



Case Study

Delaware Transit Corporation

The Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC) provides public transportation to the entirety of the state of Delaware, as DART First State. To accomplish this, they operate in accordance with their mission statement: "...to design and provide the highest quality public transportation services that satisfy the needs of the customer and the community." Their upgrades, processes and improvements are all created with the intent to provide better service to their customers. As a result, their fleet and fleet management software need to be second to none. Their medium-sized fleet relies on a little over 500 buses and over 100 support vehicles, and many are dispatched throughout the state to ensure maximum uptime on their essential transportation services.

DTC has been ahead of the 8-ball for a long time, so to speak. The organization has possessed some form of fleet management software for decades. In 2000, they switched over to what is now a legacy AssetWorks fleet management software system. In 2014, they upgraded to the modern FleetFocus system from AssetWorks. Stephanie Blevins, Fleet Systems Administrator, remarked that the upgrade was "seamless." "It felt like a natural progression," she noted. "All of our processes in maintenance were the same."

Now, DTC uses FleetFocus, the FuelFocus fuel management software, and is preparing to implement the FluidFocus fluids management software. "We are anticipating that FluidFocus will cut down on the costs for our vehicles over their lifetimes, as it better tracks their utilization of fluids," explained Blevins. "Using Fleet and Fuel and Inventory/Parts together to gain a deeper understanding of our fleet as a whole and individually per asset is critical to our success."

DTC has spent many years upgrading, improving and streamlining their fleet and operations. Over the decades, this theme of long-time growth has paved the way for long-term success. As DTC settles in to their newest, most modern software, they are poised to execute new levels of fuel accuracy, as well as pilot programs for autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles (EVs) and hybrids.

Two Transitions for Seamless Success

By being in the fleet management game for so long, DTC gained a key understanding of when it was time to upgrade and move their fleet to more modern solutions. Speaking about the 2014 transition, Blevins recalled

“ I loved FleetFocus even more than our legacy software. It was very user-friendly, especially from a new user perspective.”

To ensure that they were making the most of their software, they invited Bob Sparks, Sr. Project Manager at AssetWorks, to perform a Business Process Review in the summer of 2019. In addition to general improvements in utilization and efficacy of the FleetFocus software, Wayne Henderson, DTC's CTO, described, "With potential worker turnover, another reason we brought Bob Sparks in was to quickly assess our workforce [needs] and how to optimally train new employees to get up to speed on FleetFocus." It is important to ensure that the primary software that these technicians will have to use, FleetFocus, is readily accessible and user-friendly for them. Sparks' mission

was to identify ways for them to improve in their daily workflows and record-keeping. Essentially, DTC wanted to ensure they got the biggest bang for their buck. John Syryla, the South District Maintenance Manager, noted “We aren’t doing parts in FleetFocus, or even the Accident Module, but we would love to use them from a maintenance perspective. These are things that Bob identified as well and we are excited to implement.”

In terms of record-keeping, Doreen Thorn, Application Support Manger, explained how time-keeping has become a hot issue for them. “It was very helpful having a business process review with Bob,” she started. “We want to improve our timekeeping aspects, by creating it in FleetFocus and removing our timeclock.” Sparks identified ways that they could begin that transition.

Syryla was excited for the transition, especially considering he had been there for the first one in 2000 as well. “Our processes and workflows stayed in place through implementation – all of our users and techs were able to appreciate the same system but with better and faster screens,” he recalled. “It was well-received throughout. You could hover over a job code and it would tell you what it was – a lot of these smaller, convenience changes made a big difference.” The technicians weren’t the only beneficiaries of this software, however. Managers and analysts use the software to report on high-level data to provide support for fleet-wide decisions, such as changing a recurring purchase, switching to EVs or selling off excess fleet vehicles. Blevins spoke to that point: “The Ad-hoc reporting is very useful, we use a lot of those. We love being able to

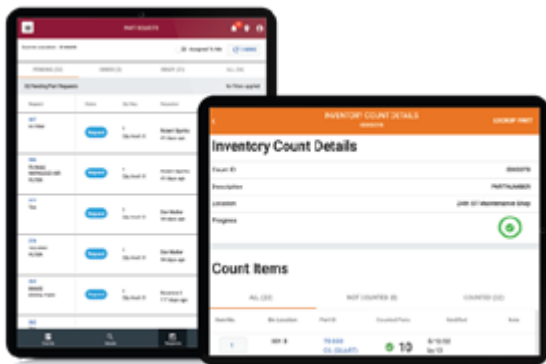
generate reports directly from the system!”

