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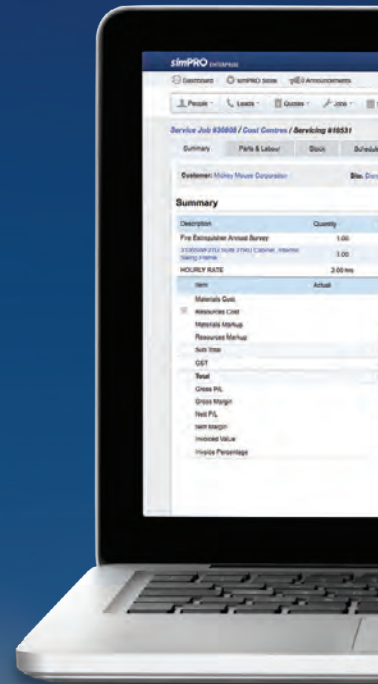
FIELD SERVICE BUSINESS

managing, resourcing & enabling your team in the field

IS LIFE ON THE ROAD TAKING ITS TOLL?

Electrical | Plumbing | Utilities | Construction | Security | HVAC | Landscaping

SERIOUS
JOB MANAGEMENT
SOFTWARE

ENTERPRISE

simPRO Enterprise is a feature-rich business management tool designed from the ground up by trade and service contractors for the trade and service industry.

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Project Management

Service Management

Scheduling

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simPRO SOFTWARE

Serious Job Management
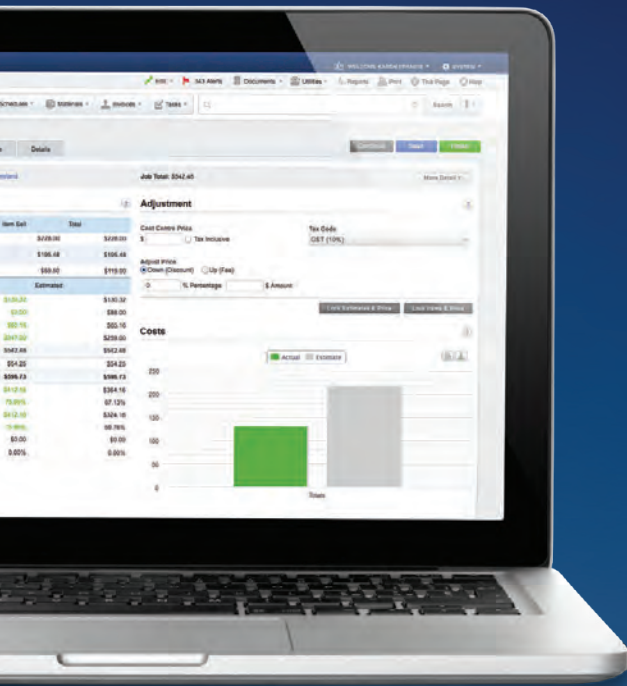
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Invoicing

Accounting Integration

Cloud-Based

simTRAC Vehicle Tracking Software gives you the peace of mind of knowing exactly where your vehicles are at any given time, and the ability to watch as they are tracked in real-time.

✓ Easily locate all of your fleet vehicles

✓ Know which driver is in which vehicle at any time

✓ Improve customer experience

✓ Monitor and manage driver behaviour

✓ Adhere to WH&S legislation including duty of care for field staff requirements

✓ Ensure onsite and offsite accountability

WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Here we are at issue two of *Field Service Business* magazine - how the months are flying! I hope that you found our launch issue both interesting and informative. We've had a great response from readers so far and are striving to maintain an even spread of content, both in print and online, across topics that we know are of interest to you.

Our features this time around include both Safety and Fleet Management, which are inextricably linked from a field service management perspective. While there are undeniably commercial considerations when running a fleet, safety remains a primary concern for most business managers and owners. Hopefully you'll learn a thing or two from the articles herein, as well as see theory put into practice via a range of interesting case studies. As with every issue of the magazine, we are shining a light on the latest products and technologies.

This print issue of *Field Service Business* will take readers through the holiday season, but remember to keep an eye on the website and to sign up for our weekly eNewsletter, so you don't miss the latest industry information, news and events.

Thanks for your feedback on issue 1; I really do welcome your input. Stay safe over the break and look out for our next issue in early 2015.

Dannielle Furness

dfurness@fieldservicebusiness.com.au
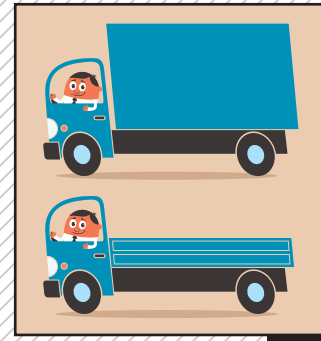
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NOVEMBER 2014

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ADOPT
MOTIVATE
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AND WIN

Use your own organisation's goals to create configurable, correlating or even progressive achievements to:

- Drive the change management process and make it fun
- Improve productivity through motivation and emotionally engage your field workers
- Deliver a better experience for your customers
- Provide visibility and tangible results of the great work happening in the field

The Achievements Center uses self-motivation to drive improved efficiencies in the field and deliver superior customer service.

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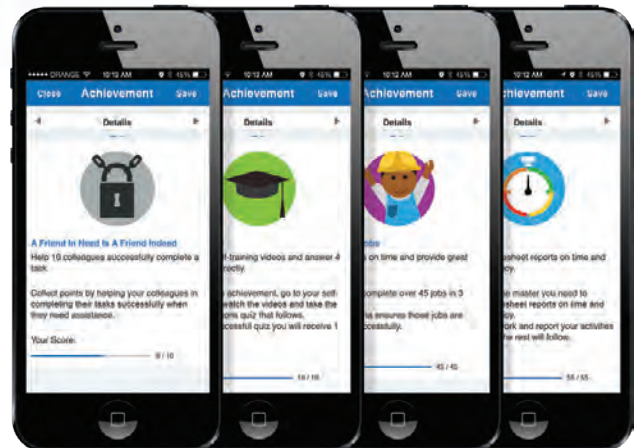
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THE FUTURE OF THE FLEET

Dannielle Furness

Managing a fleet in 2014 is about more than leasing costs and fuel economy. Drivers are facing increased traffic, risk of fatality and amplified stress levels. Is life on the road taking its toll?

Recreational driving is one of life's great pleasures - wide, undulating roads, the gentle thrum of the engine, a playlist of favourites and leisurely stops in scenic spots for lunch or just to take in the view. It's a pity the same can't be said for workday driving, where scheduled appointments, traffic and overpriced parking are constant reminders that there's a job to be done and not enough time to do it.

Drive me crazy

There is no doubt that driving can be a stressful business. In fact, a 2013 study carried out by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in collaboration with car manufacturer Audi, discovered that driving is on a par with skydiving when it comes to stress levels. The study measured vital signs, skin conductance and facial movements across a range of activities, including attending an MIT economics lecture and eating breakfast. The results for both driving and jumping out of a plane were remarkably similar and far outweighed the stress levels experienced during the more mundane tasks.

It's easy enough to understand why. We can only assume the term 'peak hour' stems from a time when traffic increased for just that - one hour. Not so today. Major metropolitan roads and motorways are bumper to bumper well before 7 am and again long after dark. An increased propensity for parents to ferry the kids to and from school has created a second mini-peak hour, while the introduction of reduced speed school zones further exacerbates the problem, making moving on our roads even slower and for longer periods each day.

When your job requires you to be on the road all day, there's no getting away from it. You can't just wait till peak hour is over or till the school traffic quietens down. While fleet managers can implement technology improvements to ensure the field team uses the quickest route and are only scheduled for jobs close to a current location, the fact remains that sitting in traffic is often unavoidable and undeniably stressful. For some drivers, an added layer of perceived complexity can even contribute to further anxiety.

Highway to the danger zone

If the stress doesn't get you, statistics suggest an accident likely will. The Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety - Queensland (CARRS-Q) published a paper on work-related road safety which incorporates some frightening numbers as provided by government and industry groups including Safe Work Australia and the Australian Transport Council. For example: work-related crashes make up 15% of the Australian national road toll. That's a pretty big number, particularly when you consider that most fatality reports on the evening news involve inexperienced young drivers coming home from a night out with friends - we simply don't hear about the service technician who didn't make it to his next appointment. Even more alarming: road fatalities equate to a staggering 33% of total Australian occupational deaths. Even with non-fatal outcomes, CARRS-Q reports that work-related crashes incur a greater average time lost in worker absence than any other type of worker claim.

Apart from the ongoing health risks associated with high stress levels, increased

FEATURE

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pressure on the roads can lead drivers to make poor decisions and tends to encourage erratic behaviour. Unfortunately, no amount of technology improvement can completely compensate for the bad driving that others often display and the subsequent actions we are forced to take on the roads. The human element of driving is still the most unpredictable and unmanageable facet and some personality types are simply more prone to making potentially questionable driving choices and engaging in risk-taking behaviour.

No-one in the driver's seat

This is probably what Google was thinking when it unveiled the self-driving car earlier this year. Hailed as an avenue to less stressful driving, better fuel economy and fewer traffic incidents, the driverless car is not as implausible as it would initially seem when you consider the technology involved. Many of the standard inclusions in today's cars, such as cruise control and crash-avoidance features, are already facilitating less human interaction in the driving process.

What will be interesting to watch unfold are the changes to infrastructure that will follow implementation of such technology. According to an article published on the UK-based Telegraph online, traffic lights could become redundant, as cars will have the ability to communicate with one another to facilitate smooth and efficient traffic operations. It all sounds very 'Jetsons' and certainly conjures up images of zooming sky-cars as predicted in such animated cartoons of the 1960s, but it is obviously still a way off broad-scale adoption.

Here and now

Until such time as we can summon a car to transport us safely to our destination without delay, we'll have to make do with the status quo: traffic snarls, longer peak hours and other drivers. For those

"

If the stress doesn't get you ... an accident likely will.

managing mobile teams, development of a thorough work-related road safety program will help to define potential risks and identify where there is room for improvement.

