



## Finding the Right Operational Balance

**As the waste industry moves forward and new technology is introduced, SOFT-PAK IMPROVES UPON THEIR SOFTWARE PACKAGES ENABLING THEM TO GROW WITH THEIR CUSTOMERS.**



Throughout the company's growth and transition, Nick Casagrande, who has worked for SWS since 2009 in the role of IT Director, has been part of its major business strategies. Photo courtesy of Southern Waste Systems.

### **SOUTHERN WASTE SYSTEMS (SWS) (LANTANA, FL)**

serves southeast Florida from Indian River County to Miami-Dade County. Since 1999, the company has grown rapidly through acquisitions and increased market share. With four lines of business—roll-off, front end commercial, recycling facilities and portable toilets, there are nearly 400 employees and 100 trucks on the road. Throughout the company's growth and transition, Nick Casagrande, who has worked for SWS since 2009 in the role of IT Director, has been part of its major business strategies. With 50 years of family history in the waste industry and 10 years in the role of Waste Management Corporate IT behind him, Casagrande was an essential part of getting Southern Waste Systems programs up to par.

### **Integrating an Efficient Software System**

At the end of 1999, SWS was a small company experiencing solid and consistent growth. As a result, in 2000, they decided to look into purchasing a software system that could easily integrate hauling, post collection, and reporting timely and accurately. Born on the back of a garbage truck, Casagrande looks at the IT portion of the waste industry through a different view with higher expectations and deliverables, so he knew that the company needed a product that could support all lines of business and that offered ease of use with superior reporting capabilities. In addition, the product had to work seamlessly across 10 locations.

After researching several companies and their systems, SWS decided upon Soft-Pak (San Diego, CA), a company that offers integrated software solutions for the waste industry. Soft-Pak allows hauling companies the ability to easily manage all lines of businesses, including billing, routing, customer service, scales, inventory and fleet maintenance. "Soft-Pak was great when it came time to implement the system. In less than a month, we were billing and routing," says Casagrande. "The owners of the company chose I-Pak when they began operations and it was the best choice as it has grown with our business in all aspects."

SWS started with Soft-Pak's 'I-Pak' solution, which operated on an in house server supported by SWS's IT team. In 2010, SWS made the decision to switch to 'E-Pak', the hosted "cloud" solution. Without any loss of service or functionality, SWS reduced their annual capital expense by alleviating the need to support an onsite server. "The switch was easy; our users did not notice the difference. Daily activities and month end billing and reporting performances actually increased with E-Pak. Our customer service and scale operators are more efficient with faster response times. In addition, we put the E-Pak server onto our internal corporate network for security and robustness. This allowed us to not only use a VPN tunnel, which Soft-Pak fully supports, but also gave us added piece of mind. When you run a business as big as ours, sometimes you need to step up and do things a better way," says Casagrande.

Casagrande also stresses that the I-Pak solution integrates between hauling and transfer and back office reporting through a multitude of ways. "Different modules of the system all balance to each other financially, and Soft-Pak provides excellent tech support. There is always a real person answering the phone who solves the issues from cradle to grave."

### **Real Results**

Because SWS is now able to view operations in the field in real-time, Casagrande says there is no daily upload/download that occurs between all locations as is the case with other products. "Everything from billing to routing to pickup and delivery is tracked accurately and quickly. In addition, since we have been on the E-Pak-hosted solution, our internal costs have dropped significantly because we are not supporting any in-house hardware or software solutions. All data, backups, patches, updates and enhancements are handled by Soft-Pak on a 24/7 basis."

Casagrande goes on to stress that when considering purchasing a software package, companies must also think about how much hardware is also needed and the additional costs, whether or not your company has the expertise to support the system or if an outside

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consultant is needed, what happens if the system crashes and how long will the system be down, and if expensive database software has to be purchased. “In fact, the one problem we did have about nine months ago was when the California data center lost power for a few hours due to the power company,” says Casagrande. “Soft-Pak has since relocated their main E-Pak servers to a secure data center in Utah, which meets all industry certifications for hosting enterprise applications and we have not had a problem since then. I also know Soft-Pak has invested in a secondary back up data center in San Diego that replicates everything in real-time. Soft-Pak has invested a lot to be redundant, and if they did switch over to San Diego ... our users would never know the difference.”

### The Most Practical Solution

Since the original Soft-Pak solution was implemented all those years ago, SWS has remained a loyal customer and continues to contact them for support and customer requests. “We’ve been able to provide accurate billing and routing to our customers while gaining valuable insight into the financial aspects of our business. The software has grown with our business, there’s no report that can’t be produced. Most companies who start small and expand over time usually have to move onto a bigger and better package. We haven’t had to do that and don’t anticipate having too,” says Casagrande. “As the industry moves forward and new technology is introduced, Soft-Pak takes those things and figures out a way to bake them into their product and make it better for their customer. We anticipate adding blackberry handhelds to our fleet very soon to give us real-time GPS tracking and service information as it happens to be able to analyze data and change direction if needed on the fly.”

*For more information about Soft-Pak, contact Chris Anselmo at (888) 763-8725, ext. 513, e-mail [canselmo@soft-pak.com](mailto:canselmo@soft-pak.com) or visit [www.soft-pak.com](http://www.soft-pak.com).*

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