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# WORD FROM THE EDITOR



**2** 016 is lining up to be a bit of a wild ride. With a federal election in the latter half of the year on the cards and all of the uncertainty that these things generally bring, there is sure to be a reasonable level of instability in the business world. To that end, we've talked to some of the biggest and brightest in the industry with respect to what the upcoming year holds for members of the field service industry. We're sure you will find their Industry Insights illuminating.

Our focus this issue is spread over a couple of topics: commercial vehicles and GPS integration. As we move ever closer to the fully connected car, these are two areas we see merging together to provide enterprise-wide benefit, so read on to see what this will mean for your business. You may notice we've tweaked the design of our magazine a little, which we hope makes it even easier for our readers to access up-to-date information on the field service industry. Feel free to let us know your thoughts, as feedback is always welcome.

As always, our digital channel is bursting with new information in the form of news, products and technical articles, so be sure to visit regularly. If you haven't yet signed up for our weekly eNewsletter — what are you waiting for? Simply go to the website ([www.fieldservicebusiness.com.au](http://www.fieldservicebusiness.com.au)) and register.

Kind regards,

Dannielle Furness

Editor

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18



20



28

## CONTENTS

MARCH 2016



6	The tip of the iceberg	18	10 things to consider when buying a van
<b>INDUSTRY INSIGHTS</b>			
10	Nigel Hammond, Baseplan	20	From customer service to customer care
12	David Younger, The Service Manager	28	Light vehicle load restraint
14	Wayne Harper, Zebra	31	The connected fleet - an open innovation revolution for business operations
22	Justin Hocevar, Renault		
24	JP Shelburn, XL Service Bodies		
26	Mark Alfred, simPRO		
34	Ben Hartman, Astea		
36	Michael Carter, Navman		
38	Bruce Minty, Pronto		

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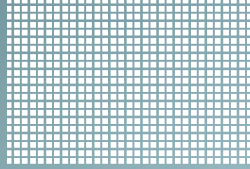


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DX Single Cab cab-chassis shown with optional aluminium tray, ST-X King Cab pickup shown and ST-X Dual Cab pickup shown. #For full details of the myNissan Service Certainty program visit [nissan.com.au/service](http://nissan.com.au/service). New Vehicle Warranty expires 3 years from date of first registration or after 100,000km (whichever comes first). Conditions apply. See [nissan.com.au](http://nissan.com.au) for more details. Terms and conditions apply to Roadside Assistance; please visit [nissan.com.au/roadsideassistance](http://nissan.com.au/roadsideassistance).



FEATURE

# THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

*Danielle Furness*





Looking to increase business efficiency? When it comes to tomorrow's vehicles, GPS is just the tip of the iceberg.

**W**here would we be without GPS? As with many ever-present technologies that have inched into our lives to become a 'can't-live-without' tool, it's hard to recall a time when we didn't rely on these devices to get us from one place to the next.

Of course, we've moved on from a simple navigational device to integration with other technologies, which increasingly provides business-wide benefit. Big data is no longer just a buzzword and the ability to capture and analyse information means that meaningful insights can be drawn and used to develop strategies for increasing overall business efficiency.

### More than a map

Like the humble street directory before it, GPS as a navigation-only tool has pretty much had its day. Advanced functionality now allows users and organisations to derive many additional benefits. At a navigational and positioning level, fleet and field service managers can accurately pinpoint the location of team members, enabling sophisticated route optimisation and improving scheduling. Making real-time updates available to customers and estimating technician arrival times with increased accuracy also has clear benefits in terms of meeting service delivery promises and client expectations.

It also means that staff utilisation levels are optimised, eliminating extraneous downtime. Integration with other enterprise systems streamlines human resources, payroll and accounting functions and decreases the burden on the back office in terms of data entry and other forms of manual input. With so many clear advantages, it's hard to believe that many small to medium-sized businesses still elect not to implement such technology, but it seems they do.

### Safety and savings

Integrating GPS tracking functionality with onboard cameras gives you a bird's-eye view into driver behaviour, as well as allowing you to verify any issues or provide proof of service in the event of a customer dispute. Alerts and warnings can be automated, providing another level of safety, and a program of preventive maintenance achieved through the integration of fault code monitoring to identify issues before they become safety problems. Programming regular maintenance reminders also ensures that the fleet remains on the road and thereby improves asset utilisation.

### Keeping connected

Clearly the key to efficient operations is integration, the first step towards a more complex form of connectivity. Mobility research expert Juniper Research defines telematics as "the use of wireless technologies and in-vehicle IT to relay information to and from vehicles, with the aim of improving the driver experience or providing additional information and analysis to the driver or a third party".

So, we already live in the age of the connected and the benefits to business users are well established. For consumer markets, the value chain is less defined. Juniper's report 'On track with connected & self driving vehicles' suggests this is due to vastly differing application requirements.

For commercial users, engine maintenance, fleet tracking, freight tracking, driver behaviour and logistics are the key priorities. There is little crossover for the consumer, whereby telematics use is geared more towards infotainment, usage-based insurance calculation, vehicle location, servicing, emergency response and theft protection. Third-party telematics requirements include traffic data, driver behaviour and

## FEATURE



There is an increasing focus on moral considerations.

road safety, but provision of this information remains a contentious issue due to privacy concerns.

The final frontier is vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) and vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) connectivity, which promise to deliver a truly intelligent road transportation system. Early examples of V2I include ramp metering but, according to the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), this will further develop into more sophisticated scenarios in which overall emissions, fuel consumption and traffic speeds will be controlled. The IEEE suggests that this type of interactive driving will be deployed sometime between now and 2020.

The institute concedes that V2V is a more difficult concept to realise because it is decentralised in structure, requiring vehicle interaction and information interchange at a local level. Agreement between car manufacturers and other suppliers is required in order to implement V2V, as true interoperability demands consensus on communication technology and protocols.

Central to the intelligent transport system concept is the autonomous vehicle. While deployment of V2I and V2V may seem simple enough, the IEEE says that the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic (an international treaty to facilitate road traffic and increase safety) presents a significant stumbling block. The convention states that “every driver shall at all times be able to control his vehicle”, thereby contradicting automatic control as a concept. The treaty was developed in 1968 and enforced in

1977, so it’s probably due for amendment in order to align with projected advances.

### The road to autonomy

Research and business management firm Boston Consulting Group (BCG) estimates that partially autonomous vehicles will hit the market in the next couple of years. Contrary to the name, partially autonomous vehicles actually operate with a high degree of autonomy but are limited to specific driving situations including highway driving and lane changing. User input is still required in all other circumstances.

Fully autonomous vehicles, which require little or no driver intervention, are set to hit the streets in 2025 according to BCG, but it remains to be seen how this technology will deal with current limitations including severe weather conditions and an inability to accurately distinguish obstacles.

BCG’s research indicates that consumer demand for this functionality will be high, citing 55% of drivers in the United States as likely to consider purchasing a partially autonomous vehicle and 44% likely to consider purchasing a fully autonomous one.

Of course, this functionality will come at a price, but the research suggests that consumers will be willing to pay an additional US\$4000 for features including self-driving (highway and traffic) and autonomous parking. The drivers for demand include lower insurance premiums, reduced fuel costs and improved safety.

Factors that will largely determine uptake levels incorporate: the maturity of the

technology, resulting legislative changes or requirements and the mitigation of important risks including reliability and cybersecurity.

The introduction of this type of technology will challenge current vehicle ownership norms, as shared cars may prove to be a more economical option when compared with outright ownership.

### Ethical concerns

Much of the available research on autonomous vehicles deals with factual elements, but there is an increasing focus on moral considerations. Specifically, how should a car be programmed to behave in the event of an unavoidable accident?

This is the subject of academic research being carried out at the Toulouse School of Economics in France, which finds there are several options: should loss of life be minimised even if it means sacrificing occupants of the car, should occupants be protected at all costs or should the car randomly select between these extremes?

There is no simple answer, of course, and the study focuses on the human response to the dilemma, hoping to highlight the intricacies of the issue and looking beyond fuel efficiency, traffic control and emissions reduction.

We live in interesting times and the next 20 years will present significant change in terms of transport advances. How we respond remains to be seen, but it’s unlikely we’ll ever yearn for the days of the street directory again.





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### Many processes have been streamlined in the field service industry in recent years — what further improvements are likely in 2016?

Customers are providing their field staff with more information, which was previously only available on desktop applications. Our mobility solutions are fully integrated with our Enterprise rental, service, sales, parts and financial modules, so field staff are now more effective and can provide clients with an immediate response.

It's no longer about one-way information transfer from mobile device to a separate back-end accounting system. It's now bidirectional communication, including parts lookup and asset service history. Increased functionality includes payments, instant invoicing, immediate service history access and real-time monitoring.

### What do you see as the greatest challenge for managers of mobile teams in the year ahead and why?

- Constantly changing market environment.
- Vendors promising the world makes it hard for managers to sift through the jargon and find the right fit.
- Customers asking for better service.
- The need for continuous improvements.
- Ensuring mobile teams have the right information when they need it.

### How has the field service industry evolved since the advent of mobile technology and what are the downsides of rapid change?

The FS industry is now more streamlined. Mobile teams have timely access to data, which means greater efficiency. It is moving more to paperless systems, meaning one source of truth for the whole business. Managers and owners have greater control and visibility over mobile teams, from capturing labour hours to breakdown response times.

The downsides are: the change management required to attract those who are unfamiliar with mobile technology; the increased training requirement; product obsolescence; and initial upfront costs.

### What trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the 'next big thing'?

We are likely to see more specialised providers offering bespoke arrangements to clients and letting them focus on their core business. Managers are crying out for technology to reduce paperwork, improve breakdown response times, reduce call frequency and duration, and to capture true data around job completion. If they can find a system that ticks all those boxes, they are onto a winner.

### An increasing number of vendors have been attracted to the field service segment in response to market growth. How will that landscape level out and what will it look like at the end of 2016?