While the internet is awash with 'are you an aggressive driver?' quizzes, as well as tips and tricks for maintaining a Zen-like composure from countless road safety organisations, it is worthwhile considering a program of driver training for your team.

Most programs offered today include instruction on driving tactics to reduce vehicle running costs and to identify signs of driver fatigue. Many incorporate some form of risk identification and defensive driving education as well. Participants are encouraged to actively engage in practices that promote safety for themselves, as well as other drivers.

While there are obviously commercial benefits to better driving, the safety and wellbeing of your mobile workforce should be a key concern. Given the frightening statistics around work-related road incidents, encouraging better driving just makes sense.

in the field

HANDLING WITH CARE

Linde Material Handling secured its prominent position in the Australian market by developing a strong customer focus and backing its advanced product range with comprehensive after-sales support. It was during Linde's search for ways to enhance its support performance that the company engaged with Baseplan Software. Six years later Baseplan is central to Linde's operations.

Linde had been exploring the idea of equipping its large field service technician fleet with an In Van Terminal system to allow two-way data communication for improved efficiency. Datalink's system facilitates live vehicle tracking, job dispatch and acceptance, electronic paperwork completion, accurate inventory consumption records and costing.

"When we asked about software options for the IVT system, Datalink recommended Baseplan," Linde's former CFO Georg Bommers recalls. Georg was a key member of the Linde team that selected Baseplan in 2006.

"At the time we had an application called Scala and we had to weigh up whether to go with a new version of Scala or to choose something entirely different," he said.

"One of the main drivers which influenced us to have a good look at Baseplan was that it had a strong rental and service focus in the product. In fact it was our understanding that was where the product originated from.

"A crucial factor in the selection process was that we wanted software with local rather than overseas support.

"We could also see an important advantage for Linde and particularly for me in my role as chief financial officer because of Baseplan's high level of integration.

"There was no need to have other software systems hanging off it. We don't have to have a separate rental billing system and there's no need for departments to run their own separate spreadsheets for anything.

"From a data integrity perspective, it is very important that everything goes into Baseplan and everything comes out of Baseplan. That's what we aimed for and we've found that is possible within the program."

Although the Linde switchover to Baseplan occurred half a decade ago, Georg Bommers still recalls clearly how it took place.

"The migration to a new system is very much dependent on the preparation, the cleansing of records and all those routines that are done beforehand," he said. "We started the actual migration on a Friday afternoon and worked over the Saturday and Sunday.

"We were finished by Tuesday lunchtime and in the big scheme of things three and a half days is not a bad effort. Successfully bringing all the assets and transactions over normally doesn't happen so smoothly, but it went well from Linde's side and from Baseplan's. All our branches around Australia went live over the same weekend."

Evaluating what has transpired since the move to Baseplan is also a source of considerable satisfaction for Linde's CFO.

"Our expectations of the product in terms of having an integrated system with data visibility and transparency have all been met," he said.

"Baseplan really has improved the data quality throughout our organisation. That data quality and availability has allowed our executives to make better, more informed decisions and has helped to improve the performance of Linde generally."

One of the key trends in recent years in the markets in which Linde operates has been the strong growth of short- and long-term equipment rental as an alternative to outright purchase.

Customers are choosing these options to help them conserve capital and to provide maximum flexibility in changing market conditions. In that environment the flexibility of Baseplan has also assisted Linde.

"The equipment rental module in Baseplan does not really distinguish between long-term and short-term rental," Georg Bommers said. "The features of the software used to handle either arrangement are virtually the same, it is just that different stakeholders within Linde Material Handling can use them to suit their own specific purposes.

The success of the solution speaks for itself, as Linde is currently implementing its third-generation solution of Baseplan.

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BUYING A SAFER TRUCK

As employers and fleet managers, you have a legal obligation to provide a safe working environment, including vehicles. This information from Victorian Transport Industry Group explains safety features to look for when purchasing heavy vehicles.
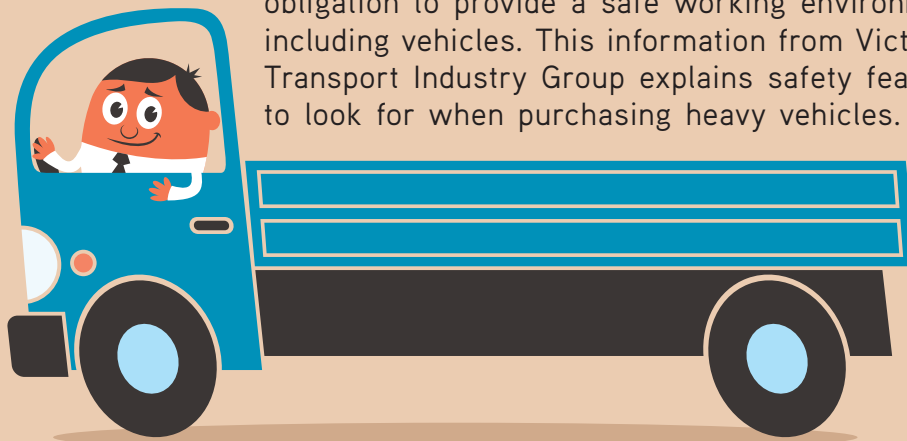
Making the right decision when purchasing a truck can offer significant benefits, but depends on a number of important factors. The lifecycle cost includes direct costs such as purchase price, fuel, maintenance and tyres, but should be considered in tandem with indirect costs including image, maximum load and safety.

It is essential that the truck you want to buy is properly specified to suit the intended task. To ensure maximum benefit, both active and passive safety features should be considered.

Active safety

The optimum design and construction of a safe truck should incorporate features that prevent crashes before they happen. Crash prevention features are known as 'active safety'. There are two key areas of active safety, but these features only deliver benefits when driven within the vehicle's operational and environmental limitations.

Braking and stability features

Having an efficient braking system is the best protection you can have to reduce the risk of a crash.

1. Anti-lock braking system (ABS). ABS eliminates brake lock by controlling the braking pressure applied to individual tyres, allowing the driver to continue steering and avoid a crash. ABS is engaged when wheel lock is imminent due to hard braking. Each wheel's brake cylinder is controlled via a modulator, by releasing and applying the brakes very quickly. In heavy vehicle combinations whereby a trailer is fitted with ABS, the risk of jackknifing during heavy braking is reduced. ABS can be integrated with skid control technology and a roll-back lock to control braking and traction functions of the entire truck and trailer unit.

2. Electronic braking system (EBS). EBS signals the brake system and speeds up the reaction time. Electronic sensors fitted to the footbrake register when the driver applies the brake and a signal is instantly sent to the EBS control unit, which determines braking pressure for each axle and wheel. Air or hydraulic pressure then applies the brakes at that wheel. Most systems include ABS and are designed to ensure that braking power is distributed efficiently between the wheels, depending on the axle load.

3. Electronic stability control (ESC). ESC builds on ABS and EBS to provide advanced braking and stability. This technology helps prevent jackknifes, rollovers

> **Both active and passive safety features should be considered.**

© Malchev/Dollar Photo Club

and other loss-of-control crashes. It helps the driver maintain control by: correcting steering, stabilising the vehicle, improving handling, improving traction and by providing balanced braking depending on the load. ECS uses sensors to measure steering angle and lateral acceleration, registering an impending skid or tilt, then selectively braking individual wheels and reducing engine torque to bring the vehicle back on course. It helps the driver control lateral movements, as well as longitudinal.

Driving assistance features

Driver fatigue and distractions pose a serious risk to drivers. Active safety features that increase the comfort and awareness levels for drivers will reduce the potential of a crash.

1. Adaptive cruise control (ACC) - selecting a safe distance. Standard cruise controls lock vehicle speed but ACC also optionally locks vehicle following distances. It uses a form of radar to determine the speed and distance of the vehicle ahead. ACC enables the driver to select both time and distance gap and maintains this by automatically controlling the throttle and brakes. It can be deactivated via a button press on the ACC control or depressing the brake pedal or clutch.

2. Lane assist - image processing. A digital camera behind the windscreen detects the vehicle's position relative to left- or right-hand road or lane markings. If the vehicle touches or moves over these markings, a warning signal sounds, alerting the driver.

3. Good visibility - making the driver's view of surrounding traffic as good as possible lowers risk. Ensure the cabin design has adequate visibility.

4. Comfortable climate - suitable ventilation and climate control make driving easier.

5. Comfortable driving - to minimise risk of misjudgement, ensure that instruments are legible, simple to understand and within easy reach. A comfortable seat in the correct driving position will help avoid the onset of tiredness and a good quality seat will also ease back problems.

6. Low noise level - noise and vibration affect both endurance and concentration, so adequate soundproofing and a well-balanced cab suspension are a must. The driver must still retain a sense of surrounding road conditions, so cabin design needs to be sensitive to noise levels while permitting the driver to hear and monitor both internal and external conditions.

Passive safety

When accidents do happen, the truck's 'passive safety' features help protect the driver, passengers and other road users from the consequences.

1. Seatbelts. A seatbelt assists drivers to remain in their seat, maintaining better control in the event of a crash. If buying an older truck, most B-Pillar anchored seatbelts can be retrofitted with an integrated seatbelt/suspension seat replacement. Some vehicles require engineering and cab modification, so you should see a reputable seat supplier and have them inspect the vehicle to ensure structural integrity of the cabin is maintained.

2. Airbags. Analysis of the actual crash sequence in 94 real-life crashes has shown that airbags reduce injuries in frontal collisions. The use of a seatbelt/airbag combination is the most effective protection a driver can have.

3. Cabin strength. For maximum safety the cabin should be made of high-strength materials and reinforced at both the doors and the front. In a collision, energy is transferred backwards through the cab, creating a survival space. The cab mountings can be design to yield to a certain extent, enabling the cab to be pushed backwards, minimising penetration and likely injury. The dashboard, steering column and items of trim at knee height should all be energy absorbent and upholstery fabrics made of flameproof materials. Look for cabs with ECE29 Cab Strength standard - or better.