Over time, different speedbumps or opportunities for growth arose while learning the software. Thankfully for DTC, Orlando Barrett, Account Manager, and Paul Kinkel, Project Manager, were available. Blevins was eager to speak to Barrett’s and Kinkel’s dedication to her team’s success: “We have had a pretty good relationship with AssetWorks for quite a while. We love Orlando and Paul, they have been a wonderful resource for us over the course of the project.” Syryla, on the other hand, spoke to the longstanding commitment to DTC’s growth: “I have been here for 20+ years, and Paul was here when we first moved to the legacy system. He has always been helpful and encouraging, ensuring that we moved along well.” It is this dedicated and team-effort that ensures that DTC succeeds through all of its upgrades to honor its mission statement.

Propane, Electric and Autonomous – Oh My!

Speaking of upgrades, DTC is no stranger to the changing trends of fleet vehicles. In recent years, they have experimented with hybrid diesel fuel vehicles, propane conversion, electric vehicles and even autonomous vehicles. Syryla explains, “From a user perspective, there is no difference in propane and gasoline, so we are really hitting the whole gambit of different vehicles.” If all of these new ideas have supposed benefits, it’s reasonable to try them out and see which fit best for the fleet. With a powerful fleet management system that can help track the utilization and fuel consumption, these pilot programs don’t necessarily have to be a headache.

Syryla delved into the details of their innovative programs, including some hints for their future plans. “We currently have 14 Proterra all-electric buses, and a handful electric cars, and two autonomous vehicles that are going into testing,” stated Syryla. “They are supposed to be for use around the Dover campus, to test their usefulness in larger scale deployment.” Autonomous vehicles are exciting – and controversial. Many developers and larger organizations are anxious to see how they can improve safety and efficiency around campuses and in in the delivery industry. Others, meanwhile, see a product that is ripe for issues:



decreased safety and accident accountability, displaced jobs, disproportionate acquisition and maintenance costs and some are even wary of the potential for cybercrime. This is the beauty of a small-scale pilot program, like the one at DTC. They can safely test the latest and greatest in the industry, demonstrating its potential for improvements in fleet technology, without over-investing into the process. Syryla transitioned into

“ We anticipate that FleetFocus can help us in keeping track of these costs over times. We are using ChargePoint for staff chargers for things like Chevy Volts.”

the fleet’s plans: “There are plans to get more electric buses soon – if they work out and the costs are efficient, we may deploy them in full-scale,” he explained. Utilizing a fleet management system to its full extent is important in saving money and providing the best possible experience for the customers.

Fueling the Fleet

On the fuel side of operations, improvements didn’t necessarily come right away. Thorn explained, “We actually had two systems before we switched over to FuelFocus,” she started. “So having just one system is incredible. One of our old systems was definitely was on life support, it had needed to be replaced for probably 10 years.” Needless to say, an upgrade to a fully integrated, modern fuel management system was a welcome change. In addition, this opens the door to future electric vehicle integration through the system that can track and monitor utilization and costs related to electric vehicles. DTC’s commitment to future-proofing and growth sets them up for long-term success.

Paul Curran, Application Support Specialist, described exactly how FuelFocus has improved their operations. “Simply put, it is much better now with FuelFocus,” he began. “Not having to type in the mileage, bus number, etc. saves our employees a lot of time.” Efficient, happy drivers translates at an organizational level to a team that is committed to providing their very best service to

their customers, all while supporting the organization that they work for.

Future Upgrades

For DTC, the sky is the limit on how far they will follow technological innovation. Blevins described their situation by saying, “We have become more tech-forward and open to modern innovation in our organization as time has gone on. This allows for more smart tech in-house and with generally better results.”

While FluidFocus is already on the docket for coming improvements and additions, DTC is always looking for new ways to become efficient and stick to their mission. Henderson picked up the conversation and described an exciting program that DART employs:

Ultimately, a policy of open-mindedness and a pursuit of efficiency has illuminated the path forward for DTC – on a path of technological innovation in the fleet industry.

