic weighing, dimensioning and scanning (DWS) system is ideal. The system will capture the dimensions, weight and ID of each parcel as it moves along the conveyor. This eliminates the need for additional procedures as all data is captured in one go. The system can be integrated with sophisticated sorting and tracking software that instructs the sorter to send a parcel to a specific destination. A fully automated process ensures the highest possible throughput.

Identification



Sorting



Correct bar-code identification

There are a number of bar-code reading options available for different types of operation. Typically used in automated processes is an unattended, overhead bar-code reader. You might choose the option of incorporating an additional handheld bar-code reader to scan

any bar-codes that the overhead bar-code reader cannot see. Your system can provide a 100% read rate on dimensions, weight and ID. Any packages with missing or damaged information can be stopped or diverted for manual inspection. You define your own level of control. In fully automated, high volume processes, a bar-code reading tunnel will read labels on up to six sides of a parcel; ensuring maximum read rate and further speeding up processes.

Small operations benefit too

Smaller operations won't have a fully automated line or advanced sorting system but productivity will still improve significantly with automatic measuring. Typically, stand-alone solutions are used. The system will capture dimensions, weight and ID once it is triggered by an operator using a hand held bar-code reader. The information is then sent to the IT system and an invoice is automatically generated.

It is typical that smaller outfits struggle to get everything done on time as they have no or limited levels of automation. An automatic measuring solution that is linked to a label printer and invoicing system reduces the number of processes to be carried out.



Irregular shaped items

Parcels come in all shapes and sizes. If a number of the parcels you process fall into the irregular category, you should make sure that your system is suitable to measure all shapes. Many automatic measuring systems on the market are only approved to measure regular, solid objects. They won't provide accurate results on bags, cans, barrels etc. or boxes that have been over-filled or dented. Carriers lose the most money on these irregular shaped items. Such objects also take the most time to process as they are difficult to measure manually and might not fit easily into vans or containers. Advanced dimensioning technology will calculate the smallest rectangular box that an irregular shape fits into. The item will then be invoiced based on the space it needs in a vehicle.



When does investment in an automatic system start to pay off?

The answer to this is straight away. From day one you will begin capturing extra revenue and after your investment has paid for itself, all extra revenue secured is pure profit. In the example to the right, payback time is five weeks.

This example is conservative and only takes into consideration the extra revenue gained through invoicing based on data generated by automatic dimensioning. There are in addition, other significant cost savings to be made by automating the measuring process.

Average no. of parcels shipped per day	2000
Average shipping cost per parcel	€40
Operating days per year	250
Extra revenue captured per day (3%)	€2400
Extra revenue captured per year	€600,000
Payback time	5 weeks

Streamlining processes

Process streamlining is the improvement of an overall process with a certain goal in mind. For the carrier company, the objective is to deliver as many packages or pallets - to the right destination within the designated time frame - as possible. Maximizing capacity, while minimizing the number of mis-sorts is essential. An automatic DWS solution can be integrated with any sorting line and track-and-trace system to streamline processes. Dimension, weight and identification data is instantly sent to the sorting line and the package is correctly sorted and ready to be loaded into the next vehicle.

Intelligent loading

This increased level of productivity in both static and dynamic applications extends to loading. By knowing the volume of all shipments you are better prepared to load vehicles. Many of your key customers will ship the same sized boxes over and over again. By having the dimensional data of these items, you can calculate how best to fill a space. Furthermore, a focus on dimensions rather than weight encourages denser and better packing. Your customers will be less likely to over-fill, or under-fill boxes making life easier for everyone.

Better use of resources

The higher the level of automation in your operation, the less need there is for extra manual labour. By cutting down on the number of people needed to process a package or pallet, you save money. Saved resources can be used to improve performance in another area.

Meeting your goals – keeping customers happy

The Express Business is called so for a reason. The industry is characterized by speed. Customers expect deliveries within one to two days, leaving no room for inefficiency. Automatic measuring will ensure that you work at optimum capacity and that your pallets and parcels don't stay in the terminal for long. Along with revenue recovered on items that have been accurately weighed and dimensioned, better use of resources, increased throughput and improved customer trust will all have a positive effect on your bottom line. Investment in an automatic dimensioning, weighing and scanning solution is fool proof.



METTLER TOLEDO has the broadest range of dimensioning solutions in the industry. Whether your operation calls for fully automated, semi automated or static measuring, we can advise you on how best to boost productivity and generate extra revenue.

Be Productive. Contact METTLER TOLEDO for a Free Consultation.

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