4. Front underrun protection (FUP). Lessen the effects of impact. FUP is a structure at the front of the truck that prevents cars from becoming trapped underneath in the event of a collision. It also ensures that the safety features of a passenger car are activated and prevents damage to the truck's steering by distributing the crash forces evenly.

5. Side and rear underrun protection. In crashes involving other road users, side and rear underrun protection helps prevent serious injuries. Research shows that 40% of protected road users are killed as a result of impact with the side of a truck.

For a full copy of the guide, including health and safety checklists, questions you should ask yourself when purchasing a heavy vehicle and information on Roadworthy Certificates, visit the Victorian Transport Industry Group site.

Victorian Transport Association

www.vta.com.au

MITIGATING POOR PERFORMANCE

Poor driving habits not only increase the risk of accident and injury, but can have a detrimental influence on fuel consumption and maintenance costs. While managing driver behaviour in a 400-vehicle fleet may seem like an onerous task, a simple and effective tracking and tracing solution has provided substantial physical benefit, in terms of less vehicle wear and tear, as well as a notable shift in driver attitudes.

The Public Authority for Electricity and Water (PAEW) is a government department that provides high-quality sustainable and reliable potable water and power services to the people of the Sultanate of Oman. As the regulator for both water and electricity services, as well as a direct water service provider to homes and businesses, the PAEW serves a population of more than 1.5 million people, transporting an average of 650,000 cubic metres of water per day.

PAEW is involved in a large capital delivery program to reach 90% of the population of Oman connected to the water network by 2035. While electricity production and distribution are managed by electricity companies, PAEW is involved in policymaking for the energy sector and manages innovative renewable energy projects.

PAEW had a critical need to proactively manage violations within its fleet of 400 vehicles, many of which operate in remote locations. The company reported unsafe and poor driver performance, accidents, speeding, high maintenance costs and excessive fuel consumption due to personal vehicle use. It recognised that driver safety and fuel consumption were being negatively impacted due to overspeeding.

Top priorities for PAEW management around rectification of unsafe driving practices included: to improve fleet management and safety, increase efficiency, reduce road accidents, implement safety measures, improve management control, reduce the cost of both fuel and maintenance, and to boost driver performance while optimising health and driver safety measures.

The fleet management solution implemented for PAEW consists of MiX Telematics' FM Tracer. The solution combines the latest onboard computer and vehicle tracking technology to provide a cost-effective, feature-rich tracking and tracing solution.

The solution allows PAEW to manage its fleet and communicate with drivers. Tracking functionality is supported by fast and accurate GPS positioning, which is used in conjunction with GPS and GPRS.

The FM Tracer offers useful tools such as trip replays, finding the nearest vehicle to a location and reports on movement history and vehicle utilisation. This assists customers in the improvement of fleet efficiency by discouraging unauthorised personal use of fleet vehicles.

The installation was carried out in multiple phases and began in mid-2013. 281 vehicles were initially fitted with the MiXTelematics solution, with the remaining 119, located in various remote areas across Oman, due for completion by the end of 2014.

PAEW saw benefits within three months of the phase one installation, including sharp reductions in major violations such as speeding and improvement in management of vehicles and drivers, unfastened seatbelts and harsh braking. The company's management was impressed by the effect of the MiX Telematics solution on drivers' attitudes and behaviour, which resulted in improved driving practices across the board.

Using in-vehicle monitoring system data generated in conjunction with feedback and coaching of drivers, IVMS helped to improve driver performance, which led to a reduction in crash rates and lowered maintenance costs. The solution delivered consistent improvement in driver behaviour. Monitoring driver behaviour has contributed to a dramatic decrease in overspeeding, which has increased driver safety and reduced fuel consumption, delivering PAEW a fleet management solution that addressed key management priorities and more than met expectation.

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THE FIELD SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Sumair Dutta - Chief Customer Officer

When we speak of consumerisation in field service, we often think of the impact that consumer devices, such as smartphones and tablets, have had on field service delivery. We might also think about the impact of consumer applications on enterprise field service workflows, making it easier and simpler for technicians to access their necessary field service information. In essence, if they could do it with what they had at home, then why not at work? Most of our thoughts around consumerisation in field service revolve around the technology available to field technicians.

An area where consumerisation is likely to permeate the enterprise field service space is in the area of field service experience. We have all heard of customer experience management and its impact on customer loyalty and commitment. But most customer experience management discussions revolve around service delivered via the channels of the contact centre such as email, voice, chat, social or the web. However, very little attention is paid to the experience delivered to a customer during a field service visit.

Perhaps I should say that very little attention 'was' paid. In field service visits to direct customers, organisations are spending a lot more time focusing on the experience associated with the visit. This starts with the appointment booking process and extends all the way to the post-visit feedback process. Organisations are focusing on areas such as:

- Ease of getting an appointment
- Ease of cancelling or rescheduling appointments via text or web-based channels
- Precise and shorter service windows
- Alerts on technician status on the day of service
- Technician likeability
- Technician professionalism and concern for customer (not just getting the job done but doing so in a manner that shows concern for the customer's premises and time)
- Summarising work and ease of adding new services
- Capturing customer feedback

Therefore it's not just about someone showing up at any point in the day to solve your service issue, but it's more about minimising the inconvenience of what is considered to be a painful situation for most customers. And with that in mind, it's also the hope of turning a field visit into a positive experience for both the servicing organisation and the customer.

In times when we shy away from in-person and face-to-face communications, and it is extremely difficult for organisations to connect with their customers, a field visit offers a unique opportunity wherein customers provide a window of time and attention to the servicing organisation. During this time, much can be learned about customer preferences and annoyances and what can be done in the future to align with the former and avoid the latter. There is also the opportunity to make customers aware of other valuable services that can prevent service inconveniences in the future or improve the usage experience of that particular product and service. Customers can also use that time to learn more from their visiting field agents around getting the most from their investment in that provider's goods and services.

This focus on experience necessitates a change - both in the types of workers that are hired to serve as field agents, as well as in the training provided when these agents step in front of the customer. Our research continues to show an increasing focus on customer interaction and interpersonal traits in field service hiring profiles. Technical skills are still important, but organisations are coming around to the fact that the technical requirements of the job can be taught - the interpersonal requirements cannot be.

Now, it is vital that the particular service issue a field visit is scheduled for gets resolved effectively. Without that, investments made to improve the field service experience are mostly wasted. But when paired with issue resolution and effective field service, a unique field service experience can go a long way in delighting customers. And these customers might begin to expect the same type of field service experience in their multimillion-dollar enterprise relationships.

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HOW TO REDUCE VEHICLE
RUNNING COSTS

As a business owner or manager with mobile workers on the road, you've probably invested a lot of money in your vehicles. Here's a few simple ways to reduce running costs.

When running costs are broken down, petrol is predictably at the top end - and fuel prices continue to rise. More hours on the road and heavy traffic can mean more accidents and idling time. This, in turn, leads to higher insurance and maintenance payouts, not to mention disappointed customers. Add increasing taxes and vehicle depreciation to the mix and you would be forgiven for thinking that vehicle running costs are beyond your control.

While it's impossible to control fuel prices, it is possible to reduce fuel consumption. Safe, responsible driving helps to keep maintenance costs in check. And, with less damage to your vehicles, insurance costs will be lower. By influencing the costs that are under your control, you can stay firmly in the driving seat when it comes to saving money.

How can you control vehicle running costs?

Drive fewer kilometres

• By ensuring that you and your drivers take the quickest routes and cut unnecessary journeys, you can save fuel and minimise the wear and tear of your vehicles.

• Take the smartest routes. The latest navigation technologies with live traffic information will ensure that you and your drivers head straight to your customers without delays or confusion. Not only does this mean less mileage - but spending less time on the road means spending more time with your customers.

• Go straight to the customer. Do your drivers need to come into the office to pick up job information before they can go to the customer? Innovative fleet management technologies eliminate these unnecessary trips. Drivers receive job updates directly on their navigation device so they can head straight to the customer - saving unnecessary mileage.

• Know where your drivers are. With today's fleet management technologies, you'll always know where your vehicles are. That means you can send the closest driver to a job. This not only saves on fuel and vehicle wear and tear, but the rapid response of drivers certainly impresses your customers.

Drive more carefully

If you and your drivers are more careful on the roads, you can protect your vehicles from unnecessary damage, save on insurance costs and even reduce fuel consumption.

• Know how your drivers are driving. Poor driving styles cost money. That's why today's leading navigation devices deliver real-time driver feedback, to encourage your drivers to improve their driving style instantly. This means less harsh breaking, cornering, accelerating and idling, saving fuel and minimising vehicle wear and tear. At the same time, less damage to the vehicle means less insurance costs.

• Promote proper vehicle maintenance. There are simple things you can do to save on fuel. For example, regular servicing maintains engine efficiency. Keeping tyres fully inflated uses less fuel. Even removing roof racks when they aren't needed helps; these add wind resistance, which increases fuel consumption.

• Make your drivers your ambassadors. Innovative fleet management technologies offer clear reports which detail driving behaviour, fuel usage, standstill time and more. With this information, you and your drivers can work together to help them make changes to their individual driving behaviour.

Avoid unnecessary fines

No one wants to pay out for something that could have been avoided. Today's leading fleet management and navigation technologies help you to make sure you don't pay any unnecessary costs.

• Stick to speed limits. With world-class navigation technology, you and your drivers can be alerted of mobile and fixed cameras and average speed check zones. So there's no need for sudden braking - and no surprise speeding fines.

• Avoid tax fines. Today's world-class fleet management systems capture reliable trip information and present it in easy-to-read reports. This helps you to prove your performance - and avoid unnecessary tax fines arising from non-compliance.

Control all costs with one solution

These techniques all contribute to lower vehicle running costs and will help you to save fuel and minimise wear and tear. If your drivers receive real-time feedback on their driving behaviour, there will be less damage to your vehicles and insurance costs will be lower too. A higher-quality vehicle will be worth more when it is sold - which means you won't need to borrow as much money to buy a new one, indirectly leading to lower interest payments.