Mobility is revolutionising the way field teams do their job. It alleviates the need for paper and back-office staff are fully aware of what's happening in the field in real time.

Vendors offering entry-level solutions with a quick ROI will increase. However, as customer requirements and needs mature, further integration with ERPs will be required. At this level, the majority of vendors may not be able to facilitate the complex interactions required. As competition increases, better products will be available at a lower price. Companies are more likely to embrace the technology as the ROI is realised more quickly. Everyone wins.

### How big a role does customisation play in delivering the most suitable offering to your client and can off-the-shelf ever compete with a fully tailored solution?

Customisation suits customers with specialised requirements — it may be the most suitable offering based on current and known needs, but needs are dynamic and will almost certainly change. By selecting industry-specific solutions that offer configuration over modification, the customer is helping in futureproofing their own investment. They also know the vendor will continue to meet their needs and instil best practice within their organisation.

At entry level, off-the-shelf packages can meet most demands. As requirements grow and the need for in-depth and bidirectional communication develops, then customer/industry-specific solutions are ultimately required. The bottom line is that it's great to customise, but it increases cost.



*Nigel Hammond is Director of Business Development, Baseplan Software Group. He has 15 years' experience in sales and consulting with industry-specific business management solutions and 10 years in the rental and automotive industries.*

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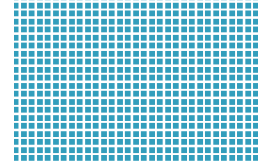
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# DAVID YOUNGER

## MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE SERVICE MANAGER

### Many processes have been streamlined in the field service industry in recent years — what further improvements are likely in 2016?

The big thing now is industry within industry templating rather than just a generic product fits all approach. This has been the domain of ERP until now, but scalability and hybrid cloud are changing all that. Scalability is now affordable for SME customers. Providing the total cost of service using a platform tariff approach over the economic (read current technology life) for small and larger users is what the market wants.

### What do you see as the greatest challenge for managers of mobile teams in the year ahead and why?

Mobile will become the handset device of choice of the back-end scheduler as well as the field technician from now on. Offline is problematic for large screens, smartphones and tablets but HTML and tools that enable browser offline are now available to overcome this. Having a 50/50 balance of employees and contractors is now reality if the operator wants to make money in Australia; having the ability to have dual synchronised scheduling capability for the contractor as well as the operator that uses his service is where the market will go. SME operators can now achieve these productivity benefits provided by SME Platform tariff providers; it's happening now.

### How has the field service industry evolved since the advent of mobile technology and what are the downsides of rapid change?

I have been involved for over 25 years so I have experienced everything from the Palm Pilot and HP Jornada through to today's leading mobile devices. Native Android and iOS apps built for the handset will move towards smarter HTML browser apps and the change out will go from two years to 6 months if it's not there already. The slowdown of Apple and Samsung is partly due to the high cost of new handsets. Too often, OS updates have broken perfectly working software affecting productivity so users are reluctant to update, preferring to stay with what they know works; it's in the vendors' interest to build in obsolescence. Seriously, platform tariff providers are the new disruptors and need to provide over a sensible contract term tested handset replacement so that their customer has the latest technology for productivity. Watch the emergence of these platform tariff service providers.

### What trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the 'next big thing'?

From what I have said already, it's the platform tariff service provider, plus the UBER of field service and logistics, that for the first time in the industry looks after the most important 'person' — the service person who is not recognised, and has until now been the employee of the service operator. Watch this space.

### An increasing number of vendors have been attracted to the field service segment in response to market growth. How will that landscape level out and what will it look like at the end of 2016?

This is what I think is happening in Australia. Overseas operators in declining economies are looking to a stable economy like Australia, even though it only has 23m-odd population over a huge geographic area. So what do they do? They pick industries that need shaking up, and field service is one of those. They are usually ERP operators wanting to pick an industry like cleaning or field service where 80% of the incomes are controlled by 20% of the operators at the big end of town. However, they are mainly foreign and Australians prefer local support. The Australian thing will happen because we are a creative population but no longer at the app level; it has to be the platform service provider and we need Australian companies to fill this space.

### How big a role does customisation play in delivering the most suitable offering to your client and can off-the-shelf ever compete with a fully tailored solution?

The market is generally divided into Lite, Pro and Enterprise. There seem to be few solutions offering true whole of life growth from Lite to Enterprise. Lite (small) and Pro (medium) solutions should be capable of growing out of the box with 'chunks' of functionality as the business grows and can afford it but customisation should be avoided. Customisation at higher levels is critical to a successful solution but as the market moves upwards, solutions seem less capable to customise economically. Most subscription software companies are standardising their cloud offerings stopping customisation, so a platform tariff service provider, with the technology to customise without having to upgrade every customer, is what Australia needs. This technology is available right now.



*David Younger is Managing Director of The Service Manager and has been involved with the field service industry since 1986. For the last 10 years, he has specialised in all aspects of field service through his TSM software suite, which has evolved into an ERP TSM solution. In 2014, David published his 'Instant Profits' guide identifying and finding solutions to common problems faced by field service business owners. In 2015, he merged Proware with Wireless Accounting to create TSM Evolution.*



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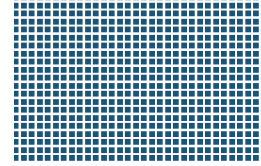


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# WAYNE HARPER

**SENIOR TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, ZEBRA TECHNOLOGIES**

## **Many processes have been streamlined in the field service industry in recent years — what further improvements are likely in 2016?**

Productivity has never been more important, but there's still a hidden productivity drain and the answer lies with the devices. Making devices more ergonomic, more quickly maintained, less likely to cause fatigue and less likely to result in errors plugs that drain. This is why Zebra tasked engineers with designing the most efficient, feature-loaded mobile computer possible. They delivered a breakthrough ergonomic design and an extensive list of productivity-enhancing innovations - real improvements that make measurable efficiencies and add extra productivity.

## **What do you see as the greatest challenge for managers of mobile teams in the year ahead and why?**

The challenge is to find extra productivity and efficiency. Enterprises have already extracted the maximum available efficiency increases through today's handheld computers, but new operational challenges mean finding new ways to increase productivity and accuracy. It can be done and innovation is key. Our new device saves one hour per worker per shift in a warehouse setting. Across an eight-person team it's like adding another worker to your line.

## **How has the field service industry evolved since the advent of mobile technology and what are the downsides of rapid change?**

Many organisations were quick to adopt mobile technology but didn't fully consider the true TCO. Long term costs comprise the hard costs of deployment (hardware, accessories, software, implementation and training) and the softer operational costs (productivity loss, opportunity loss and IT support.) Consumer mobile devices can look more cost-effective due to their low initial purchase price, but can introduce complexities and hidden costs. Enterprise-grade devices are purpose built for harsh environments and tailored to your requirements, providing long-lasting value. Although the initial purchase price may be higher, operational costs will be lower and deliver an application-rich, purpose-built device. This reduces TCO and guarantees an ROI that delivers more business value.

## **What trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the 'next big thing'?**

Managers are seeing the value of rugged enterprise-class devices. These put focus on the user and find extra efficiencies. Changing worker demographics adds a new challenge — today's workforce wants a familiar, easy-to-use, touch application interface. After

extensive R&D, Zebra's own Innovation and Design team has been able to create a device that increases productivity in a warehouse setting by 14%.

## **An increasing number of vendors have been attracted to the field service segment in response to market growth. How will that landscape level out and what will it look like at the end of 2016?**

It will be those vendors that are not simply resellers but can offer their customers end-to-end software application services and prepackaged development and support offerings that will really prosper this year.

## **How big a role does customisation play in delivering the most suitable offering to your client and can off-the-shelf ever compete with a fully tailored solution?**

There are certainly plenty of off-the-shelf, consumer-focused smartphones that offer some business functionality. The question is whether these devices have the right physical characteristics, capabilities and support to meet the needs of field workers and their support team. Organisations should be looking at whether mobile devices that have been designed for business use — and specifically outside the office — could deliver a better service. Many devices they bring issues through lost or stolen data, device downtime and unsuitability for use in certain conditions. Enterprise-class devices are customisable and better suited to the task. Zebra's range of rugged handheld and tablet computers can be tailored to meet the unique needs of any organisation, utilising our comprehensive choice of Android and Windows-based applications, plug-ins and accessories.



*Wayne is responsible for delivering technical engineering support across Asia Pacific. He joined Zebra in 1997 and is instrumental in guiding the pre-sales technical support team towards end-to-end technology solution design, empowering businesses with enterprise asset intelligence. He consults across Zebra's key trade verticals and oversees the consolidation of customer requirements, business reviews and process reorganisation.*

## VEHICLE TRACKING AND BEYOND

Tomazos Transport is an Australian-owned and -operated transport company, initially established to provide vehicles and building material transport capabilities to parent company Tomazos Group, a construction company operating since the 1970s.

The company installed a Navman Wireless in-vehicle monitoring system in order to keep in touch with drivers in remote areas and to more effectively manage its growing fleet. The system enables vehicle tracking as well as two-way communication between drivers and the company's home base.



Transport & Logistics Operations Manager Keith Joy, who coordinated the deployment of the Navman Wireless system, said the installation had immediate benefits beyond simple vehicle tracking.

“We were able to not only track speeds, routes and positioning of all vehicles in the fleet, but keep in constant communication with our drivers. A lot of the sites to which our vehicles travel are remote, so the Navman Wireless satellite system allowed us to keep in touch without having to rely on limited mobile phone coverage or two-way radio systems.

“Since the installation of the GPS tracking system, we have utilised its programs to cut costs, increase fleet efficiency, prolong the life of vehicle parts, promote good driver behaviour, and track WH&S and fatigue management.”

The system offers insights informing decisions that have improved the day-to-day running of the business, often putting the company in front of the competitors, in the areas of health and safety, event and fatigue management, maintenance monitoring, fuel and tyre efficiency, driver management and communication, and government fuel rebates.

