

## APS Technology Special Report



### Five Steps to Selecting the Right Gate Security Solution for Your Terminal

Recently the Brazilian government passed legislation mandating the use of character recognition software to read license plates on containers at container terminals. Companies are expected to send the images and data to customs officials in real time and store the images for at least 90 days to increase port security and visibility for customs officials. The government's goal is a first step towards reducing bureaucracy and paperwork, and the benefit to you is reduced labor, higher operating margins, faster throughput and real-time visibility into cargo.

Brazil is in the process of modernizing the country's port infrastructure to bring it inline with the current demands of international trade. Ports in Brazil handle 95% of the country's trade by volume, so participation in international trade is heavily dependant on reliable and efficient infrastructure and logistics. With the increased demand for security in international trade, ports throughout the world have been embracing gate technology and process automation and are reaping the benefits through increased cargo visibility, velocity and volume.

You've probably been wondering where to start in your search for the right gate security solution for your business. How much will this cost? How long does it take to implement? What benefits can I expect to receive? What is the typical return on investment for a project like this? What will my competition be implementing?

As an overview, gate automation solutions include ultra-industrial hardware and cutting edge software to identify, inspect, track and manage equipment in real time. Benefits you can expect include lower operating costs, increased capacity and safe, efficient processes that lead to improved market share and higher margins. An optical character recognition component, the gate OCR portal, provides automatic, centralized identification and inspection of containerized cargo and equipment entering and exiting the terminal via over-the-road trucks. The system can automatically identify containers, chassis, license plates, gensets and HAZMAT placards associated with the equipment.

The right gate solution for your business is the one that addresses your specific challenges, such as increasing efficiency, reducing bottlenecks, reducing operating costs, improving safety and security and reducing your impact on the environment. As a preview, the five critical steps in selecting the right gate automation solution are:

*“We decided to add gate automation to provide a more systematic process to decrease truck dwell time and improve the quality of the gate process for our customers.”* Saud Al Onani, Terminal Manager for GSCCO of Saudi Arabia.

1) Find a provider with real-world experience automating terminal operations – when searching for a mission critical application like gate automation it is very risky to choose a vendor that has limited experience. Find a vendor who can demonstrate successful implementation at facilities with similar requirements to yours.

2) Look at the total value the solution provides to your business over time, not just the initial price of the system.

3) Make sure you choose a provider who has local representation to better understand your needs and provide more personalized support.

4) Make sure your system has proven integration with leading terminal operating, PDS and other technology you employ.

5) Look beyond the gate for more efficiencies. Now may be the time to implement visibility and tracking solutions for crane and rail areas of your business.

Read on to learn how you can find the best gate automation solution to meet your business goals – and to avoid the pitfalls that can really set your business back.

### ***1. Find a provider with real world experience automating terminal operations***

While it may be tempting to base your decision on price alone, this tactic can often lead to lost time and money due to a less robust system and a slow project that is plagued by delays and poor integration with other equipment. Implementing a “new to market” solution to automate mission critical process is too risky and potentially costly for terminal operators.

The best gate automation solution provider for your business is the one who has proven experience implementing successful solutions in businesses that are very similar to yours. Ask for examples of quantifiable benefits that other companies are achieving with the solution. Obtain a list of references and speak to the terminal managers personally.

Find out how the solution is performing for them, how smooth the implementation went and whether they would recommend it to you. After all, when you're considering a mission critical application to manage your terminal, do you want to be one of the first companies to install it?

## **2. Consider value over time when evaluating price**

When assessing the price of a gate automation solution, be sure to look at the potential for savings and new business gained over time. Often a gate solution will pay for itself in the first year through operating cost reduction and increased capacity. The actual price of a system has many components, and what you ultimately should consider is the total cost of ownership over the lifetime of the system.

The right gate automation solution provides so many operating cost benefits. When calculating your total return on investment, be sure to take into account these factors:

- Improved security and safety
- Reduced operating costs
- Higher productivity and throughput capacity
- Greater visibility and centralized management of operations
- Improved environmental impact through reduced emissions
- Seamless integration with terminal operating system and other complementary equipment

Talk to your provider about assisting you with a one, three and five-year payback analysis. You may be surprised at what you find.

### **Case in point: Gate throughput increase for Ports America**

*Ports America installed the APS Gate OCR Portal system at each of the four exit lanes at its Baltimore, MD facility, which provided real-time identification of container and trailers via optical character recognition.*

#### **Benefits gained:**

- *500% increase in gate throughput capacity*
- *Elimination of gate queues and backup of traffic into the container yard*
- *Increased safety and security by relocating inspection clerks from the lanes to a remote area where any system exceptions could be managed via system software.*

### **3. Look for local support and expertise**

Working with a company who understands your needs, culture and language is vital to a project's success. Verify that your provider has a local representative who understands the needs in your region and who will come to your facility when you need them. After all, if you are facing an operational issue or have a question about your system, you don't want to worry about what time it is half way around the world to see if your provider's support desk is open and ready for business. A local representative provides assurance that any service issue will be handled promptly, correctly and in a timely manner.

*"Our goal is to provide a valuable service in the growing international shipping market, and to increase our efficiency and productivity by applying state-of-the-art technology. We are the first terminal in Turkey with automated gate and crane OCR, which will benefit our customers with faster turnaround times, increased capacity and more accurate service."*  
Robert Yuksel Yildirim, Yilport, Turkey

### **4. Make sure your provider has systems integration experience and the ability to manage your project turnkey**

Your solution provider should be able to demonstrate proven experience integrating with leading terminal operating, PDS solutions and other technology providers. With proven integration experience, you gain a more seamless connection which speeds time to delivery, reduces costs and the resource strain on your staff.

Finding a solution provider that can manage your project turnkey – from software developer and engineer to hardware and software integrator and support provider, will save you headaches over dealing with multiple providers. Many projects have suffered when the integrating party cannot get the proper adjustments and commitments from the underlying software company. Going with one partner who develops, implements and supports their own product gives you peace of mind along with a faster, less expensive implementation than an outside third party integrator can provide.

### **5. Look beyond the gate for even more efficiencies**

When researching options to increase the efficiency, capacity and margins at your terminal, you probably want to look beyond the gate at other areas for improvement. Rail and crane solutions can be added to maximize your efficiency and to give you end-to-end visibility into inventory and assets. If you find one provider that offers a full suite of terminal automation solutions, you'll save time in integrating systems, and support is greatly simplified since you only have to call one partner for any automation issues.

Now you know the critical factors involved in selecting the right gate automation for your business. The next step is to analyze your operational needs and determine the areas where you will see the most ROI for your investment.

### **About APS Technology Group**

APS Technology Group is a leading provider of OCR and automation technology solutions for marine and intermodal terminals. The solutions improve the productivity, efficiency and cost effectiveness of container operations by increasing the visibility, velocity, and volume of cargo moving through a terminal's gate, rail, vessel and yard operations.

APS leads the industry with over 700 OCR and automation systems installed at 40 marine and intermodal container terminals in 14 countries around the world. The company is located in San Diego, CA and has offices or partner resellers in North America, South America, Asia and Europe. For more information, call +1 858.571.4444 or visit <http://www.aps-technology.com>.