While it all sounds simple, employing these techniques may be easier said than done. The best option is to implement a fleet management technology solution that is easy to install and use, giving your drivers the best chance for improvement in driving style while delivering tangible savings.
Forum Group

www.forumgroup.com.au

MULTITASKING MADE EASY

Imagine you're responsible for maintaining the United Kingdom's utility infrastructure. It requires managing several complex, multitask jobs every day, with each job demanding numerous field technicians with various skill sets, specialised vehicles and a range of equipment. You have a full fleet at your disposal, but how do you coordinate these variables to get all the work done, while staying competitive? This was the challenge Andy Carter, head of business process improvement at Morrison Utility Services (MUS), faced.

MUS has an important job. It keeps the UK's utility network infrastructure in peak performance by providing maintenance services and responding to repair requests from electric, gas, water and telecommunications companies.

For every job, MUS must provide notice to the local governing authority that it will be working in a public space. Often, the most critical aspect impacting on-time project completion is the highway reinstatement services at the end of the job. MUS has a dedicated business line responsible for reinstatement (filling in) of the holes created by excavations and roadworks. This process often requires:

• 20+ individual, and interdependent, tasks per job
• various specialist vehicles
• sourcing and transporting materials to multiple sites
• deploying staff with proper experience, accreditation and skills
• compliance with client service level agreements (SLAs) and permit periods

That's a lot to plan for! And previously, MUS supervisors were completing this puzzle using only spreadsheets.

"Quite often, our supervisors would be in the office until 8.30 pm trying to get the work allocated for the next day," notes Carter.

MUS noticed this pain point at the same time it was experiencing growth, which was increasing the reinstatement team's volume of work. Carter knew it was time to find a better way to organise and manage this complex and dynamic field service operation.

MUS needed a faster, smarter way to manage appointment variables: one that could quickly match the work type with the best available resource - and ensure it happened in the right order and maximised the field team's productivity. Carter knew this was too much to do manually. He set out to find field service management technology with the processing power and intelligence to consider all variables - job type, required equipment, location, technician proximity and availability, time constraints, etc - and optimise job scheduling based on those factors.

MUS selected and deployed TOA Technologies' SaaS field service management solution, ETAdirect. The application uses real data points that measure how long each MUS employee

takes to complete work, and tracks which people and vehicles have the capabilities to perform each task. It then applies predictive analytics to make the best match possible between jobs and resources. "ETAdirect truly optimises our complex field work and keeps learning our tasks and routes over time to continuously improve the results," says Carter.

The system automatically pulls reinstatement tasks from MUS's workforce management system and allocates them to the best resource. Dispatchers can stay focused on managing

exception situations, and more efficient processes help MUS consistently meet SLAs and notice periods.

Since deploying ETAdirect 12 months ago, MUS has:

• reduced excavation open times, minimising inconvenience and enhancing customer satisfaction
• realised substantial savings by reducing time spent manually scheduling and assigning work
• increased workforce productivity by intelligently scheduling interdependent tasks
• reduced travel time and fuel costs through fewer depot trips and optimised routing between work sites
• received fewer highway fines through more consistent compliance with SLAs and permit/notice regulations
• delivered faster emergency job responses thanks to real-time visibility of team location and status

Recently, MUS expanded its use of ETAdirect to manage its excavation and cable-laying teams, and will continue seeking news ways to improve its processes using the technology.

TOA Technologies
www.toatech.com

GOING IT ALONE

Dannielle Furness

The cliché tells us there is safety in numbers, but for many solo workers, travelling in a pack simply isn't an option.

Supervising staff that undertake remote or isolated work poses a unique set of challenges for field service managers. Bound by a duty of care, employers need to manage risks to health and safety of those workers, which may involve more than you think.

One is the loneliest number

According to the WorkCover Authority of NSW, remote or isolated work is defined as "work that is isolated from the assistance of other people because of the location, time or nature of the work being done". Assistance from other people in this scenario includes rescue, medial assistance and emergency services.

An employee can be considered isolated even if there are other people close by. Anyone carrying out tasks alone is, by strict definition, isolated from others and that separation exposes individuals to a range of risks and hazards that are not as prevalent when working with an offsider or in a group.

Size up the situation

Safe Work Australia (SWA) published a code of practice late 2011 titled 'Managing the Work Environment and Facilities', which incorporates a section specifically for remote or isolated work. It suggests that a number of factors must be considered when assessing employee risks and makes a useful starting point for risk identification by managers and business owners with a responsibility for lone workers:

· The length of time and time of day. How long will a person need to be alone to finalise a job and is there more risk at certain times of day?

· Communication. Can the worker access communication systems and are there procedures for regular communication? Will any existing emergency communication systems work properly in all situations and, if they are vehicle based, what arrangements are in place if the case of a worker being away from their vehicle?

· Location. What will happen in the event of a vehicle breakdown and is the work in a remote location, making immediate rescue difficult?

· Nature of the work. What type of machinery or tools are required, are high-risk activities involved, is fatigue likely to increase risk? Is the worker exposed to adverse environmental conditions including weather and animals such as reptiles or insects? Is there the possibility of violence or aggression when dealing with clients?

· Skills and capabilities. Does the individual's level of work experience and training equip them to make sound judgements with respect to their own safety? Do they have any pre-existing medical conditions that may put them at risk?

Put protection in place

Once you've grasped the nature and extent of risks, processes and procedures need to be implemented to guarantee worker safety. For some industries and professions, the assessment process may uncover risks too high to allow workers to continue alone. SWA recommends a buddy system in cases

such as these. It also suggests that workplace layout and design can be adjusted to diminish risk, but the focus in the remote or isolated section of the code of practice is fixed on communication.

SWA advises that the most suitable type of communication system will be determined by the worker's ultimate distance from their home base, as well as the environment through which they will have to travel. They suggest that both expert advice and local knowledge will assist in selection of the most appropriate form.

In situations whereby a worker does not have access to a fixed line phone, or would be unable to reach one in the event of an emergency, SWA offers the following options:

• Personal security systems - are an ideal solution for workers on the move in usually isolated places. Many are capable of automatic alarm transmission in the event of an absence of movement.

• Radio communications systems - are suited to situations where multiple mobile workers need to contact one another, or a home base. The effectiveness of this solution is likely to be dependent on factors including frequency, power and distance between broadcasters.

• Satellite communications systems - are most useful when dealing with geographically remote locations, although they can be susceptible to damage to aerials, vehicle power supply failure or vehicle damage.

• Distress beacons - where the threat to life is substantial. The technology employed in emergency position indication radio beacons (IPIRBs) used in marine environments, emergency locator transmitters (ELTs) used in aircraft and personal locator beacons (PLBs) for personal use, provides accurate location information and can communicate the event of an emergency through simple activation.

• Mobile phones - although the most obvious and prevalent of communications devices, there is potential for mobile phones to become inoperable in areas of no or limited coverage. Given the susceptibility of mobile phone service with respect to geographical features, SWA suggests an additional communication device be made available to workers.

The guide also recommends the use of movement recording, including simple systems such as regular call-ins, through to more advanced technology such as satellite tracking, which can initiate distress or alert functions if required.

Of course, common sense will prevail in many situations, but workers will need to be adequately educated with respect to working alone, including instruction in the use of available communications systems and how to obtain assistance in the event of an emergency.

For more information on employer obligations, contact your local WorkCover office. A copy of the full code is available from the publications section of Safe Work Australia website: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au.

PRODUCT WATCH

MOBILE RETAIL SELLING SOLUTION

A mobile selling solution from StayinFront is set to revolutionise mobile retail execution by putting integrated, intelligent outlet data on more than 320,000 retail outlets throughout Australia and New Zealand, at the fingertips of consumer goods companies and their field forces for the first time.

StayinFront Sales Locator is a complete solution that combines software, data and services to provide powerful sales and competitive data on retail outlets nationally.

The SaaS-based solution enables reps to identify and capitalise on the key opportunities in the field by providing strategic insight into a territory, customers and prospects, including the relative size of each opportunity.

The unique combination of outlet data, map-based journey planning tools and ongoing refreshes and data maintenance enables field forces to become more efficient and productive, sell more and discover better ways to manage a territory.

The intelligent outlet data integrates seamlessly into the StayinFront mobile sales force automation solution with processes that regularly update, independently verify and maintain the data. The data is presented in easy-to-use dashboards, and onboard mapping tools direct the representative to the store - all on their mobile device.

StayinFront Sales Locator uses a comprehensive range of factors, including current sales performance, as well as local area and store attributes such as outlet information (including location and complementary outlets), the competitive landscape, the demographics of the catchment area and accessibility by road and public transport to allow easy comparison between stores. The Sales Index predicts relative sales opportunity for each outlet, while the Competition Index rates the competitive potential of an outlet and allows a rep to know where to focus their efforts and the sales message most likely to generate a favourable outcome.

The real value of the data is unleashed when combined with StayinFront EdgeCG to pinpoint the location of an outlet and identify the relative size of the opportunity.

The company claims StayinFront Sales Locator is a breakthrough solution that provides consumer goods companies and their field forces with fact-based intelligence and tools to do more, know more and sell more. Field forces can now analyse outlet data to identify opportunities and develop strategies and tactics to drive effectiveness based on powerful information and insights. It empowers reps to sell, plan and make decisions based on fact - not incomplete, outdated or unknown information.

StayinFront Group Australia
www.stayinfront.com.au

LONE WORKER SAFETY SOLUTION

The SafeTCard Identicom 8 and 9 series personal safety alarm is a smart identity badge and one- or two-way (configurable) audio communication device that allows a wide range of workers to reduce the risks associated with working alone or in remote locations.

Five models are available in the 8 and 9 series, offering a range of features and functionality developed specifically to suit varying levels of risk. The device utilises class-leading SiRF IV GPS technology, unique to lone worker devices. SiRF IV enables a quicker time to first fix and can gain a location fix even if GPS signals are weak.

SafeTCard Identicom features a sleek and contemporary design and is easy to wear on a lanyard or belt clip, providing ease of access in the event of an emergency.

