Sustainable Distribution Systems at GloryBee

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Louisa de Heer, Sustainability Manager at GloryBee

GloryBee is a family owned natural ingredients supplier and distributor in Eugene, Oregon. Sustainability is embedded into their mission and core values, which translates into a commitment to make its distribution system as low-impact as possible. Their self-managed transportation system of trucks accounts for nearly two-thirds of GloryBee’s total tracked carbon footprint. 34 million out of the 55 million pounds of GloryBee product sold in 2018 were transported across 600,000 miles via 17 trucks on 25 routes and 3 bike routes.

Sustainable Distribution Goals

Finding ways to increase transportation efficiency and protect drivers – who are a core part of their business—from unnecessarily long hours as the company grows is an important part of the sustainability program. GloryBee’s distribution program strives to manage from a triple bottom line perspective: save money, minimize pollution and resource extraction, and ensure drivers are empowered to succeed. The program has 4 core goals:

1. Sustainable Growth
2. Distribution Efficiency
3. Reduced Climate Impact
4. Align Outcomes with Company Culture

The following projects are a great example of how clear goals can drive triple-bottom-line outcomes. Recent updates also explore the challenges and cost benefit that must be taken into account. Enjoy reading about GloryBee’s multi-faceted approach to their distribution model.

GOAL #1: Sustainable Growth—Utilize Bike Transportation Options

In 2017, GloryBee expanded downtown bike routes through partnerships with B Line and Peddlers Express in Portland and Eugene, OR, respectively. The goals: reduce traffic congestion and exhaust emissions, and reduce
drivers’ stress and time on busy downtown streets for deliveries. In 2017, 459,000 pounds were transported by bike—an increase of 51% over 2016. However, the economics of delivering this way around Eugene, where the truck loaded up at the distribution center, offloaded to a bike company who then pedaled loads around the city, just couldn’t pencil out with overlapping truck distribution. They removed that route, losing a third of the bike deliveries in 2018. However, in 2019 they are reviewing interest from customers to receive merchandise in this way within certain clear areas and with specific weight minimums.

**GOAL #2: Distribution Efficiency— Route planning**

Routes are set up by geographic area and delivery days, and managed by a distribution logistics team. The distribution coordinator and driver both evaluate new customer distribution routes via initial planning and on-the-ground assessment to develop the most efficient route plan. This reduces time on the road, fuel used per pound of product transported, and helps ensure GloryBee drivers are never away from home for more than two nights. They perform route optimization reviews in partnership with the sales and distribution teams to make sure routes are continuously as efficient as possible.

**GOAL #3: Reduce Climate Impact— Biofuel, compressed natural gas, and a focus on efficiency**

All GloryBee owned trucks run on B20 biodiesel. The biofuel is locally sourced and processed, and blended to get a high efficiency mix for the fleet. Tyree and SeQuential Biofuels are an excellent partner fit because: 1) They use recycled oil fuel sources, 2) trucks are fueled at the GloryBee truck yard, saving drivers time and effort on the road, and 3) they pick up any GloryBee product waste oil and turn it into biofuel.

Also in 2017, GloryBee converted three of their trucks to run dual fuel CNG (compressed natural gas). Dual fuel CNG trucks run more efficiently than straight biofuel trucks, traveling farther on less fuel, and costing less to run. Evidence suggests that CNG emits less particulate exhaust, but the technology is changing quickly for both diesel and CNG, and GloryBee is committed to staying at the forefront of emissions minimization.

In 2018, they took the initiative to sell off three older trucks and lease new, high efficiency diesel trucks, which boosted the overall fleet’s efficiency. Further, they schedule these trucks more frequently, ensuring they are on the road most often to benefit from the better fuel mileage.

**GOAL #4: Align Company Culture— Green Incentives**

GloryBee’s driver bonus system includes incentives on safety and customer satisfaction, but also sustainability. Specifically, reduced idle time—the less time a truck spends idling, the higher the bonus. Metrics are calculated from electronic onboard recording devices that keep track of truck location, speed, and engine revolutions. To ensure success, drivers receive green incentive training annually.

**Results**

In 2018, the GloryBee fleet averaged just under 7 miles per gallon, a 4% increase from 2017. While upgrades to the onboard truck monitoring systems caused some hiccups in tracking, they are confident that they will sustain the increased fuel efficiency with the choices made in route planning and truck upgrades.

Further, they achieved the highest ever cube utilization (lb/mile), up 16% from 2017, through smart route planning. They lost a major bike route because it didn’t pencil out economically. However, they are looking into new ways to incentivize customers to opt for bike delivery in dense urban areas.
What’s next?

GloryBee is focused on driver training programs, and continuous improvement in route efficiency. In 2019, GloryBee’s team will look into additional opportunities for haul backs, ensuring trucks are never running empty. As technology allows, GloryBee is committed to minimizing their carbon footprint in distribution to get customers what they need when they need it.