In addition to its original use of vehicle tracking, Tomazos Transport has been able to track the diagnostic and behavioural patterns of drivers through the use of reports, logs, alerts and maps. Using the Navman Wireless system, Joy was able to conduct a time and motion study looking at the speed and fuel usage of each vehicle. Results showed running vehicles at 90 km/h, rather than at the speed limit of 100 km/h, would save the company an average of 10% of fuel costs — an annual saving of close to 150,000 L of fuel per financial year.

As well as saving money on fuel costs through the reduced speed of fleet vehicles, Tomazos Transport was also able to prolong the life of the fleet's brakes and tyres. Previously, brakes and wheel bearings were changed every 12 months, but subsequently they only needed to be changed every 18 months.

But the cost savings did not stop there. Tomazos informed the company's insurance provider, who was able to view the driver management records as well as monitor the vehicles' servicing and maintenance records. After a thorough audit process, the insurance provider re-evaluated the standard coverage and reduced insurance premiums by 52%.

“The insurance company was impressed that we had all the integrated monitoring in one package — everything from when the tyres were changed, acceleration levels, how hard the brakes are used, regular servicing records, vehicle speeds and the shift times drivers are working. Once they had ascertained that our drivers and our vehicles were one of the safest fleets on the road, they happily gave us a credit and reduced our annual insurance premiums,” Joy said.

Tomazos Transport is looking to install additional Navman Wireless solutions into its fleet of 18 quarry vehicles, including dozers, excavators and dump trucks. It also plans to roll out electronic prestart using the GPS interface, eliminating manual checks and paper trails while covering off all aspects of pre- and post-inspections. Future plans also include the installation of integrated event-triggered dash cams and driver alert functionality which recognises when a driver leaves the vehicle while it is running, further ensuring the ongoing safety of the mobile team.

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# 10 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING A VAN

There are plenty of decisions to be made when buying a van, some more obvious than others. Before you purchase, it's worth considering more than just engine capacity and price.

**T**here are 10 things you should think about when shopping around for a new van, from comfort to purchase price to standard safety features. Here's some handy information to use as a starting point.

## Petrol or diesel?

The low-rev/high-torque power delivery of diesel engines makes them better suited to most commercial vehicle applications. They can also use a lot less fuel compared with a petrol engine, helping offset their usually higher initial purchase price. But if you keep your van for the typical 4–5 years and you do less than around 15,000 km annually, the advantage starts to swing back in favour of

a petrol engine, especially if you're not carrying a lot of weight. This is before you take into account the fact that petrol engines are often cheaper to service as well, so be sure to do the sums before you decide.

## 4WD or RWD?

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages of both four-wheel drive and rear-wheel drive, and a good salesperson will be able to explain the difference and recommend a van with a powertrain that best suits your business.

In general, 4WD usually offers slightly lower fuel consumption, lower load-in heights and more internal room, while RWD typically gives you better traction, more payload, less

sensitivity to load distribution and better unmade road capability.

## One side door or two?

Most vans sold in Australia are specified with a single left-hand side door and, in many circumstances, this makes perfect sense. But if you regularly operate in areas where parking is scarce, two doors will provide a lot more parking flexibility, as you can stop close against a wall or another vehicle and unload from the driver side. If you're working in alleys or quiet backstreets, you're not really at much increased risk by working offside. A glazed left-hand door makes reversing easier and definitely much safer. Dual doors also have a higher resale value.



### Tailgate or barn doors?

If you plan to load the van from the rear by forklift, barn (swing) doors are almost mandatory, as it's difficult to get a forklift right up to the back of the vehicle if there is a tailgate in the way.

To load at a loading dock, you'll need to open the back doors first. Doors that open 270° and lie flat against the sides of the van make reverse parking easier and safer, as a reversing camera mounted on the doors won't be of any use with the doors open.

On the other hand, an open tailgate provides handy shelter from sun or rain. Make sure it opens high enough — one of the most popular vans on the market has a rear gate that opens to provide only around 175 cm of ground clearance, which means you'll be ducking even if you're of average height.

### Stay safe

Commercial vehicle safety has come a long way in the past decade and some now have ANCAP or EuroNCAP safety star ratings, which in theory makes them easy to compare. You should always look at the detailed ratings before making a decision.

As there is wide variation in standard safety equipment, ensure that the van you select has the following features as a minimum: dual front airbags, ABS brakes and electronic stability control (ESC). Employers have a legal obligation to provide employees with a safe workplace, so ensure the van is fitted with a steel bulkhead between the passenger and cargo spaces. Better still, have a cargo barrier that meets Australian Standard 4034.2, if it is applicable.

### Your van as a marketing tool

A van is a mobile billboard, so use it well. A basic signwriting package will set you back as little as \$600, while a full-colour, full-vehicle wrap can be had from about \$4000. It could be some of the most effective marketing you do. Buying a white van and wrapping it to protect the original paint will maximise the resale value — about 90% of vans sold in Australia are white.

### Total cost of ownership

The van with the lowest purchase price rarely has the lowest total cost of ownership (TCO). TCO is a comprehensive calculation that includes a wide range of costs that show you the economic impact of operating a commercial vehicle.

Ask the salesperson to calculate the TCO of the van you're considering so you can make an informed choice about which is the best-value buy for your specific usage profile. Make sure that the estimate includes residual value — while not important to every van buyer, poor resale can seriously skew an otherwise reasonable TCO equation.

### Comfort is king

A quick spin around the block won't give you too many clues about what a van is like to live with on a full-time basis. When you're on the road all day, every day, comfort is critical, and that means more than just a comfortable driver's seat. Check the range of adjustability and consider who else might drive the van. This includes the next potential owner, as some vans have had a reputation for poor comfort that makes them harder to onsell.

Also consider noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) and cabin ventilation — excessive NVH or a cabin full of fumes will leave you feeling tired and stressed at the end of the work day. Check the air-conditioner performance, as big white vans can absorb a lot of heat very quickly. A bulkhead or AC curtain fitted to a cargo barrier will significantly improve AC performance and cut down noise transmitted to the passenger compartment.



**Commercial vehicle safety has come a long way in the past decade.**

### Fuel consumption

The fuel consumption and emission figures provided by manufacturers on all new vehicles (under 3.5 t GVM) are for the vehicle tested to a procedure that has little in common with 'real world' use. Even more problematic for commercial vehicle users, these tests are conducted with the vehicle empty. While this ensures that consumers have a level playing field when comparing models, it gives little indication of what the actual consumption in service will be.

In some cases, especially when towing, fuel use can increase significantly. Count on it being 15–30% higher than the manufacturer test figure, with diesels at the lower end of the range. If you're looking at buying used and the vehicle is fitted with a trip computer, take the time to check its recorded average fuel consumption. Owners and dealers almost never reset this figure and it can give you an insight into the consumption you can expect. Be warned: if you check the figure and it is very high, it may have been recently reset. It could also have been driven hard, regularly overloaded to (or over) the GVM or done a lot of towing — all of which make checking further a wise move.

### Peace of mind

Choosing the right van is important, but what happens during the time you own it is just as important. A vehicle is a complex mechanical device, so at some stage it'll need maintenance or repair. Whichever brand of van you elect to purchase, consider the following: the service and support provided by the manufacturer and their dealer network; their new vehicle warranty; the availability of extended warranties; service and parts costs; breakdown assistance; and parts availability. Don't forget to check out fleet partners — good commercial brands have a high proportion of fleet business, because fleet managers don't take chances on the vans they buy, and a good brand is more than just good product.

*Renault Australia*  
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# FROM CUSTOMER SERVICE TO CUSTOMER CARE

*Bruce Minty, Product Marketing Manager*

**T**op companies are fast moving away from a simple 'break/fix' approach to customer service to one in which they are in an ongoing conversation and relationship with their clients.

It's a powerful shift and importantly, they are using new tools to make this transition, leveraging the insights technology can generate to improve the way they engage with and provide service to their customer base. Machinery and equipment are supporting service companies in successfully transitioning their focus from a 'Customer Service' to a 'Customer Care' model.

This shift in paradigm was a major discussion point at the 'Field Service USA Conference' in California last year, which highlighted how analytics, better collaboration in the field and access to high-quality customer data will help business in the

sector achieve better customer outcomes. Businesses need to embrace this new model so their staff have more access to real-time service information, ensuring customers are fully informed.

Interestingly, Accenture forecasts that technology will be a primary driver of profitability and market differentiation in every industry this year. Additionally, 89% of business leaders surveyed by Gartner believe that customer experience will be their primary basis for competition by 2016. The Gartner Top 10 Strategic Predictions for 2015 and Beyond: Digital Business Is Driving 'Big Change' report also emphasises that renewing the customer experience is a digital priority.

Customer experience may be the most impactful area of innovation available to businesses today, according to Gartner. With the rapid rise of personal digital

technology, customers have become savvier and more demanding about how they want to interact through technology. The report also notes that the practical business acknowledges customer experience innovation as the next frontier, and half of all consumer goods product investments are likely to be directed towards improving the customer experience.

In order for field service businesses to offer superior customer service, smooth business processes need to be front of mind. A company that has a software system in place that reduces laborious processes, increases productivity and assists in the execution of business management is going to generate extra time for staff members to focus on the key business ingredient, the customer.

There is also the well-known belief that satisfied customers will attract new busi-



instant feedback from customers. They can then immediately respond to or resolve any issues, and improve service levels as well as overall business performance.

Having an analytics-based technology solution in place to deliver better insights, resolutions, features and applications will not only allow staff members to perform a better service, but will positively impact the business as a whole.

### Business-to-business customers: the right approach

For business-to-business organisations, the level of service they offer clients determines long-term success. Business customers demand high service levels, so every organisation must be exploring ways to ensure they are continually exceeding their customers' expectations.

Again, technology is key and one of the major ways they will deal with this in the future is by offering customers access to online web portals. Web portals are ideal as customers can log calls, keep track of expected arrival times and gain an understanding of what type of service will be involved. As the expectation is set up front, this reduces confusion and ensures your customers are fully informed.