SafeTCard Pty Ltd
www.safetcard.com.au
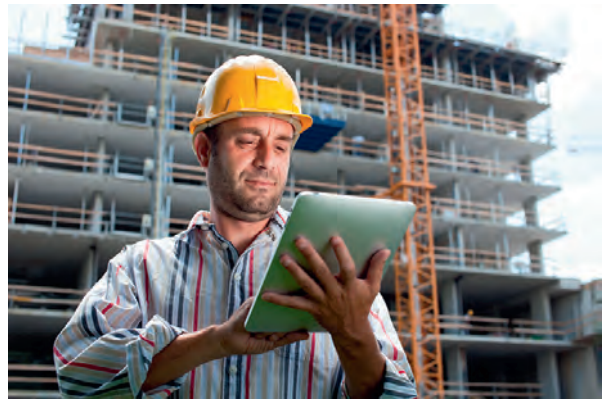
OS-AGNOSTIC MOBILE APPS

Acresta customised mobile apps and mobile forms allows users to mobile-enable their workforce and online presence with minimal customer IT resources.

The needs of the end user are identified to develop customised, task-specific forms for managing everything from HR to audits and asset inspections. They operate fully in offline mode and also link into existing IT systems, removing the need for time-consuming data entry when staff return to the office.

The forms are operating-system agnostic so can be used by fieldworkers on any mobile device. This shields organisations from the ever-evolving uptake of new devices as well as operating system releases.

The key benefit is that all information is captured on-site, ensuring up-to-date data is available at any time. The solution is scalable and and offers customers the ability to streamline business processes and make significant savings in time and money, regardless of size.

ACRESTA
www.acresta.com
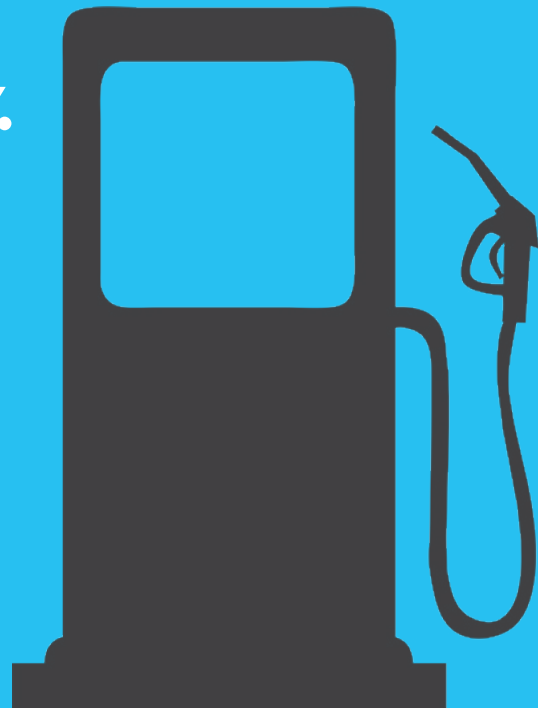
360° SURROUND-VIEW SYSTEM

VDO's ProViu, from Continental, provides real-time, high-quality images utilising four specialised cameras with 187° fisheye lenses. It gives the driver or operator 360° all-round vision and a good view of the vehicle's surroundings.

Suitable for retrofit and original equipment application on a wide range of public transport, trucks, buses commercial, contracting, agricultural and special-purpose vehicles, this latest development from VDO is designed to assist in risk reduction of accidents and life-threatening incidents.

The unique, robust four-camera system is linked to provide all-round visibility for the operator, reducing blind spots and displaying pedestrians, obstacles and dangerous situations that may not appear in direct rear-vision mirrors. The transmitted images are adjusted and consolidated to create a preview in one bird's-eye view.

The system improves the ease of manoeuvring large vehicles while decreasing the risk of accidents, improving turnarounds and downtime associated with damage to a vehicle. It is suitable in critical situations such as dense city traffic, narrow loading areas, cluttered factory yards, building sites or when negotiating narrow streets with parked cars, cyclists and obstacles.

Unlike CCTV and other mostly reactive monitoring systems, the VDO ProViu is a passive, proactive system. Perfect merging, 'alpha' blending and grading are a standard feature. The entire system is designed for accuracy and has the advantage of a flexible SW tool chain with multiple screens, configuration, custom user interface etc. Light/dark balance is achieved by the automatic balancing of the whole image on the screen reducing the differential between the images. The system is built to the highest automotive standards and has full certification for EMC and type approval.

Continental Pty Ltd
www.continental-corporation.com

EMPLOYEE ROTATION SOLUTION

Human resource management and planning in the oil and gas industry has long been characterised by a large number of local HR policies, making it a challenge for global companies to comply with national rules and regulations.

Traditionally, staffing and employee rotation in the oil and gas industry have been a complex task managed by ad-hoc, customised or third-party solutions. To address this need, IFS is launching a module for staffing and rotation planning as an integrated part of IFS Applications, ensuring efficient support for offshore operations.

The solution will provide companies with the ability to dynamically handle day-to-day planning of offshore staff while ensuring full compliance with industry standards. The solution offers a de facto industry-standard solution for planning and tracking mission-critical HR data; and functionality fully integrated with the IFS Applications ERP suite.

IFS Australia
www.ifsworld.com/en-au

WHS FIRST AID COMPLIANCE

The importance of first aid in the workplace cannot be overstated. In the event of an accident or medical emergency, the application of first aid can mean the difference between life and death.

While almost everyone is aware of the importance of first aid and the necessity of first aid training, the scope and breadth of Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) regulations - and the variation in regulations between different states - can make it difficult for organisations to keep their first aid procedures current and compliant.

How do you achieve first aid compliance?

Organisations are required by law to have first aid procedures in place. Released in 2012 was the First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice that sought to harmonise compliance under the federal *Work Health & Safety Act 2011*. To date, all states have adopted the code except WA and Victoria, though they are expected to adopt it in the future.

While these regulatory revisions have made it somewhat easier for organisations to achieve compliance and identify gaps in knowledge, many industries are still familiarising themselves with the changes and there can be some confusion about what requirements exactly have changed.

When regulatory changes are introduced, organisations often assume that compliance with old regulations means they are compliant with the new ones. However, codes and regulations are updated to reflect new understanding of risks and occupational safety, and any company that does not make the necessary updates to their procedures in accordance with new regulations is vulnerable to disciplinary action.

An effective way to determine if your workplace is compliant is to complete a workplace first aid 'health check'. These

are different to risk assessments and compliance audits, which are carried out by certified inspectors; rather, a health check helps an organisation self-identify areas where there is a potential gap in knowledge and the kind of training required.

First aid training 10-point health check

In completing this health check, whether you are able to answer these questions at all is just as important as what the answer is. If you are unsure how to respond, it is likely there is a procedural or operational gap which needs to be addressed. Receiving the right advice will lead you to implement a solution to close the gap and often includes a mix of training, procedural updates and ongoing consultation in order to achieve and remain compliance.

1. Under WHS legislation, is your organisation classified as a low, medium or high risk?

2. Does your first aid room meet current standards?

3. Do you have a qualified first aider on site during all operating hours?

4. Do you have an analgesics register and are you aware of guidelines for administration?

5. Are you aware of the most common on-site injuries in your workplace?

6. Are there people who work at home or have company vehicles?

7. Do you have contractors/subcontractors/volunteers on-site?

8. Do you know the minimum number of first aid kits you are required to have at all sites?

9. Is first aid part of your induction process for contractors, visitors and staff?

10. Do you keep oxygen on-site and if so is it clearly marked?

Selecting the right training provider

Training must be provided by a certified registered training organisation (RTO) to be considered compliant. Prospective providers should work with an organisation to identify their needs and tailor a program to their specific needs risk level and organisational requirements.

Red Cross has been operating in Australia since 1914 and is the world's largest and most credible first aid training provider. It provides consultancy and workplace reviews to assist organisations in identifying the risks present in their workplace, what needs to be done to meet first aid compliance obligations and the training required for their specific workplace and the risks it presents. Its range of nationally recognised and compliant first aid training packages and products ensure your workplace receives correct and quality WHS support.

Its extensive experience and presence nation-wide allows Red Cross to provide single point account management for organisations with offices in different states that may be subject to region-specific solutions. A company can organise and commission training through one central point with full confidence that employees in each workplace will receive training and products to ensure legislated requirements are met.

Red Cross also offers blended learning options, where training can be delivered either on-site, off-site or in a blended e-learning format to facilitate the best learning and engagement with quality outcomes for individuals and the business. In addition, specialist training in Occupational First Aid, Advanced First Aid and Remote First Aid is offered, along with Mental Health First Aid training, which can help managers reduce the severity of mental health issues for employees and provide appropriate support.

If you are still unsure if you have bridged the WHS gap, contact the first aid experts and book in for a 'health check' with Red Cross.

Red Cross
www.redcross.edu.au

TRACKING AND TRACING

One of the biggest challenges by small business owners is finding the right balance between working 'on' the business and 'in' the business. Administrative burden is the bane of many owners, operators and fleet managers, so adopting a solution that both lessens the load and delivers real and immediate benefits is a logical step.

Just Power is an electrical contracting business based in Sydney's rapidly expanding Western Suburbs. The business is largely built around tendered work from large electrical contracts across Sydney. As the tenders began to increase in size so did Just Power's administration and logistics requirements across its fleet.

Having never worked with a business solutions provider before, Just Power sought out Forum Fleet to help overhaul and improve the management of its fleet and employee information after hearing about the TomTom Telematics technology from other businesses that had installed the solution.

Some major concerns that Just Power needed to address were how to manage employees and track their work and movements between multiple locations. It also wanted to maximise its efficiency on and off the road by reducing the amount of time that employees had to spend in transit to building sites.

Forum Fleet installed the TomTom LINK 530 Track and Trace systems to efficiently track its fleet en route to and from job sites. The LINK 530 is a user-friendly system that helps to improve overall vehicle management by providing driver IDs and detailed tracking. This enables Just Power to provide accurate employee ETAs to its customers on building sites, contributing to better service levels overall.

The functionality provided by the Track and Trace system also means that Just Power can address the issue of employee accountability, by being able to accurately record their vehicle-use activity throughout the day.

