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Process Excellence at APM Terminals Rotterdam Improves Service level to Truckers, while Reducing Costs

- **Every week, over 5,000 trucks enter APM Terminals Rotterdam to transport the global container trade. In 2009, management wanted to constantly improve service levels to the trucking community.**

The Process Excellence project in APM Terminals Rotterdam helped improve trucker turntimes and save EUR 110,000 per year by organizing resources in a more efficient way.

Rotterdam, Netherlands – Guided by market research information that trucking companies prefer a "guaranteed maximum turnaround time" at the container terminal - rather than a "good average service time", APM Terminals Rotterdam shifted its focus from average service levels to a defined maximum acceptable service time for trucks. This time varies per activity, and includes documentation processing, container handling and customs clearance.

The company decided to use the Process Excellence (PEX) approach and made this a Black Belt project. Black Belts are dedicated project managers, who apply a structured team project approach combined with advanced statistical tools.

"Although the average turnaround time in Q4 2009 was acceptable, we identified that only 76% of the truck visits were within the maximum accepted turnaround time", mentions Wijnand Visser, Shift Manager at APM Terminals Rotterdam and a PEX Black Belt.

Using data analysis, the company learned that many service defects resulted from not having a truck handling service during Labor shift changes and limited service during meal breaks. Equally important, there was a shift in arrival patterns of trucks from the morning to the early afternoon, resulting in many of the port's straddle

carriers assigned for truck handling – going idle in the morning.

The project team identified a solution, working closely with the local Works Council and the leadership of the Trade Union to ask straddle carrier operators to work in a mid-day shift, or "M-shift". These operators work during the meal break of the regular dayshift and during the afternoon Labor shift change. This ensured a steady flow of straddle carriers to serve the trucking community while reducing port congestion and shortening trucker turnaround times. This resulted in straddle carrier productivity increasing nearly 10%. The "M-shift" option is only used when needed.

After introduction of the M-shifts, APM Terminals Rotterdam significantly improved customer service performance by serving 89% of the trucks in time, while saving over EUR 110,000 per year.

Speaking at the 2010 Benelux Process Excellence Regional Forum in Brussels, Belgium, Leo Bevelander, Business Process Manager for APM Terminals Rotterdam explained "As the terminal's volume grows, we see potential to expand the use of M-shifts, increasing the financial benefits, while maintaining the newly achieved service level".

"This project taught us that data analysis is essential to fully understand and get the best out of the terminal's operation. Effective solutions can be found by a team of people from various backgrounds and improved service levels do not always require more investment" concludes Rob Sponselee, Director of Operations at APM Terminals Rotterdam.

About APM Terminals in the Netherlands

Home to Rotterdam, Europe's largest container port, The Netherlands remains a vital transit point and corridor for global trade.

APM Terminals, which has world headquarters in The Hague and a European regional headquarters office in Rotterdam, operates one major container facility in the Netherlands, with another currently in development. The destination of the very first international containerized cargo shipment in 1966 (from Port Elizabeth, New Jersey), Rotterdam is the 10th busiest port worldwide with an annual throughput of 9.7 million TEUs in 2009.

APM Terminals Rotterdam, one of the largest container terminals in Europe, was first established in October 2000. As of November 2009, it is one of the first container terminals to "go green" with wind-generated electrical power for cranes and other operations. Rotterdam is a major transshipment center for the British, Irish, Scandinavian and Baltic Markets, with multi-modal access to the 320 million-strong consumer, commercial and industrial center of Continental Europe. Throughput at the Rotterdam Terminal was 2.4 million TEUs in 2009. APM Terminals is also developing a new terminal at Rotterdam's Maasvlakte 2 site.

Terminal Facts:

APM Terminals Rotterdam

- Capacity: 3.5 million TEUs

APM Terminals Maasvlakte II port project

- Capacity when completed: 4.5 million TEUS
- Opening: 2014

About APM Terminals

– providing the port infrastructure to drive global commerce

APM Terminals operates a Global Terminal Network of 50 terminals with 22,000 employees in 34 countries that provide the port infrastructure essential to international transportation and global economic growth. The liner shipping industry, served by APM Terminals and other operators, carries $4.6 trillion worth of international trade - approximately one third of the total value of global commerce. Media can download more information at www.apmterminals.com

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