

There's nothing like a crisis to get people moving

Harbor Watch meets labor challenges amidst COVID-19 and other disasters

By Reid Nelson



Using Harbor Watch, a tablet or a Smartphone, maritime unions can schedule and dispatch labor in real time, view current member work history and send text messages to any number of workers.

CHARLESTON, S.C. – Already facing the constant threat of hurricanes, flooding, and power outages, businesses and industries located in seaports along the East and Gulf coasts are struggling more than ever to find ways to survive...and thrive...amidst the ever-changing complications caused by COVID-19 and the resulting “new normal” created by the worldwide pandemic. One company is already helping the maritime industry meet its growing challenges.

Dispatch Dynamics, Inc., a Charleston, S.C.-based software company, has been providing cloud-based remote work solutions for the maritime industry for nearly a decade. In fact, **Harbor Watch is the only cloud-based dispatch application in the maritime industry today.**

A Virtual Hiring Hall that Saves Time. Saves Money. Saves Lives.

Now with the pandemic further complicating how work gets done in seaports, Dispatch Dynamics’ “virtual hiring and dispatch” software often means the difference between success and failure for any business that relies on, or is transitioning to, a mobile work force.

According to DDI president and CEO Jody Newman, Harbor Watch “virtual hiring and dispatch” is a suite of eight craft-based dispatch applications designed around seniority order specifically for the maritime industry and the International Longshoremen. “In addition to cloud-based scheduling and digital data archiving, Harbor Watch provides instant text messages to hundreds or even thousands of maritime workers simultaneously,” says Newman. “Our Virtual Hiring Hall provides all the functionality of a brick-and-mortar facility, but without the risks associated with COVID-19 exposure. From the safety and convenience of their Smartphones, employers, dispatchers,

union officials and members can accomplish everything they need to do from any remote location without the inherent and increasingly risk that comes with face-to-face contact.”

Given the stringent mandates, both locally and nationally, limiting face-to-face interaction in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, not to mention the devastating results of the six hurricanes that overwhelmed Texas and parts of the Gulf Coast last summer, DDI software offers maritime companies an efficient way to continue doing business despite disruptions to power, internet and land-line communication. “More importantly, DDI’s remote work solutions allow companies transitioning to a mobile work force to provide employees or independent contractors with a secure mobile app to indicate their availability for work according to shift, job and/or seniority,” adds Newman. “Every step of the remote hiring process is transparent and



In the midst of a pandemic is union labor prepared to meet the growing demands created by the growth of the Port?

viewable in real-time on a password-protected website, even as jobs are being scheduled by the dispatcher.”

Using Harbor Watch Virtual Hiring application, a tablet or a Smartphone, maritime unions can schedule and dispatch workers in real time, view current employee’s work history and send text messages to any number of workers.

Harbor Watch supports Port security

In addition to providing employers and port security with digital dispatch orders containing member photos, Harbor Watch demonstrated its mass communication value when a security threat was called in to the Port of Charleston at approximately 8 p.m. on June 15, 2017. Within the hour, an ILA Local used Harbor Watch to send 1,350 members working in the port 5,000 text messages, keeping them safe and informed as events unfolded.

“Given the restrictions on assembly caused by the pandemic and the reluctance of some

ILA Locals to embrace change and technology, International Longshoremen will continue to endure long lines outside their hiring halls as they wait for daily job assignments,” Newman continued. “The members in these same Locals could be at risk, considering the current and growing health threat posed by COVID-19.”

No one can predict how long the current pandemic will continue to impact labor and underscore the need for remote work solutions. But natural disasters, power outages and other disruptive events will forever create challenges for maritime labor and management. The digitalization of the work-flow processes and the connectivity offered by Harbor Watch will continue to provide intuitive, easy-to-use solutions to maritime labor for decades to come. **Utilizing the proven framework of their signature software, Dispatch Dynamics offers web-based workforce solutions to other industries with: Rapid Dispatch, V-Tracker and People Mover.**

“With zero downtime for seven years, Harbor Watch digital dispatch has performed flawlessly for participating ILA Locals, Newman concludes. “We are prepared to provide maritime labor with the digital transformation needed to meet and conquer 21st-century challenges. Our remote hiring solutions are designed *to do more than simply help our clients continue to do ‘business as usual’ — but to do business, better, more efficiently and more cost-effectively.*”



Jody Newman, President & CEO Dispatch Dynamics, Inc.

Port of LA Leader calls for industry-wide digital transformation

“Digital transformation is a way to get our economy back on its feet and make it more resilient to future challenges.”

Gene Seroka, Executive Director Port of Los Angeles

To learn more about Harbor Watch and its remote workforce solutions visit DispatchDynamics.com.