Since Forum Fleet installed the TomTom LINK 530 Track and Trace systems in November 2013, Just Power has reduced its employee overtime by 20% by being able to crosscheck timesheets against the location of the staff and their assigned job site.

Following the installation of the LINK 530, there has been an overall reduction in fuel consumption by 15%. The

Track and Trace system has also helped improve driver safety by significantly reducing speeding fines and traffic infringements.

Initially, Forum Group installed the LINK 530 devices in a small number of Just Power's vehicles, but once the benefits and cost savings were apparent, this was increased to 11 vehicles. By giving Just Power improved visibility over its fleet and employees, as well as efficient job planning, it means that it can undertake more work while simultaneously maintaining its high standards of customer service.

Garry Tokins, director of Just Power, says, "The TomTom Telematics Track and Trace systems installed by Forum Fleet have become an invaluable part of our day-to-day operations. Our employees' safety is always paramount to us and this helps us ensure that they get to their jobs quickly and safely.

"New business and administration efficiencies have been developed as a product of Forum Fleet's solutions, which means we're able to put more energy into growing the business; and as a result, we're taking on bigger projects and contracts than previously."

Forum Group
www.forumgroup.com.au

RUGGED TABLET PC

Backplane Systems Technology has launched RuggON's PM-522 10.4 IP65 rugged tablet PC with Intel Atom Bay Trail E3826 Dual Core Processor supporting Windows 7 and 8 operating systems, designed for field applications.

The PM-522 meets the MIL-STD-810G rating for shock and vibration and can be dropped from 6 onto plywood on a concrete surface. The rugged tablet PC is fully sealed against the ingress of liquid and dust damage (IP65) and has an operating temperature rating of -20 to +50°C.

The 10.4 LED backlit screen with integrated 10-point capacitive multitouch screen features a display brightness of 700 nits, offering sunlight-readable functionality for outdoor applications.

The tablet includes 4 GB of DDR3 SODIMM and 64 GB of upgradeable mSATA Solid State Disk. The hot-swappable dual batteries offer up to 9 h of battery life.

The rugged tablet is available with a range of optional data capture options including NFC, barcode scanner, smart card reader (CAC) and magnetic stripe reader (MSR) suitable for portable stock and asset management.

Multiple connectivity interfaces include 1x USB3.0, 1x USB2.0, 1x audio jack, 1x Micro SIM slot and 1x Ethernet port. Plus, for user flexibility, two programmable function buttons are located on the front panel.

Vehicle and desktop docking stations are available as an optional accessory. The PM-522's functionality and user-friendly interface ensure it can meet the requirements of a wide variety of field and vehicle applications.

Backplane Systems Technology Pty Ltd
www.backplane.com.au

CLOUD-BASED FIELD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

ETAdirect is a cloud-based field service management application that takes a unique approach to managing/scheduling fieldwork. Instead of using estimates for how employees perform scheduled work, ETAdirect tracks exactly how each person does work by measuring time and creates individual performance pattern profiles. It then applies statistics and predictive analytics to these profiles.

ETAdirect predicts with 98% accuracy when an appointment will happen and how long it will take. With this strong field service foundation, organisations can: ensure greater efficiencies and higher productivity with intelligent routing/scheduling; consistently provide and meet appointment windows/SLAs, enabling them to communicate updates to customers before, during and after appointments; reduce overtime and idle time with capacity management; provide dispatchers and managers with a real-time view of field resources; enable technicians with instant, real-time information through a browser-based mobile application with complete offline availability.

TOA Technologies
www.toatech.com

M2M DEVELOPER SIM

The Global Connect M2M Starter Kit is designed to help developers of remote applications using machine to machine (M2M) hardware to focus on testing network configuration, connectivity and perfecting a viable route to market - without facing the difficulties associated with finding a network provider and worrying about data plan requirements, volume commitments and contract terms.

The kit includes a KORE Wireless SIM card with a predefined bulk data and SMS plan to be used over 90 days, as well as access to KORE's M2M management portal PRiSM Pro for SIM provisioning, usage monitoring and device troubleshooting.

These SIMs can be used in remote devices for field applications in Australia, New Zealand, Asia, North America, Africa, The Middle East, Europe and South America.

KORE Wireless Asia Pacific
www.korewireless.com.au

Clive Roberts

MANAGING THE SAFETY
OF YOUR STAFF AND SUBCONTRACTORS

Fotolia RAW/Dollar Photo Club

How do you ensure the safety of your subcontractors and integrate them into the rest of your service organisation when many firms employ hundreds of 'subbies' each year, with many working from remote locations far away from head office?

If your business is to provide subcontractors to support mining production or telecommunication network updates (think NBN), or to manage the maintenance of Australian firms' fire and safety equipment, you'll want to ensure you are delivering a competitive and quality service, while complying with industry health, safety and environment (HSE) requirements.

While this sounds pretty straightforward, it is actually very complex, particularly when you consider the challenges of identifying and briefing specialist maintenance contractors for jobs as far afield as Cobar in western New South Wales and the Pilbara in the north of Western Australia, and for network repairs in metropolitan cities. Not only do you have different legislative requirements for each of these jobs, every site and industry sector has different safety and compliance requirements.

If you are a user of contracted engineering services, you'll want to know that the staff you use have been properly briefed and operate at the highest safety levels while on-site, so that you are not exposed to the risk of accidents or injuries resulting from subcontractors not complying with your HSE procedures.

Consider the challenges of ensuring each of your subbies has completed and complies with site and customer-specific safety briefings before going on-site. It is not possible to create a HSE management plan that fits all situations for your staff. Many of your customers will have already created their own HSE manuals and policies, which everyone on-site is expected to follow.

One way of addressing this challenge is to find a system where you can capture a skills matrix of your engineering staff, record who has been inducted for each location (where you may perform services) and even digitise any documents that you know are required by the customer in question.

This is information that makes you money, because before your team schedules engineers to go on-site and fix things, your

assignment rules have intelligently processed who is actually qualified to do the job, and happens to be on today's roster. And when he or she gets there, they have a complete set of digital forms ready for use to close out the work order and capture everything needed to make the invoice valid.

Another opportunity is to take advantage of the knowledge sharing and collaboration capabilities of cloud and mobile applications. This is particularly true of applications that are native on the Salesforce.com platform, like ServiceMax.

This is because these integrated service solutions empower firms, like yours, to ensure the information your subcontractors need is at their fingertips, anytime and anywhere they need it. So if you provide services to a number of retail stores in metropolitan Melbourne, say, you can be sure that your subcontractors have safety procedures for every site. And, a complete rundown of the customer's service history by site and by product, as well as details of the contract

entitlements and response times set in your service level agreements for this customer.

Taking an integrated, end-to-end approach to delivering contracted services also means your organisation can more tightly integrate your service offer to the specific safety requirements of your customers' businesses and sites, making it much harder for your customer to go elsewhere for these services.

Using the social and collaboration features of products like ServiceMax for Mobile, you can also capture and share a lot of informal knowledge from your and your customers' subject matter experts - information that is often not contained in any formal documentation but is invaluable to delivering service excellence, each and every time your subcontractors are on-site.

For example, when your subbie visits large commercial premises on a scheduled fire inspection visit, the relevant inventory may be scattered across an entire campus of offices.

With the best will in the world, it may be difficult to capture all of the inventory and its exact location in a structured way, particularly if you are servicing parts that your firm had no role in selling.

It's valuable in this instance to be able to take photographs and provide conversational narrative to educate the next subbie that visits one quarter from now. Better still if he can direct the conversation thread to your estimator back at head office, who can pull up the images and the narrative to make some quotations.

If you are buying a field service platform, make sure you consider your network of subcontractors and find a solution that provides authenticated but appropriately limited access to your software. Australia is a big country, the use of subcontractors is essential, but it doesn't have to mean you cannot still measure your business and track compliance.

ProQuest Consulting
www.proquestit.com

PRODUCT WATCH

FLEET MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

Trimble Fleet Management is a cloud-based solution that enables managers and supervisors to make intelligent decisions using real-time field status information. Using Fleet Management, businesses can improve fleet productivity using vehicle tracking and trip management tools, reduce costs by lowering fuel expenditure and improve vehicle use.

Trimble Fleet Management offers a range of on-demand information and activity reports on key data such as vehicle condition, out-of-hours use and mileage. In addition, it includes exception alerts which highlight issues such as when a vehicle hasn't moved or leaves its designated work area, idle time and speeding. With this visibility into fleet operations, businesses can manage fleet performance and costs, running the most efficient fleet possible.

Trimble Fleet Management also helps managers improve their level of business intelligence by enabling faster communication between dispatchers and field technicians. It also delivers increased levels of customer satisfaction and retention by helping field-based organisations provide their customers with more accurate service call timing.

By using Fleet Management, businesses can maximise vehicle utilisation and lower operational costs across their organisation ensuring optimised fleet performance and, ultimately, a better bottom line.

Fleet Management is part of Trimble's integrated suite of field service management solutions, which also includes Work Management and Driver Safety.

Trimble Field Service Management
www.trimble.com

MOTOROLA TC55 TOUCH MOBILE COMPUTER

The pocket-size Motorola TC55 all-touch mobile computer combines smartphone ergonomics with enterprise durability. It delivers the business functionality a field team needs to work faster, and safer, automating processes and lowering costs.

The Motorola TC55 is fit for purpose, designed to handle the inevitable drops, spills and bumps that come with everyday commercial use. It can be used in direct sunlight, rain and even by a gloved hand. It has a removable battery that outperforms competitive devices with the capacity to last a full shift, an 8 MP integrated camera and an integrated 1D scanner that can capture virtually any barcode in any condition - regardless of whether it is damaged, scratched, dirty or poorly printed.

Available in Standard and Business Configurations (built on Android open source), the TC55's Standard Configuration comes with Google Mobile Services (GMS), a suite of integrated applications ideal for workers that depend on apps like Gmail or Google Maps. The Professional Configuration ships without GMS, promoting greater privacy and data security.