Moving to this way of engaging with customers helps to ensure there is a shared understanding between the business and its clients about the level of service they can expect. Moreover, it ensures customers are fully informed about the way they engage with their service providers, leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction.

### Business to consumer: elevated expectations

In the past, consumers accepted a situation in which a service provider would promise to send a technician between certain hours, say 9 am and noon. But this is becoming increasingly unacceptable, as consumers demand more certainty about service visits and service levels generally. Today, customers expect real-time information about delivery times — even real-time tracking



## Smooth business processes need to be front of mind

— and expect to be informed if there are delays in service delivery. Businesses need to be leveraging technology to be able to meet these expectations.

The real game changer for businesses when it comes to delivering an enhanced level of services is the emergence of The Internet of Things. This involves connecting machines to the internet and will allow seamless communication in the supply chain between warehouses, transport providers, technology facilitators and businesses. According to research firm Gartner, we can look forward to 26 billion connected devices by 2020.

Wireless connectivity allows businesses to remotely monitor the condition of connected machines and predict faults as they occur. It means systems are able to self-optimize, self-configure and self-diagnose, ultimately reducing unplanned maintenance activities and leading to more accurate fault diagnosis.

An integrated technology system that talks to each aspect of your business should harmoniously and instantly deliver improved organisational performance and better customer outcomes. The adoption of technology to drive customer care will provide staff personnel and customers with real-time insights, leading to a more engaged customer base, higher levels of customer retention and more referrals to new customers from existing ones.

The businesses that really get this right will cement a genuine partnership with their customers, who will ultimately become brand advocates for the businesses they prefer, delivering a return on investment far above mere financial gains.

*Pronto Software Pty Ltd*  
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ness. Customer care is crucial not only for current customers, but also provides an opportunity to grow business customer satisfaction, loyalty and inevitably, company turnover.

Let's take a look at three key dynamics the field service sector needs to be across to generate exceptional customer interactions.

### Communication comes first

Underpinning all exceptional customer service interactions is an outstanding approach to communication. This means businesses need to think about how they can use technology to open up better lines of two-way communication with their client base.

Every field service business should be aiming to achieve a situation in which they are using technology to be able to elicit

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**RENAULT  
PRO+**

# Renault TRAFIC

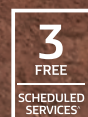
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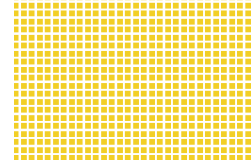
If you're in the plumbing, building or electrical trade, the Renault Trafic is the van you need, guaranteed. It combines great value for money with plenty of grunt and up to 6.0m<sup>3</sup> load space, 1.2T payload and load-through length of 4.1m. It's got the safety features you want including bulkhead, Stability Control and Reverse Sensors and Camera\*. It also has the generous 12 month/30,000km service intervals you need to keep you on the road. Get the van you want and need, visit your Renault dealer today.

\*Standard on Trafic Twin Turbo models only. †Three (3) year/200,000km warranty offer and 3 year/200,000km Roadside Assistance both apply to all new or demonstrator TRAFIC models. Warranty & Roadside Assistance valid for 3 years or 200,000km (whichever comes first) from new. Demonstrator vehicles receive balance of new vehicle warranty and Roadside Assistance. Roadside Assistance terms and conditions apply. Call our Customer Service Team on 1800 009 008 or view the Terms and Conditions statement at [www.renault.com.au/drivingpeaceofmind](http://www.renault.com.au/drivingpeaceofmind) for details. ^Offer applies to Trafic models sold from 1/1/16 to 31/3/16. First three scheduled maintenance services free on new and demonstrator Trafic vehicles, based on standard scheduled servicing from new and on normal operating conditions. Scheduled maintenance services required every twelve (12) months or up to 30,000km (whichever occurs first). However, TRAFIC is subject to adaptive servicing requirements, as determined by the Oil Condition Sensor, and may require servicing prior to the standard twelve (12) months or 30,000km service interval. If vehicle is not presented within three (3) months of when the scheduled service is required, right to that capped-price service under the program is forfeited. Whilst current Australian stocks last.



# JUSTIN HOCEVAR

## CEO, RENAULT AUSTRALIA



## INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

### What has the demise of the local car manufacturing industry meant for imported products, particularly in the commercial space?

Renault's range of passenger cars, light vans and trucks offers fleet customers an opportunity to specify state-of-the-art European executive and tool-of-trade technology from efficiency to safety and also enjoy excellent ergonomics and mobile office functionality. Our comprehensive reassurance program adds much longer warranty (five years on passenger cars and up to 200,000 km for LCV) and much lower servicing costs than fleet managers may have experienced before, while Renault Financial Services offers an array of funding possibilities that can assist the P&L reports.

### Field service vehicles spend more time on the road than most, what factors should fleet managers consider when searching for a suitable commercial vehicle?

Reliability is a key factor when specifying a fleet. Renault LCV has been the number one supplier of vans and light trucks in Europe for 18 years straight. Fleet buyers are confident the vehicles will suit the job, go the distance and offer strong residual value at the end of the term. Driver comfort and occupant safety are also important when long hours behind the wheel are required. Renault's extended service intervals (up to 30,000 km) provide a significant reduction in maintenance costs, but also require fewer days off the road, allowing the business user greater asset and labour utilisation. Some competitors require servicing every 10,000 km, so once you triple that cost and time off the road and multiply it by the size of the fleet, Renault's cost advantages become apparent.

### Safety is obviously paramount for fleet managers. What can we expect to see in commercial vehicle offerings in 2016 that will help fleet managers meet their duty of care?

Renault continues to improve the level of standard safety equipment in its vans. The mid-size Trafic vans and large Master vans and light trucks now all feature driver and passenger airbags as well as side chest/head airbags, as well as ABS, ESP and traction control systems. Trafic and Master also feature a standard steel bulkhead separating the cabin from the load area, which also makes it easier to control the air temperature in the cabin for enhanced driver comfort. Both vans are semi-bonneted designs that push the engine and transmission out well in front of the driver, providing a large impact-absorbing buffer for the occupants. The smaller Kangoo is built on the platform of the Scenic small people mover, so it has been designed with high levels of occupant safety from the start.

### Beyond safety, what trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the 'next big thing' in terms of commercial vehicles?

Connectivity and communication are vital tools for all fleet operators. Renault already offers Media Nav enhanced multi-media systems in its vans, on a par with those in its passenger car ranges. This delivers GPS navigation capability as well as system function insight. Bluetooth connectivity for smartphones already provides safer, hands-free calling and seamless music streaming. For those with a focus on environmental issues, Renault is already trialling a small fleet of Kangoo Zero Emission vans with Australia Post. They have an impressive real-world range between recharges and can adequately cope with daily round-town duties.

### How big a role does customisation play in delivering the most suitable offering to your client and can off-the-shelf ever compete with a fully tailored solution?

Renault's strength in LCVs is demonstrated by its commitment to the Renault PRO+ concept. PRO+ dealers will offer a full array of demonstrator vehicles, including some that have been converted with popular solutions such as refrigerated interiors or with load trays already installed. PRO+ dealers have LCV conversion experts on staff and longer opening hours or weekend servicing by arrangement can be provided for time-poor customers. Renault has selected preferred suppliers for conversions, ensuring the work will be done to a high standard, and giving customers the simplicity of a single invoice and one point of contact for any future queries. Renault will continue to progressively roll out the PRO+ concept around Australia in 2016.



*Under Justin's leadership, Renault has become the highest selling French automotive brand in Australia, growing a staggering 218% increase in the last five years. With a strong line-up of both passenger and commercial vehicles, Renault continues to attract the praises of expert motoring bodies winning prestigious awards such as 2013 & 2014 Australia's Best Light Car for the Renault Clio and 2015 Delivery Magazine's Best Small and Medium Vans for the Renault Kangoo and Trafic respectively.*



# Thank you Australia!

As we mark 25 successful years of delivering quality Service Bodies and Canopies for trade vehicles, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you – our loyal customers – for your ongoing support.

XL is proudly committed to:

- ongoing leadership and innovation in our industry
- staying at the leading edge of industry best practice
- improving safety and productivity for Australian businesses
- delivering products designed and built to the highest quality at exceptional value
- supporting Australian suppliers and utilising Australian materials

Every single day we develop new ways to do things better so that our customers can go about their jobs with greater ease, safety and productivity. It's been that way for 25 years now and by celebrating this important milestone, the momentum is only increasing in intensity.

XL is a proud, family owned and operated Australian business. We employ local people but not only at the coalface; some of the world's best R&D minds are right here!

None of our success would mean a thing without you, our customer. Your demand for ever-better tools of trade motivates us to develop the Service Bodies and Canopy solutions you and your people need and deserve. So thank you!

Here's to another 25 years of achievements. We look forward to having you along for the ride.

**XL Service Bodies**  
**Proudly celebrating 25 years**  
**of Australian design, innovation**  
**and manufacturing excellence**



Made in Australia  
 Sold to the World



We're  
 Bringing Change



### Many processes have been streamlined in the field service industry in recent years — what further improvements are likely in 2016?

I guess a major process that's been *streamlined* overall is the outsourcing of fleet management to multinational FMOs. For several years now I've seen fleet management roles evaporate and FMOs take on more and more technical fleet procurement duties. This may look good on the balance sheet but industry knowledge doesn't come cheap and many FMOs are now looking to either get more experienced technical staff onboard or seek consultation with reputable vendors within the industry.

### What do you see as the greatest challenge for managers of mobile teams in the year ahead and why?

By far the greatest challenge is standardisation of their fleets. Getting this right is much easier said than done and the 'one size fits all' attitude can go horribly wrong if the correct players are not involved in making the decisions. We've been at this game for 25 years. In that time, we have seen many fleet managers make the hard decisions on standardising within their fleets, with massive pushback at times from the field teams. We find good fleet managers make good decisions and hold their ground.

### How has the field service industry evolved since the advent of mobile technology and what are the downsides of rapid change?