Syryla continued the exciting news, explaining that “we are also looking forward to ensuring that we have a seamless electric vehicle data transfer to FleetFocus. With the amount of efficiency that these vehicles may bring, we want our systems to be compatible and work well.” A new age of technology and fleet assets also ushers in a new age of technicians and system users. DTC has already done internships and apprenticeship programs. In fact, the technical schools in the areas around their headquarters have recently started a heavy equipment/diesel program. DTC is excited to see the fruits of that in several years. “We want to engage ambitious, young technicians,” said Syryla. “The ideal candidate will have basic knowledge and want to expand and grow in their field.”

Moving Forward



“A continued friendship with tech support, project managers and all AssetWorks staff is anticipated by our organization for years to come,” said Mrs. Fortier.

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A Smooth Adjustment

As a precaution, Scott County initially tested this change with just a few officers to ensure that it would work as they were expecting. They were met with enthusiastic results – the officers enjoyed the freedom it brought and thought the new processes would work for their department. Mr. Kotila noted, “After starting the notifications, Keith, our Coordinator for the shop, had some communication with the operators and their Sergeants on the Notifications process asking for some slight changes and after a few adjustments... we heard positive feedback on how the process was working and as I monitored the PM compliance report it was showing proof that the process was working.”

With success on their heels, they decided to roll the changes out to the rest of the Sheriff’s Department. To further ensure its success, the Scott County team took it upon themselves to draft their own customized training document for the officers to reference during the adjustment.

Surprisingly, there were no major challenges for implementing Notifications to the Sheriff’s Department. The system administration team needed to visit the head sheriff with the information that they learned at the AssetWorks Academy. Essentially, they told him that their process would remain the same, but they can now notify him and his officers ahead of time. Mr. Allen added that now officers could “schedule at a date and time that works for them, instead of the shop staff saying, ‘hey, we need you at this place at this time.’”

When asked what the benefits of this process might be, Mr. Beam had a lot of positive things to say. “One of the other things that we are finding that is beneficial for us is that we are teaching all the departments how to utilize and monitor their access to the software and the

notifications system,” he said, “so they can physically go in and maximize their use of the tool as well.”

While the Sheriff’s Department saw immediate success with very few challenges, the Highway Maintenance Department had some additional hurdles they needed to overcome. Their trucks regularly traveled to multiple locations, where they might be far away from the shop when PM came due. In addition, they used different drivers for different vehicles, so they couldn’t use the trick that the Sheriff’s department did to assign the driver in FleetFocus. As a result, they decided to assign the supervisor as the operator for all of their vehicles so that he would be notified for each vehicle. From there, he would do all the assigning on his own, well in advance of the PM ultimately coming due.

“ This process has made it so much easier for shop staff,” added Mr. Allen, “the supervisor can manage the alert for them well in advance of the PM coming due.”

Results

After implementing this change with Notifications, Scott County monitored the situation and statistics for some time. When they reported on it again, they found significant results: communication for the shop time and scheduling improved dramatically since there was no more manual email creation from a supervisor. Not to be outdone, the PMC reports that were originally at 15%-20% were now up to 89.9%. In fact, success permeated throughout the departments countywide. “Since we started the notification process, we went from about 40% to 87% compliance overall in all county vehicles,” noted Mr. Beam.

Delivering Success

With the success they have experienced already, they decided recently to roll out the ideas to additional departments. The Sheriff’s Department is the only one that uses the same vehicles every day, so the other departments each needed their own tweaks

to the solution, much like the Highway Maintenance Department. Some departments, like Taxation and Environmental Health have department vehicles where a department representative is assigned. These users can see that PM is coming up for a vehicle and they will prevent staff from using it when it is scheduled to go in for maintenance.

Like most fleets, it is important for Scott County to report on their services. Scott County Delivers is a continual improvement initiative that allows the County to take a look at their data at the service, not the department, level. This review allows the community to see their services through the spectrum of programs, processes and departments that contribute to the County's goals. For the fleet, on-time performance for PMC is an important statistic.

When they presented on the successes with communication and PMC, it was through a televised review to the Scott County board. Mr. Beam said, "We had a huge, overwhelming acknowledgment of how well we succeeded in our performance efforts." They received additional appreciation for their ability to they increase their performance with the same strong fleet management system they already had.

Moving forward, they plan to teach the other departments how to utilize notifications and learn the software so they can use it as a tool for themselves.

To learn more about the fleet management software mentioned in this case study, visit assetworks.com/fleet.