Motorola Solutions Australia Pty Ltd
www.motorola.com/au

CONFIGURABLE MOBILE APPLICATION SUITE

Retriever Communications has launched its Barking Suite - industry-specific applications aimed at water utility companies, caregivers, sales teams and maintenance and repair workers. Unlike other point solutions on the market, the Barking applications are built on Retriever's Mobile Enterprise Application Platform (MEAP), futureproofing them from next-gen mobile operating systems while delivering the end user buy-in of a native app.

Barking Suite applications can be deployed within weeks because they are highly configurable and require no code to adapt to customer-specific workflow. Customers have access to feature sets including workforce scheduling, job-site history and location-based capabilities.

The applications lead field workers through a natural workflow that is faster and more secure than paperwork. Applications include: Barking for Water - aimed at water utilities with subcontractor management challenges; Barking for Carers - built for social workers delivering home services; Barking for Sales - targeted to improve sales rep productivity; Barking for Service - aimed at asset maintenance and repair technicians.

Retriever Communications
www.retrievercommunications.com

SAFETY-FIRST MINDSET
MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

Safety is unconditional at McColl's Transport, where a new safety-first mindset has dramatically reduced time lost to injuries from vehicle accidents, WorkCover claims and insurance premiums, demonstrating that investing in safety makes good business sense, as this 2013 case study shows.

McColl's Transport is a major Australian independent milk, chemical and dangerous goods transport carrier. The company's fleet comprises 185 prime movers and 500 tankers of various configurations.

In 2005, McColl's was sold to a private equity firm, causing a tumultuous period which included significant management turnover. There was a subsequent decline in safety and financial performance in the two years post-sale.

Paperwork and monitoring was disorganised and governance non-existent. No-one really understood how poor the company's safety practices had become until new management examined the history. They discovered over the previous 12 months a lacklustre performance and an unenviable safety record: 140 traffic accidents and two serious incidents, meaning that the company needed a culture change. Significant issues existed around fatigue management, integrity of drug and alcohol testing, lack of driver diary audits and that crashes and rollovers were occurring at an alarming rate. Additionally, issues were not being reported up the line, resulting in a lack of transparency.

Changing the mindset

In 2009, the new management team, including the CEO and national safety and compliance manager, decided that serious action needed to be taken. Incoming Chain of Responsibility (CoR) legislation was a significant enabler for change.

Several initiatives were implemented under the program:
- Drug testing: a zero tolerance approach was taken on drug and alcohol use. The random testing drug regime was significantly enhanced, acting on a 'tip-off' basis (in that suspicions can be anonymously reported). Under the previous program, small numbers of tests were conducted and those who tested positive were sent home to 'cool off', then able to return to their next shift. The company transitioned

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was purchased as a driver training tool, allowing drivers to practise manoeuvring through different 'real-world' environments without being on the road. The simulator replicates difficult situations, including a steering tyre blowout or brake failure. Drivers must spend at least eight hours per year training on the truck-mounted simulator, which regularly moves from city to city. An investment in safety infrastructure, the simulator translates to a better outcome on the road.

· Rollover awareness: McColl's collaborated with VicRoads on a vehicle rollover awareness video, which is a central part of training and induction for new drivers.
· McColl's Co-Pilot: The company invested in an integrated GPS-based solution that manages vehicles around Australia in real time to improve fleet safety and productivity.
· Delivery times: There is no pressure on drivers to meet delivery windows. Support mechanisms have been implemented that allow management of fatigue, while still delivering on customers' requirements and expectations.
· Record keeping: Records are kept around employee training completion.
· Targeted training: Relevant training is delivered for specific skill sets. For instance, milk tankers are more prone to instability and rollover, whereas chemical tankers require specialised knowledge of Dangerous Goods Codes for safe transport and handling. A training program that addresses these varying issues has been introduced, ensuring drivers are informed.
· Competitive wages: Drivers are paid in the top 25% in the industry to attract/retain the best people and reward their professionalism. McColl's is then able to charge customers a premium because they know the company will comply with CoR.
· Targeted compliance: Stopline is a targeted compliance system allowing anyone to raise concerns or provide tip-offs to a third party. This party then works with McColl's' management to investigate and determine breaches via targeted drug testing and other investigative methods.
· Coordinated approach: Business and operational processes are interlinked.

to monthly testing, changed the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) and gained the full support of the Transport Workers Union (TWU).

· Risk management reporting: A regular reporting procedure was introduced, with a 'preventative' risk management focus. A daily seven-minute call was incorporated to monitor the regime for the day and safety numbers became the first agenda item for the weekly management meetings. Compliance documentation was monitored, including shifts not driven. Compliance breaches are now extensively examined and checks carried out on log books, tollways, GPS records, pick-ups and drop-offs to ensure that figures correlate.
· Work diaries: Stringent guidelines were put in place and enforced, encompassing work diaries for all drivers, not just line-haul drivers.
· Fatigue: A program of implementation and enforcement around fatigue management and shift scheduling was introduced.
· Simulator training: A vehicle simulator

Chain of responsibility

In addition to internal measures such as fatigue management, work diaries and shift scheduling for drivers, McColl's also has an external focus on CoR that includes providing education to existing and potential clients regarding their responsibilities under the legislation. Principles are adopted in such a way that the needs of shareholders, clients and employees are balanced.

Management and financial leadership

The safety mindset has been driven from the top down and underpinned by mutual respect for all staff. This is based on an environment of sharing information, which enables issue identification and resolution. On the surface, McColl's' overheads appear higher because it has safety infrastructure in place that enables compliance with the law and the safe and efficient delivery of goods. However, savings made in other areas contribute significantly to the company's overall financial outcomes.

Reaping the rewards

The McColl's example illustrates that safety is worth investing in. Spending money on safety pays off in the long run, as demonstrated by the cost savings in areas such as reduced time lost to accidents, fewer WorkCover claims and lower insurance premiums. These outcomes are persuasive in demonstrating to company CFOs that investing in safety just makes good business sense.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that drivers are attracted to working for companies that put safety first and where they are not pushed to achieve unrealistic deadlines or work under hazardous conditions. This suggests that by adopting a safety mindset, an employer can also become an 'employer of choice' and attract the best people.

With the advent of CoR legislation, especially in the heavy vehicle industry, McColl's has led the way, aiming for consistency, safety and compliance rather than simply focusing on being the 'fastest' or 'cheapest'.
National Road Safety Partnership Program
www.nrspp.org.au

DRIVER SAFETY SOLUTION

Trimble Driver Safety is a cloud-based solution that enables organisations with field-based workforces to conduct driver-specific monitoring of aggressive manoeuvres such as rapid acceleration, harsh braking, hard turns and excessive speeding.

The solution features in-vehicle hardware which sends visual and audible alerts to drivers when their actions are outside the safety guidelines set by their organisation. Red, yellow and green LEDs are used to provide drivers with instant feedback on their driving safety level and an audible beep alerts them when their current action is outside the safe range, so they can make immediate changes to their driving style. Over time this helps them learn better driving techniques to keep them safer on the road, minimising accidents and protecting the company's reputation.

Trimble Driver Safety also enables complete back-office analysis of aggressive driving manoeuvres which can be displayed using a range of scorecards, consoles and reports.

The Driver Scorecard helps managers evaluate specific driving skills enabling them to identify behaviour trends over time and areas where drivers may require training. Managers are also able to easily view and compare trends in driving performance across their entire fleet, using the Executive Console.

The Trimble solution also features the Driver Safety Map, which pinpoints the location of a vehicle at a specific time so organisations with mobile workforces can respond to unsafe driving complaints and traffic incident claims.

Driver Safety is part of Trimble's integrated suite of field service management solutions, which also includes Fleet Management and Work Management.

Trimble Field Service Management
www.trimble.com

FIELD SERVICE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Seratec Central is field service management software that incorporates a smart business process management technology. It is fully customisable to specific business needs and designed to maximise profitability by boosting efficiency and increasing productivity.

Seratec streamlines business processes using the fastest and most advanced technology to empower users to improve field mobility and speed up job completion. Customers across a range of industries including HVAC, security, energy, solar and IT consistently report a 50% increase in productivity, claims the company.

The software provides smart and effective features for job tracking, field mobility, invoicing, accounting integration, routine scheduling, inventory management and asset management.

Seratec is a fully integrated system where data are seamlessly linked, enabling users to track jobs from quoting through to completion. Fast and secure technology enables field workers to gain access to job details in the field, easily input job safety analysis, capture photos and signatures as well as send out invoices.

Job escalations notify key people to act promptly on critical tasks such as invoicing and service level agreement commitments. Previously a division of MYOB, Seratec provides the most thorough and reliable accounting integration. The powerful scheduling tool allows efficient scheduling of one-time as well as recurring jobs and billings. Inventory management enhances billing process through up-to-date pricelists as well as accurate monitoring of stock levels and vehicles. Availability of asset history information enables technicians to assess situations and complete jobs proficiently.

Seratec
www.seratec.com.au

FULLY RUGGED 7″ TABLET

The Panasonic Toughpad FZ-M1 is a fully rugged 7″ tablet running Windows 8.1 Pro. Its sealed design is certified to meet MIL-STD-810G and IP65 specifications for resistance to drops up to 5′, water, dust and other elements. Featuring a 4th generation Intel Core i5 vPro processor, Panasonic claims the FZ-M1 offers the broadest range of configuration options available in its class, for maximum flexibility.

Unlike many consumer tablets, the FZ-M1 is built for easy integration into existing IT infrastructures and for smooth deployments and ongoing support.

The device also provides organisations with better and longer life cycle management, which means a lower total cost of ownership, saving time and resources.

The FM-ZI is powered by a long-life, user-replaceable battery and the sunlight-readable, high-sensitivity multitouch screen for use with heavy gloves makes it a suitable tool for a mobile workforce.

Panasonic Australia
www.panasonic.com.au

TELEMATICS HUB

Masternaut's MT400 telematics hub delivers unprecedented levels of connectivity, modular applications and over-the-air device and application management. The patented technology for vehicle CANbus data acquisition is fully integrated so that real-time, accurate odometer, fuel, diagnostics and other floating car data can be extracted for reporting and telemetry applications including driver behaviour, risk profiling, crash detection and remote diagnostics.