Mobile technology has added agility to the field service industry whilst also helping the industry gain efficiencies. From telematics to tablet applications, the industry is fast and lean. When we attended the IAA tradeshow in Hanover last year we were blown away by how quickly the telematics space has exploded! You also have FMOs using powerful programs like SAP which are changing the way businesses think about procurement.

### What trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the 'next big thing'?

The trends we see emerging now are 'ready to work' service vehicles. With the semi-government utilities downsizing and outsourcing, second-tier contractors are winning big projects with steep time frames. They don't have the time to develop a specification, tender, award then wait four to six months for the vehicles and conversions to be completed. These guys want the bloody thing next week! Conversions are being undertaken at ports of entry as we speak and for large fleets this model seems to be working, especially those who work out their buying cycle six months or more in advance. I think the next big thing will be the dealers getting the courage to start stocking

ready-to-work vehicles. They've been doing this for a long time in the US and it works great as the dealers have a greater opportunity to deliver more vehicles and the customer doesn't have to wait several months to receive their work-ready vehicle.

### An increasing number of vendors have been attracted to the field service segment in response to market growth. How will that landscape level out and what will it look like at the end of 2016?

In our space we have to continuously innovate and invest in the right technology that keeps us in front of the pack. Whilst we've seen many come and go, there's no doubt powerful multinational organisations are playing in our space and making waves ... thankfully, I love to surf!

### How big a role does customisation play in delivering the most suitable offering to your client and can off-the-shelf ever compete with a fully tailored solution?

Customisation can be a killer in our industry. One utility fleet manager once confided to me that early on in his job he was too afraid to ask his operators why they had five different specifications of vehicles for the same type of work group. He eventually asked: "Don't you guys work on the same types of poles and wires?" In the end they were able to rationalise and only have two specific fit-outs. There's definitely a need to ascertain where the value ends and gold plating begins when it comes to bespoke fit-outs. We feel our anthology of service bodies and accessories provides our customer base with the next best thing to full-blown customisation, which is essentially 'off-the-shelf', so to speak.



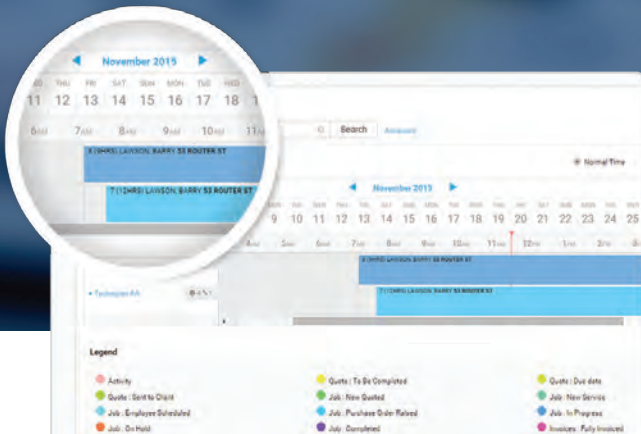
*JP Shelburn is General Manager and a Director at XL Service Bodies. His focus on lean manufacturing and quality has earned XL ISO 9001:2008 accreditation. Leveraging investment in technology and infrastructure and building on a strong domestic customer base, he is driving XL to become even leaner and to expand into other markets. JP has steered the business's momentum in the right direction and the results have been steady and positive. In recognition of his fruitful leadership, JP was promoted to Director in January 2016.*



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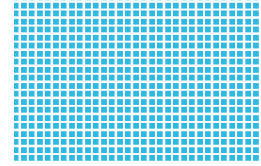
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# MARK ALFRED

GENERAL MANAGER AUSTRALIA, SIMPRO SOFTWARE

## Many processes have been streamlined in the field service industry in recent years — what further improvements are likely in 2016?

Over the years we have seen field service processes streamlined by technology, including apps on mobile devices that produce job cards, track time and materials, and take payment. We can expect Safety Audits such as JSA and SWIMS to be used more widely, which will integrate with all the simPRO office solutions through our mobile Connect app or eForms. The simPRO Connect app will soon be multilingual, with push notifications to alert technicians when a schedule (or other activities) have been altered for the day as well as numeric test fields for asset test readings.

## What do you see as the greatest challenge for managers of mobile teams in the year ahead and why?

The greatest challenge managers of mobile teams face is communication and transparency. It's much easier to communicate with your staff when you work in an office setting. Sure, you can issue a technician with a task remotely easy enough using a mobile app; however, providing ongoing updates and receiving them throughout a project is where it becomes challenging. This is where software applications specifically designed to enable real-time connectivity between the technician and the back office become an invaluable tool to the trades business owner.

## How has the field service industry evolved since the advent of mobile technology and what are the downsides of rapid change?

Some field service businesses still struggle with the concept of technology in the cloud and one of their biggest fears is security! But all you need is time to educate customers on how it works and they will become adopters. Rapid change can also deter some business owners from adopting mobile technology, as with each upgrade or a new version comes the necessity to retrain your staff more frequently and therefore pull them out of the field to do so.

## What trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the 'next big thing'?

December last year was the first month we saw mobile traffic overtake desktop internet traffic, clearly indicating that mobility is the next big thing. We are investing more resources into our mobile team to develop more tools for mobile devices. In today's cashless society, we find technology an enabler to increase the contractor's cash flow and automate their administration.

## An increasing number of vendors have been attracted to the field service segment in response to market growth. How will that landscape level out and what will it look like at the end of 2016?

Yes, that's correct; many new vendors in the market are targeting the smaller size business, offering a basic workflow with very little flexibility and no upgrade path. This offering will suit some businesses but certainly not the majority, as they are looking for a solution that can grow with their business and that offers flexibility, professional on-site training and most definitely an upgrade path. Providing a software solution is one element of being successful; the main element is great customer success, so those vendors that can deliver this will stand out.

## How big a role does customisation play in delivering the most suitable offering to your client and can off-the-shelf ever compete with a fully tailored solution?

That depends on the customer's requirements, but over the last couple of years we have seen less of a demand for the need for customised solutions. This is mainly due to the product improvements we have delivered to our core product through our rapid release cycle. Based on your service, project or maintenance workflow, simPRO Software's off-the-shelf offering does not need to be customised at all; in fact, the configuration part of the system allows you to customise a variety of things like form layouts, input custom fields and modify table view. So, unless you have a very specific workflow, our off-the-shelf solution works perfectly. If you do have a very specific workflow, then yes, of course we will work with you to deliver that fully tailored solution by customising the required functionality.



*Mark began his career with simPRO in 2010. He held the role of Group Project Manager (2013), and became Australian General Manager in 2014. Mark is knowledgeable on the best tools available to help operate a successful business and has helped field service industry companies implement best practices through cloud-based technology. Over the past 18 months, Mark and his team have worked to cultivate change, deliver customer success and increase MRR.*



# LIGHT VEHICLE LOAD RESTRAINT

Correct load restraint for utility vehicles in Australia is a vexed issue with little definitive rule or regulation. In general it is enforced state by state, with most authorities doing little to adequately educate drivers, fleet managers and business owners.

**F**or heavy vehicles, the National Transport Commission's Load Restraint Guide (gazetted in 2004), covers everything from choosing the right vehicle to load distribution, load shifting, types of restraints, how to calculate restraint requirements and how to certify a load restraint system. While comprehensive, it's not particularly helpful for a tradesman who just wants to comply with legislation, avoid unnecessary fines and prevent accident or injury.

Chances are that you are breaking the law every time you pull out of your driveway. Restraining loads is not just about making sure the cargo stays on, but also about making sure the load doesn't shift in a way

that makes the vehicle unstable or unsafe. No matter which state you operate in, it is illegal to transport an unrestrained load on public roads; there is even an Australian Standard (AS/NZS 4345) for transport fibre rope used in cargo restraint. What is less certain is how the law actually defines 'unrestrained'.

State-based legislation is ambiguous at best, and can be confusing to even the most experienced fleet manager. The European Union is leading the way, with Best Practice Guidelines on Cargo Securing for Road Transport. The detailed document covers all forms of vehicles and, although not legally binding, represents the accumulated views of a range of experts in the field.

Australia, however, has been slow to follow suit and at this stage has nothing that explicitly covers smaller vehicles, such as utilities or trailers. Industry bodies are being forced to formulate their own guidelines, which can lead to confusion and a lack of consistency across states and nationally.

## What we do know

1. Loads must not exceed legal limits in relation to weight, length, height, width and rear overhang of vehicles.
2. Driving slowly and over a short distance won't help — in fact, since it is easier for brakes to grab at low speed, there is also a greater chance of losing a load. Most load failures occur on metropolitan roads and over a short distance.
3. The weight of the load alone cannot



Specific light vehicle load restraint legislation and fines are state-based and vary somewhat across borders. All states reference the Heavy Vehicle Load Restraint Guide (2004) as the guiding principle, even when they do not specifically decree that it applies to vehicles until 4.5 t GVM.

Given there is no standard national legislation and load restraint falls somewhere between WH&S, state regulations and traffic laws, anecdotal evidence suggests individual police officers have different interpretations of the legislations and Load Restraint Guide.

### Chain of responsibility

As well as the load restraint legislation and requirements, most states now follow National Model Chain of Responsibility laws that recognise the responsibilities that others have in the transportation of goods by road, beyond that of just the driver and operator.

Chain of Responsibility (COR) laws basically mean that if you consign, pack, load or receive goods as part of your business, you could be held legally liable for breaches of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) and state legislations, even though you have no direct role in driving or operating a heavy vehicle. This serves to take away onus from the driver and ensures everyone in the supply chain shares equal responsibility for safe load restraint.

Given that legislation mainly refers to heavy vehicles, the penalties can be quite hefty — especially for corporations. Penalties for light vehicles such as utes, trailers and roof racks differ throughout the country and are often at the discretion of law enforcement officers.

### What should you do?

Sole traders, remember: you have a responsibility to ensure your load is fully secure. If you employ or subcontract others, COR laws mean you also bear some responsibility to ensure their loads are secure.