The MT400 can integrate directly with tachographs, temperature control units, salt dispenser units, weighing sensors and other onboard vehicle equipment. All of this data and control is seamlessly integrated with Connect to provide accurate and flexible reporting, alerting, visualisation and control. MT400 can connect to smartphones, tablets and other screen devices for rich driver integration features including navigation, messaging, workflow, etc.

MT400 is designed using the latest automotive-grade electronics and mechanics to provide best-in-class performance and reliability, with a streamlined installation and in-field support process, minimising vehicle installation times and ensuring devices can be fully managed remotely.

Masternaut Australia
www.masternaut.com.au

ON-SITE MANAGEMENT APP

simPRO Software's Connect mobile app now gives field staff in the trade and services industry complete control over the administration of individual jobs including the capacity to process payments on-site using a customer's credit card.

The simPRO Connect app is a mobile extension of simPRO's locally developed Enterprise business management platform that runs on tablet-sized devices and smartphones. It enables staff in the field to update times, materials and details used for each job.

The payments feature provides real-time payments processing of Visa, MasterCard, Amex and debit cards via the IntergraPay payment gateway. IntegraPay holds an Australian Financial Services licence and maintains PCI DSS Level 1 (Version 2) Security.

Other major upgrades in the release include geostamping of mobile status changes to show where a user was when the update was made. This allows head office to better manage field staff and allocate resources more efficiently.

simPRO Software
www.simPRO.com.au
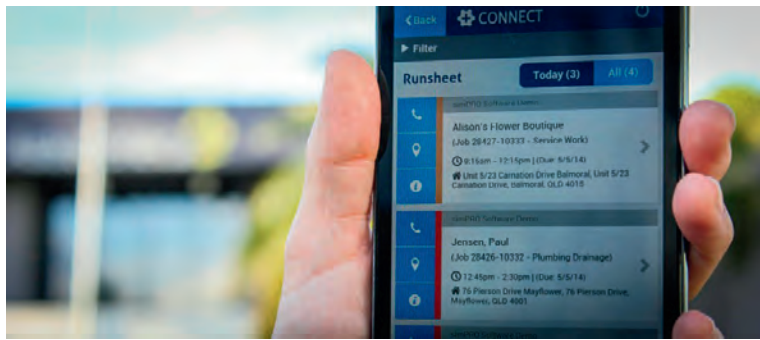
MOBILE MAPPING AND DATA COLLECTION

Geospago is a simple, yet powerful mobile mapping solution that combines GIS data viewing and GPS data collection with the ability to create custom forms and share this data real time on a map, to other mobile devices and through an export application programming interface (API). Geospago provides the essential capabilities from expensive software packages in an affordable solution that requires virtually no training to use.

Geospago allows the creation of points, lines and polygons using the map or mobile GPS. Forms created on Geospago's web portal are pushed to multiple devices and are available instantly. Using these forms, users can add attributes and attach multiple photos for each feature. Geospago seamlessly transitions between connected and disconnected environments. When connected, data is synchronised with the cloud and displayed on the web portal map. The data collected in the field may be synchronised between devices to eliminate double collection and duplication of effort when users collect independently. Integrating data is easily done by exporting the data to standard formats that can be loaded into industry-favourite GIS formats. Creating custom basemaps is possible for loading into Geospago to localise the mobile experience.

Geospago
www.geospago.com
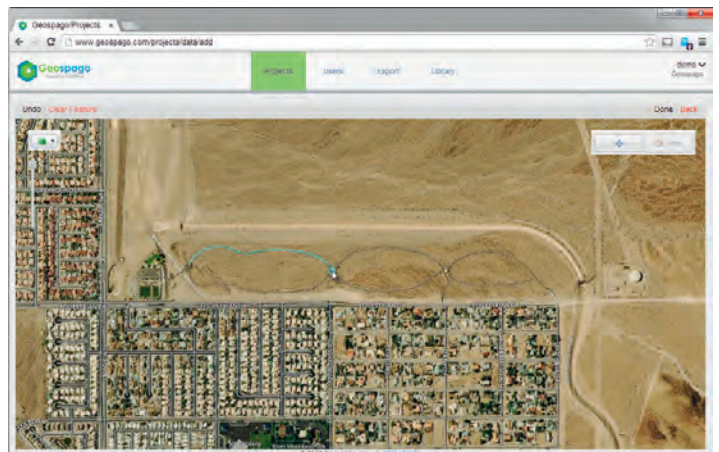
EMBRACING TECH
CAN HELP OVERCOME FUEL CHALLENGES

Jonathan Durkee, VP of Product Management, Fleetmatics

Any manager of a successful business will tell you that cutting unnecessary costs is a key pillar of good practice. This is especially true for businesses whose costs fluctuate with prices at the pump. And as we have seen this year, fuel prices are reliably unreliable.

For serviced-based businesses with a fleet, controlling fuel usage not only reduces costs in the immediate term but also limits the longer-term risk of budget uncertainty resulting from spiralling fuel prices.

This is where fleet management services such as those provided by Fleetmatics can help. Fleet management technology provides data that allows businesses to monitor their mobile workforce and implement cost-cutting changes. In particular, the data can tell business managers exactly where they are currently being wasteful with fuel and equip them with the information they need to put in place more efficient and productive practices.

Fuel costs can also grow when drivers are not taking the quickest possible journey to a worksite. Fleet management services offer a remedy to this: they give a fleet manager a clear picture of the daily routes that drivers are taking. Inefficient routes can be easily identified and eliminated, and drivers can be guided to use a new, faster route. Fuel costs are then minimised when vehicles go from point A to point B as efficiently as possible.

This benefit is even greater in emergency situations. With fleet monitoring technology, it is incredibly easy to see who the closest technician is to an accident or breakdown. Deploying the technician closest to the situation reduces fuel costs. In addition, rapid responses from emergency teams help people get back on the road faster - a core tenet of customer satisfaction for many businesses.

Good fleet management services can even prevent some emergency situations from arising in the first place. Breakdowns not only contribute to fuel waste, but they frustrate driver and client alike. Many fleet breakdowns can be prevented by paying closer attention to potential risks. Information about oil and tyre maintenance and regular vehicle safety checks are important.

The blame for inflated fuel costs cannot, however, just be attributed to inefficient routes and breakdown situations. Idling trucks often fly under the radar for fleet managers, and excessive idling doesn't just add up in wasted minutes, but also wasted fuel. A fleet management service offers what is essentially a digital radar that empowers managers to track and reduce idling.

Reducing fuel wastage is not just about cost-cutting. Fuel-efficient driving is also safe driving. Fuel efficiency drops when drivers go at speeds of over 80 km/h. And speeding is not the only dangerous driving practice that wastes fuel: jackrabbit starts, sudden braking and harsh driving all contribute to unnecessary fuel use. Managers who utilise fleet management technology can identify these aggressive drivers, and thus can cut back on accidents in their fleet, as well as fuel costs and high insurance premiums.

Given the current uncertainty around future fuel costs, it is the responsibility of fleet managers to better monitor and reduce their company's current fuel usage. Data and insights about a company's current fuel use, collected by fleet management solutions, are an integral part of this process.

When a company chooses to use the data that helps reduce fuel usage, it doesn't just help the managers of the company. It helps employees too. Reduced fuel costs can free up revenue to raise salaries, or add additional staff.

Drivers can address false complaints made by customers quicker and easier with GPS information, which gives them added security in the case of disputes about overcharges. And, because of the preventive maintenance technology that fleet management services offer, companies with fleet management technology can help drivers be physically safer as well.

Fleet management technology provides information that helps companies reduce fuel wastage. Cutting fuel usage helps the bottom line, road safety and the wellbeing of employees. It's therefore quite clear why this technology is becoming an industry standard.

TALK FROM THE TOP ▼

ROI and enterprise mobility: does it exist? MGI Research published an enterprise mobility state-of-the-market paper last month. A couple of the statistics were stunning: 71% of mobility projects in enterprises generate only average or below average return on investment (ROI) even though 70% of projects were targeting increased productivity. How can this be the result when mobile has the potential to remove paperwork and improve operational transparency?

Two questions reveal the answers.

What company functions are being mobilised?

When selecting which company functions to mobilise first, ROI is often ignored and apps that management wants, such as purchase order approvals, are the first to be done. These sorts of apps deliver convenience but actually don't affect the bottom line. In contrast, mobilising field activity of non-executive staff - field technicians, inspectors, quality assessors, sales representatives - delivers significant productivity ROI, generally above 20%. With that in mind, apps to make ERP systems more accessible should be moved to the bottom of the priority list.

What is the approach to app development?

In most IT arenas it is understood that buying a product with yearly enhancements and a proven track record is the fastest deployment option with the least amount of risk. Mobility is often not approached this way. In-house development or paying for bespoke development is very common practice. By example, development of native apps in iOS delivers to an exact requirement; however, the cost of enhancing or maintaining that solution for new operating system releases is expensive. Additionally, risk of project blowouts in time and money are common. System administration, ability to scale and flexibility between new operating systems are generally compromised by this approach.

So why are CIOs choosing to develop rather than buy mobile apps? Most see it as a short-term solution to avoid investment in software - something that will temporarily satisfy internal company demands for mobility until product investment is reviewed. What's misunderstood is that productisation of enterprise mobility is already here. By delaying investment in solid enterprise-grade mobile platforms or domain-specific solutions, companies are also delaying ROI.

Great ROI and productivity gains from mobility are achievable but it is all about approach.

Mary Brittain-White is the founder and CEO of Retriever Communications. After 20 years in the business, she has established herself as a thought leader in the area of wireless field automation.

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Innovation that excites

nissan.com.au/fleet

RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE TRADE.

Nissan Fleet caters to all fleet sizes, from a one-man tradie company to international building companies. Our dedicated team of National and Regional Fleet Sales Managers have compelling fleet plans and a variety of discount structures to suit your needs. To find out how we can help your business with a Nissan Fleet solution, contact us today at nissan.com.au/fleet