Here are some basic guidelines:

- Choose a suitable vehicle for your load.
- Position the load correctly.
- Select and use suitable restraint equipment (it should be 'rated' for each application,

be serviceable and functional and meet Australian Standards).

- Drive carefully, considering the load and the conditions, and regularly check your restraints.
- Provide adequate load restraint to prevent unacceptable movement during all expected and unexpected conditions of operation. The load restraint system must be capable of resisting each of the forces illustrated.

Further steps that can help you meet your obligations and limit risk:

- Although rope is not as suitable as tie-down straps, if you are relying on rope to secure your load, you need to ensure you have enough and that it is in good condition, it is certified, it is strong enough for your load and it meets the AS/NZS 4345 standard.
- Webbing straps are more effective than certified ropes.
- Nets and tarpaulins are generally an easy and effective way to retain lighter items.
- Make sure any tie-down lashings are rated and are as near to vertical as possible.
- Attach lashings at tie rail support points.
- Check and retighten restraints regularly.
- Protect ropes and other restraints from sharp edges.
- Make sure that loose bulk loads cannot fall or be blown off your vehicle.
- Avoid loading heavier items on top of lighter items.
- Utilise 'fit for purpose' and approved ladder racks, conduit carriers and pipe cages.
- Enclose smaller items in lockable compartments or toolboxes.
- Ensure toolboxes, service bodies and canopies are correctly fitted, serviceable and maintained regularly.

The National Transport Commissions Load Restraint Guide (2004) outlines the best ways to restrain and cover different types of loads. It provides practical information on how to restrain loads depending on the type of vehicle and the load's size and weight. Using these methods guarantees both vehicle stability and load security. While not the only way to restrain a load, these methods meet the load restraint performance standards.

*XL Service Bodies Pty Ltd*  
www.xl.com.au



What is less certain is how the law actually defines 'unrestrained'

provide enough friction — a heavy load is just as likely to fall off as a light load. Always use restraints.

4. Restraints need to be checked regularly: when the load settles, there may be a reduction in tension.
5. Different loads require different methods of restraint, as can different tray deck surfaces.
6. Similar items should be bundled together into a single, more stable unit.
7. Most headboards and loading racks are not strong enough to fully restrain heavy loads.
8. High and narrow items, such as stacks of smaller cartons, usually need more than one restraint.
9. Spaces and gaps between piles should be filled before restraining the load.

## TALK TO YOUR ERP SYSTEM

Martin Gunnarsson, Director  
– Product Strategies & IFS Labs, IFS Software



These days, thanks to the internet and cloud services, data can be accessible to anyone at any time. You don't need to be stuck at a desk to browse social or business data.

To interact with enterprise software, however, you are still stuck behind the screens and keyboards on your smartphone, tablet or laptop, and have been so for the last three decades. Yet there are many situations when you are not able to use your phone, but still need to access business data to remain productive: when driving, for instance, particularly if wasting valuable time in a traffic jam.

Whatever innovation we have seen throughout the years, talking remains a natural way to communicate (teenagers excluded, possibly, but that's a whole other article).

So we thought that IFS Labs should explore the opportunity for people to start talking to their enterprise software. The result was a mobile app that lets the user control his or her enterprise application using their voice, via a smartphone or tablet.

Rather than go into detail about how it works — although it's pretty simple, really — let me step outside my comfort zone of enterprise software for a moment to explore how we already use voice interaction today.

If I need to get in contact with my broadband supplier at home, I first

navigate through voice interaction in their support centre to explain the issue. It's convenient and works very well. I'm also a big fan of the Google Translate app, which can help me to order sushi and a beer in Japanese as I frequently visit Tokyo on business. It's a bit embarrassing, but fun.

Looking at enterprise software, there are a number of situations where voice has the greatest potential. It might not necessarily be the only user experience in a given scenario, but it's certainly a great complementary one.

For instance:

- for users with various disabilities who cannot see or use a keyboard and a screen;
- for users who are in eyes-busy and hands-busy situations such as driving, wearing protective gloves preventing them from touching a device, or getting instructions when repairing equipment;
- for users who need a very simple user interface (think Google search, Siri or Cortana) where you don't get paralysed by lots of menus or buttons but instead just ask the system simple questions and are guided through your queries.

Even if new technologies can offer cool new things, I'd like to see if there are some potential benefits to be gained.

Using the TomTom Traffic Index, we can see some statistics on how traffic jams in major cities delay people. While you'd expect that Los Angeles and London are among the top 20 most congested cities in the world — 10th and 16th,

respectively — it might surprise you that Sydney comes in at 21st, worse than Paris (22nd out of 146 on the list) and New York (45th). Other Australian state capitals aren't too much better, with Melbourne ranking 60th (worse than Berlin), Perth 73rd, Adelaide 81st and Brisbane 88th.

TomTom also calculates the average expected delay on a 60-minute round trip due to congestion compared with a free-flowing traffic situation.

For Sydney it's 24 minutes, Melbourne 20 minutes, Perth 19 minutes, and Adelaide and Brisbane 18 minutes. That's a huge amount of wasted time if you calculate it out on a daily, week or monthly basis.

So, you can see how talking to your enterprise software in your vehicle to check some business data to have on hand before arriving at your destination could be a smart use of non-productive time spent in traffic.

I'm sure you can think of many more ways that talking could improve the user experience of your enterprise software and your organisation's productivity.

It's something you should probably start thinking about because the reality is just around the corner.



# THE CONNECTED FLEET

## AN OPEN INNOVATION REVOLUTION FOR BUSINESS OPERATIONS

*George de Boer, International Alliance Manager*

As companies strive to cut costs, improve workflow efficiency and stay ahead of the competition, open platform fleet technology can help them achieve their goals.

**A**chieving business goals for firms running vehicles, whether sales reps, delivery personnel or field service engineers, has led to many turning to telematics systems to improve planning, scheduling, responsiveness and customer service.

Access to data is, after all, vital to achieving these objectives. Managing mobile workers can be a challenging task without a meaningful insight into their activities out on the road — from location and job completion information to details on their driving performance.

Connected vehicle and open platform technology is now taking this management to a whole new level. New opportunities are opening up for firms to improve their business workflow and benefit from automated, paperless processes.

By seamlessly integrating different business technologies, data can be brought

together to improve business efficiency and provide greater insight into operations. Rather than existing in isolation, different technology platforms can speak to one another, removing the need for management to analyse different data sources on different platforms.

Using an open telematics platform, information from a range of sources can be integrated, including routing and scheduling software, CRM or ERP systems and mobile hardware.

The costs associated with technology integrations, in the past, meant this was out of reach for many businesses. Out-of-the-box software integrations available today, however, mean that back-office systems are seamlessly connecting with vehicles and mobile workers in the field without the need for expensive IT consultancy.

What's more, events such as the TomTom Telematics .connect Developer Conference are driving ongoing innovation in the

creation of new business apps, offering more choice for improved workflow management and a better customer experience across a wide range of industries. Customised applications can be adopted to meet the specific requirements of different business sectors.

### How does connected technology work?

An open platform approach to telematics enables businesses to overcome the physical distance between mobile workers and the back office — and this is made possible by application programming interfaces (APIs). APIs provide access to data being generated by technology platforms and hold the key to enabling software developers to create integrated solutions.

### Efficient workflow through apps

The practical outcome for businesses is smarter and more efficient workflow processes and more immediate insight into field processes with business intelligence being gathered in one place.



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**Any business operating vehicles can benefit.**

Any business operating vehicles can benefit, but a good example to illustrate the possible efficiency gains is a delivery company's potential use of the system. Mobile workers can be given access to a tablet-style device with apps relating to their daily business processes. This is connected to back-office systems, meaning the data is always available to monitor and manage operations by management — all while the driver is fully connected for simple and smooth workflow in the field.

The obligatory vehicle check can be made via the device, at the start of each day or week, with the results instantly updated in the back office to ensure maintenance

schedules are up to date and that duty of care responsibilities are met.

As soon as the check has been made, daily workflow can then be loaded onto the device and navigation provided to each destination along the worker's route. Using live traffic data, the fleet management software can generate accurate ETAs for each journey, with automatic alerts sent to customers via text or email to advise them of arrival time.

On arrival, the worker can submit proof of delivery using the app's signature capture functionality or by scanning with the device's in-built camera or NFC

chip. Once jobs are completed, status is updated in the back-office system, along with daily mileage records and worker hours, eliminating the need for separate, laborious record-keeping processes.

A wealth of out-of-the-box integrations are already available — TomTom Telematics, for example, has more than 330 technology partners — with more applications set to emerge as open platform telematics and the connected vehicle ecosystem evolves.

The future of business operations is changing, giving businesses the tools needed to meet customer service demands and the call for greater levels of efficiency.

*TomTom Telematics*  
[www.tomtom.com/telematics](http://www.tomtom.com/telematics)

**PRODUCT WATCH**

**WINDOW SECURITY SCREENS**

Motexion window security screens offer increased security without compromising driver view. Currently available for Mercedes Vito and Volkswagen Transporter and Caddy, other models will be available shortly, or can be supplied on demand.

Rear window screens come with 5 mm holes, side windows with 21 mm holes and both can be bonded or screwed to the window frame.

The lightweight, one-piece perforated screens are made of high-grade aluminium and protect windows from damage in the case of unsecured loads. The light colour means that screens are highly visible to thieves and, because they are fixed flush to the actual window frame, there is no compromise to the cargo area and nothing can become caught.

The screens are rustproof, and if removal is required, they cause no damage to the vehicle as the bonding agent simply peels off, leaving no screw holes behind.

**Motexion**  
[www.motexion.com.au](http://www.motexion.com.au)





## THE SOUND OF SUCCESS

National Automotive Audio Services was established in 2001, performing mobile installation services into all types of vehicles nationwide, including car audio, security and telematics. For the last 15 years it has been providing an installation service to individuals, corporate businesses and major retail businesses.

National Training and Operations Manager John Sherwood took charge and led the change in the business's job management processes that helped the National Automotive Audio Specialists Company become a well-oiled machine.



Over time, the National Automotive Audio Services team had established sophisticated systems using calendars, emails and Excel. However, as the business grew, that process slowly became ineffective and obstructive, and real-time visibility of jobs became vital.

“We had a couple of instances where somebody accidentally deleted three of the calendars out of their account and therefore we lost probably over a thousand jobs and every bit of information — plus it made it difficult to securely store information,” said Sherwood.

“I needed something that was going to free up more time, not getting swamped at the end of the month with invoicing. The most pivotal thing was getting that cash flow — that rhythm and that procedure back.”

Loss of information wasn't the only concern. With the growth the National Automotive Audio Specialists Company had been experiencing it became obvious that having real-time visibility into jobs and staff was paramount.

“We were having issues where customers were getting forgotten about or jobs were getting missed because our needs and requirements of the system surpassed the boundaries of what we had in place; we'd outgrown it basically,” added Sherwood.

Sherwood knew an intuitive cloud-based business management program like Fleetmatics WORK would overcome these obstacles and migrating would not be a problem. His concern was more for his team as transition can be seen as posing challenges.

When suggesting change in today's dynamic business environment, it is not uncommon to expect a bit of resistance from colleagues who may be comfortable with familiar systems. Sherwood realised he needed to find a way to coach his field workers away from the older system and into the Fleetmatics WORK platform.

“I gave them all a transitional period where we ran both systems side by side and gave them a feel for it. As soon as the installers got a taste for it and had live field testing, it made their lives a lot easier. There's a lot less paperwork involved, there's a lot less documentation. It's now all done live on the app.”

With the integration of Fleetmatics WORK, the platform has provided National Automotive Audio Specialists with the benefits of dispatching jobs to staff with job details, location and customer information via SMS, email or push notifications. Sherwood will know as soon as the team has acknowledged and accepted the job, providing higher levels of accountability, efficiency and visibility across the business.

“If there are any discrepancies, we now have data and history. There are very rarely any duplicate jobs now. If something gets entered into the system we can see very clearly that it's in the system; there's accountability. It makes people do their job more thoroughly and everyone is working a lot more efficiently. Tasks that could have taken up to a week to complete can now be done in one day. I like the fact that it's cloud based, it's very live and any changes and interaction that happens is instantaneously received by all parties that are using it.”

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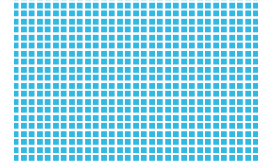
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# BEN HARTMAN

## DIRECTOR APAC, ASTEA INTERNATIONAL

### Many processes have been streamlined in the field service industry in recent years — what further improvements are likely in 2016?

By 2020, there will be billions of connected devices communicating. Service organisations will be able to predict failures, create usage-based maintenance schedules, reduce on-road activity, improve inventory utilisation and deliver greater service with fewer resources. The traditional field service model is reactive. The downside is that the asset has failed and a piece of equipment is not performing. Companies are now shifting their focus from identifying cost-effective scheduling to a more proactive way to support and improve equipment uptime with faster resolution. MtM and IoT will drive the industry to streamline. The 'connected asset' will leverage service visits into a value-added experience, shifting from a break-fix event to partnership-building.

Analysis of knowledge management and business intelligence will drive efficiencies. Organisations can use insights that provide proactive servicing while streamlining service provision to reduce costs. Machine learning and predictive analytics will change the game in customer service.

### What do you see as the greatest challenge for managers of mobile teams in the year ahead and why?

Talent, knowledge and collaboration are the biggest challenges. The evolving role of service professionals and the changing workforce require a focus on continuous learning and employee engagement — including onboarding, training and performance management. Combining this with technology and collaboration delivers a more engaged service team. The increased risk of knowledge loss due to turnover and an ageing workforce means organisations must become proactive in cultivating knowledge sharing.

Giving technicians easy ways to access subject matter experts or peers in real-time helps. An expert located anywhere can provide guidance and assistance to the field technician, to aid in quick issue resolution.

### How has the field service industry evolved since the advent of mobile technology and what are the downsides of rapid change?

There are no downsides, just opportunity presented when dealing with change. Mobile solutions provide valuable information to techs and make it easier to recognise opportunities and sell in the field. Field technicians are often seen as the 'trusted advisor' and can be a great resource for capturing additional business. When on-site, he may be making recommendations, but the sense of urgency on the customer's part wears off quickly. It can take time for someone to

follow up with the customer and their desire to implement recommendations diminishes. They are less likely to approve expenditure until something breaks later down the line. Capturing and quoting these recommendations can lead to a higher conversion rate.

### What trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the 'next big thing'?

The IoT model builds on existing M2M technologies that many field service companies have already been leveraging for years. With the availability of low-cost sensors, higher bandwidth wireless networks, more robust batteries, cloud infrastructure, location-awareness technology and big data analytics, service organisations are poised to take advantage, improve service, reduce costs and create new revenue opportunities.

### An increasing number of vendors have been attracted to the field service segment in response to market growth. How will that landscape level out and what will it look like at the end of 2016?

Many established ERP vendors need to respond to customer business needs when addressing service management. They will either continue to develop their own service management software or acquire companies that are a good fit to their product suite.

Field service management is highly specialised; the technology is cutting edge and continues to evolve. The need for an end-to-end solution that drives revenue, reduces costs and delivers better customer service is greater than ever. The solution must deliver a full set of capabilities; work order management, automated scheduling, asset management, contracts, inventory and procurement management, workflow capabilities and mobile collaboration.



*Ben Hartman joined Astea Intl. in October 2013 having fulfilled management roles at Staples, EskoArtwork, Heidelberger Druckmaschinen, MAN Ferrostaal and Pentana Solutions across EU, MEA and APAC regions. Being exposed to a variety of cultures with various responsibilities which included managing country subsidiaries for Capital Equipment Sales and Service, IT Solutions, Software and Professional Services; Ben covers all facets of business, strategies, marketing, sales and service delivery processes.*

I'M STILL AT MY  
FIRST APPOINTMENT  
... 4 HOURS LATER



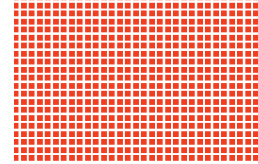
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# MICHAEL CARTER

DIRECTOR OF CHANNEL SALES, NAVMAN WIRELESS



INDUSTRY  
INSIGHTS

## Many processes have been streamlined in the field service industry in recent years — what further improvements are likely in 2016?

As GPS technology becomes more advanced, its focus is shifting from internal business benefits to improving the customer experience. Integrating telematics with existing systems and applications will help to provide exceptional customer service by minimising delays and escalating issues. Domino's Pizza is an excellent example. It recently outfitted all delivery vehicles across Australia with GPS fleet tracking, which has dramatically improved business efficiency and fleet safety. This is unique in that instead of the data just being available to the store manager, customers can track the driver's route as well.

## What do you see as the greatest challenge for managers of mobile teams in the year ahead and why?

Under the WH&S Act, fleet managers have a duty of care to their mobile workforce. However, managing driver safety is a challenging task, especially with hundreds of vehicles out on long journeys, often in remote locations. Fleet managers need to understand the potentially hazardous factors operators may encounter, particularly solo workers. Between 2012–2014, 64% of worker fatalities in Australia involved a vehicle. The challenge is not only gaining visibility into (and communicating with) remote workers, but convincing senior management that this is an issue.

## How has the field service industry evolved since the advent of mobile technology and what are the downsides of rapid change?

Customers' expectations are changing and resistance to change is one downside. Integrating telematics with existing systems and applications has a positive impact on businesses, as managers can allocate fleets more efficiently and improve accountability. For example, ScuzzTrans implemented a joint track-and-trace system using a combination of GPS tracking and an iCOS LIVE transport and logistics management system. The integrated solution offers insights to make informed decisions and has increased business by 35%. ScuzzTrans is winning business over its competitors on the basis of this technology. This is proof that the reluctance to manage vehicles through integrated solutions is likely to put any business operating a fleet of vehicles at a disadvantage.

## What trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the next big thing?

With the ability to measure everything from driver location to time spent at a job, to travelling time and driver behaviour, GPS fleet tracking has become much more advanced than 'dots on a map'. It provides comprehensive data that can be used to increase visibility of driver behaviour and vehicle location. This data can be delivered

to an app in real time, meaning a user interface is not required. Integrating telematics with existing systems is the future of any business operating a fleet of vehicles, no matter what industry.

## An increasing number of vendors have been attracted to the field service segment in response to market growth. How will that response level out and what will it look like at the end of 2016?

Market growth means greater competition. Businesses that invest in technology to manage mobile assets are those that will grow. Reverting to the Domino's solution, providing data to the manager and the customer is a trend we will see much more often. Instead of providing customers with a five-hour window of arrival, field service managers will schedule, route and dispatch technicians efficiently through GPS fleet tracking, meaning the customer will be notified when the tech is en route. In addition to improving the customer experience, insight into vehicles and core data (where they are and what they are doing) will drive down costs and improve productivity.

## How big a role does customisation play in delivering the most suitable offering to your client and can off-the-shelf ever compete with a fully tailored solution?

Advances in hardware technology and integration capability have enabled fleet managers to drive greater efficiency and productivity across their business. A fully tailored solution is key to improving the customer experience, which is crucial to success for any business. Taking data to the next level through integrating telematics with existing systems and applications will help businesses provide exceptional customer service. It's important to keep customers informed every step of the way through providing visibility into driver location, allowing fleet managers to respond efficiently to issues and prevent delays.



*With 20 years' industry experience, Carter is responsible for strategic outcomes at Navman Wireless. In his tenure he has been a driving force behind the organisations' phenomenal growth. Carter's role is to ensure Navman Wireless realises its market potential, creating an industry benchmark for after-sales service. Having held senior positions with Optus and Hutchinson Telecoms, he is a respected presenter and media commentator.*

# PRONTO



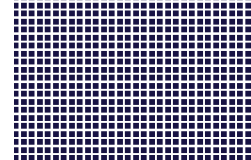
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### Many processes have been streamlined in the field service industry in recent years — what further improvements are likely in 2016?

We'll see more of a convergence between traditional field service mobile and customer collaboration tools. This will likely be value-add features such as social media integration, web conferencing and instant feedback mechanisms designed to better inform both customer and service provider, resulting in a 'customer care' model of service delivery. Given the prevalence of FS solutions in the market today, there will be more disruption and expectation on vendors to adapt quickly to market expectations, to constantly evolve their offering and drive innovation and interoperability with complementary tools.

### What do you see as the greatest challenge for managers of mobile teams in the year ahead and why?

With users becoming more tech savvy and the prevalence of Gen Y, we'll see more pressure on managers to have a clearer strategy on technology developments. They'll need to know how new mobile tech can give them a strategic advantage over competitors and how they can leverage innovation to motivate and retain good staff in the longer term.

### How has the field service industry evolved since the advent of mobile technology and what are the downsides of rapid change?

The FS industry has been forced to become more customer focused. KPI monitoring, service level agreements and a growing competitive landscape have provided customers with better performance data, negotiation power and more choice. Mobile has streamlined processes that we're once hindered by paperwork. Concerns relating to efficiency and utilisation of workforce have driven change and disruptive tech has become the norm. Rapid change has to be managed and it needs to be in line with a company's longer term strategy. They need to be confident that short-term pain will result in longer term gain and that all stakeholders have buy-in on the process and outcome. As a software vendor where rapid change occurs every day, I see no downside.

### What trends are we likely to see emerge in the short term — what is the 'next big thing'?

Predictive analytics will mean the end of the current 'break and fix mentality' and change how preventative maintenance is forecasted. IBM's Watson Analytics is able to use trends in data to predict issues before they arise, so I see this driving innovation in service by making providers more proactive. Technology will have significant impact on how maintenance is scheduled and breakdowns are predicted.

### An increasing number of vendors have been attracted to the field service segment in response to market growth. How will that landscape level out and what will it look like at the end of 2016?

New players to FS may well be agile enough to develop mobile solutions in HTML5 and leverage existing technology to fill functional gaps in their offering and this will satisfy the price-conscious customer with minimal complexity. However, these new players will struggle to compete on larger deals where supply chain, analytics and big data are priorities. Sophisticated ERP and BI can't be developed quickly. The market demands a robust transaction engine to drive efficiencies across their organisation, so well-marketed new technology will create interest but customers always select solutions on the depth of capability and reputation of the vendor.

### How big a role does customisation play in delivering the most suitable offering to your client and can off-the-shelf ever compete with a fully tailored solution?

A customised solution may suit in the short term, but can create difficulties when maintaining and upgrading solutions. For the most part we've always consulted with best practice in mind as the preferred approach to an implementation, but we also have the benefit of being able to craft a solution where gaps are identified. Ultimately, if a customer identifies a potential opportunity to introduce a customisation that gives them a competitive advantage, then we'll scope this and deliver the bespoke solution. It's all part of our methodology of listening and adapting.



*Bruce is Product Marketing Manager at Pronto Software. He has extensive experience in business development and marketing and has also held financial controller positions in the materials handling and retail sectors. Bruce has a passion for the services industry and is a regular contributor to industry blogs and publications.*

# PRODUCT WATCH



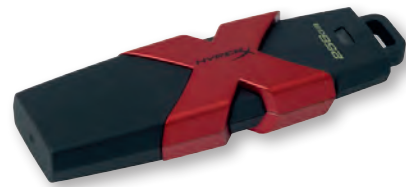
## LABELLING MACHINE

Brother has launched its PT-D600 advanced labelling machine, designed to meet a wide range of business needs - from organising office filing to tracking property through specialist barcode and asset management labels.

The PT-D600 is designed specifically for the higher-volume business user in mind. Its full-colour LCD display provides a true 'what you see is what you get' image of the label being created, shows edits in real time and even automatically detects and displays the colour of the labelling tape installed in the machine. The large Qwerty keyboard with convenient formatting keys rests at an angle for comfortable, accurate typing working in conjunction with the LCD display to help make creating professional labels easy and intuitive. The PT-D600 connects to Windows and Mac computers with the included USB cable to be used with the free P-touch Editor Label Design software. With this software, users can create high-resolution labels, choose from an expansive library of label templates and create custom labels using the fonts, symbols and graphics already stored on their computers.

The device is powered by an AC power adaptor or 6 AA batteries and prints on durable TZe laminated tapes to create long-lasting labels for indoor and outdoor use.

Brother International (Aust) Pty Ltd  
[www.brother.com.au](http://www.brother.com.au)



## FAST USB DRIVE

HyperX, a division of Kingston Technology, has launched the HyperX Savage USB Flash drive, which operates at transfer speeds up to 350 MBps read and 250 MBps write, and is available in 64, 128 and 256 GB high capacities.

The USB 3.1 Gen. 1 (USB 3.0) Flash drive is suitable for users who want to spend less time waiting for files to transfer. It both complements and is compatible with the latest release desktops, notebooks and gaming consoles and is backed by a five-year warranty and free live technical support.

Kingston Technology Far East  
[www.kingston.com](http://www.kingston.com)

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## FLEET MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

AusFleet online software for managing fleet, plant and equipment, from purchase to disposal, helps monitor and improve safety, efficiency and operational performance.

With 20 modules to choose from, AusFleet covers fleet administration, maintenance, inventory and hire to assist with chain of responsibility and WHS policies.

Users can manage external repair and maintenance or internal workshops with customised service schedules, requirements and parts, as well as generate job cards, record personnel and maintain a complete history for auditing purposes.

Programmed servicing also allows regular safety and condition checks to be performed and recorded.

Online access means drivers and operators are able to log service requests quickly and easily while on the road.

Other optional modules include fuel, hire bookings, incidents, inventory and invoicing, plus extensive reporting to deliver tailored fleet management solutions.

AusFleet Software  
[www.ausfleet.net](http://www.ausfleet.net)





# PRODUCT WATCH



## UTE

Toyota has released the new-generation HiLux range. Almost every aspect of the eighth-generation HiLux has been strengthened, including a thicker frame, stiffer body, new high-torque turbo-

diesel engines, advanced six-speed transmissions, beefed-up suspension and brakes, and expanded off-road ability. Towing capacity is now up to 3.5 tonnes and payloads are up to 1240 kg with 23 of new HiLux's 31 variants confirmed as genuine one-tonners, including all 4x2 variants and all 4x4 single and extra cabs.

At the same time, the latest HiLux offers SUV-like features including a more compliant ride, quieter cabins and higher levels of comfort and convenience with standard air conditioning, touch-screen display audios, cruise control, more supportive seats and power-operated windows, mirrors and door locks.

New HiLux also has a distinctive Australian flavour with Toyota's local engineers undertaking an unprecedented six-year program that delivered a new rugged suspension package, enhanced underbody protection and electronic control systems tuned for more effective operation on gravel and during off-road driving. More than one million kilometres of testing, including 650,000 km in Australia, has confirmed the performance, reliability and durability of new HiLux over the widest possible on-road, off-road and climatic conditions.

A new family of high-torque turbo-diesel engines is headed by a 2.8-litre version with maximum torque of up to 450 Nm — a gain of 25% compared with the previous 3.0-litre engine. Its 2.4-litre sibling also generates higher torque of up to 400 Nm.

Toyota Motor Corporation Australia Ltd  
[www.toyota.com.au](http://www.toyota.com.au)

## DURABLE PHONE CASE AND CHARGER

The LifeProof FRĒ Power for iPhone 6s combines four-proof protection with advanced technology to double battery life.

The case provides protection from water, dirt, snow and dropping and features a built-in scratch protector, ensuring the 3D touch display on the iPhone 6S remains scratch-free. A single button press fully charges the phone using Rapid Recharge technology via the built-in 2600 mAh lithium-ion battery. The case is also suitable for use with iPhone 6.

LifeProof  
[www.lifeproof.com](http://www.lifeproof.com)



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# TALK FROM THE TOP

**A** solid communication system capable of transmitting quality data is necessary for any business operating with a medium to large team of field technicians and a fleet of service vehicles. With the stabilisation of improved technology over the last 10 years, mobility software is now able to take advantage of these developments to the benefit of companies and their customers.

The rollout of field service mobility software frees staff from the counter and allows them to engage more with the customer whilst retaining the ability to record and look up information. Customers reap these benefits immediately in terms of securing the item and placing a deposit, signing on glass, accessing service history information and receiving rental contracts via email. Stuart Dean, head of IT at Kennards Hire, believes, “The role of mobile devices will transform, even revolutionise, the way we transact with our customers.”

The starting point for properly measuring whether your business is making the best use of its mobile personnel and fleet is accurate data. This constant and systematic flow of quality data information can be used to generate analysis reports of response times, downtime and service types. It can also expedite accurate and meaningful work reports, showing percentage on labour recovered on internal and external service jobs as well as percentage on non-service job activities. Baseplan Software’s latest FSM offering handles preventive maintenance schedules and job dispatch. It allows technicians to process all aspects of service and repairs, giving full access to parts availability, upcoming service requests and back-to-base service communications — all over the air.

Mobility can be a big win — not only for the rental company, but also for the staff and, more importantly, the customer. The role of the software provider is to embrace new technologies as they come to market and to evaluate them from the perspective of adding value or reducing cost for their customers. These technologies then need to be embedded and interfaced within software to provide the best user experience such that the technology becomes a natural part of the process and not a roadblock. Only modern software can accommodate the new technologies without compromise.

In the future, technology will become more and more seamless and will anticipate our needs. Devices get smaller and simpler in function but more complex in capability. The future of technology lies where you are using it without even knowing it, as it has become a natural extension of the human form.

*Andrew Satterley is CEO – APAC & EMEA, Baseplan Software Group. He has an impressive and proven track record of 30+ years filling senior management roles. His drive and tenacity has seen him named Executive of the Year by Stanford Who’s Who twice.*



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