

Customer Success Story

Piller's

Improves Performance with Route Sequencing & Supply Chain Visibility

Keeping an Eye on Supply Chain Activities

Piller's Sausages and Delicatessens is a family-owned foodservice distribution company. For over 40 years Piller's has been delivering high quality European deli, smoked meats and sausages to customers across North America, including large-scale grocery chains, and small mom-and-pop operations.

As demand for Piller's products increased, dispatchers had to add new stops to its fixed delivery schedule and ensure that loads were balanced. These tasks were done manually and became increasingly difficult to accomplish as the business grew.

Piller's also had no visibility into its supply chain. While delays and exceptions could range from lack of dock space to heavy traffic, the key for Piller's was real-time access to this information. Dispatchers needed to know the status of deliveries and where drivers were being held up – time wasted on one call could affect the rest of the day's delivery schedule and ultimately impact Piller's number one priority: customer service.

Piller's realized that it needed an efficient way to optimally sequence its routes following the order cut-off and prior to loading the vehicles. Dispatchers and managers had to be able to measure actual performance against an engineered plan, and required real-time visibility into their delivery operations to ensure ongoing customer satisfaction.

Enter Descartes: The Solution of Choice

The day Descartes first demonstrated its visibility and routing solution to Piller's Fleet Supervisor, Klaus Schraud, he was very excited. "My first thought was, Holy Mackerel! This is exactly what we need."

After a 30-minute demonstration of the Descartes solution, Piller's knew that the Descartes solution would prove to be an affordable alternative to more conventional – and expensive – logistics offerings on the market. With Descartes, Piller's is now able to ensure that the most efficient routes are created for every delivery, while achieving visibility into the status of every order.

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Klaus Schraud,
Fleet Supervisor at Piller's

With its subscription-based model, Descartes would provide advanced functionality and real-time access to critical delivery information at a fraction of the price. The Descartes solution, available on a pay-as-you-go basis, would require no up-front capital costs, and would minimize operational and financial risks. Over and above these advantages, the Descartes solution could be implemented quickly and the impact would be felt immediately.

A Quick Hit for Business

Piller's went live with a pilot project using the Descartes visibility solution. Within days the results were obvious. According to Schraud, "Feedback was immediate – and the impact on business was felt within a matter of days. Finally we could actually see what we were doing!"

Schraud reported that within two weeks of the implementation all drivers were on board with Descartes. "Descartes did a great job and the training was straightforward. Anyone who can work a remote control for TV can use it. It's that simple."

Less than a month later, Schraud presented results from the pilot to the executive team. "They were impressed. Within two months we were signed up with Descartes for the long term."

Route Sequencing and Field Data Capture Keeps Scheduling Efficient and on Course

By using Descartes sequencing functionality to create engineered routes, Piller's has significantly reduced time and miles spent on road. The actual performance and cost of each route are compared daily against an engineered plan. Information captured in the field is continually fed back to the Descartes system to further optimize daily routes.

Using web-enabled cell phones, the Piller's fleet and status of each delivery is now tracked real-time. As well, drivers capture data such as mileage, service time at each stop, exception handling, and dock waiting times.

With visibility into daily delivery activities, Piller's can now respond immediately to customer enquiries. Sales representatives and night managers can check on delivery status without having to call Schraud – or the driver – for details. They simply log on to the Descartes solution and select the route in question to know exactly where a truck is and its estimated time of arrival at each stop. This information is also then used to sequence routes for maximum efficiency.

Schraud now puts together his route for the next day using the Descartes visibility and routing solution. "I assign drivers to their routes, put in any extra stops, and within minutes it's all there. We can now easily integrate new orders that come in last minute and still make distribution as efficient as possible."

Recurring route problems are also easily dealt with as Descartes enables Schraud to look at historical data to pinpoint problem locations. "Say a driver has a long wait time at the same spot every week. Now we have the information so we can work with that customer to consider alternative delivery times or other solutions. Sometimes what seems to be a big problem, only takes a little reshuffling." Piller's can now also measure actual performance against a daily plan, and use that information to increase overall efficiency and optimize the organization's performance in relation to industry standards.

In the near future, Piller's will be using Descartes to generate trip sheets, which are currently filled out manually by drivers. "Now the information needed is captured through the Web enabled cell phones. And soon we will be able to print off sheets with all the data that has been captured throughout the day." As a man who has his finger on the pulse of the Piller's fleet, Schraud said Descartes has made his work much easier. "It's the best thing out there compared to anything else I've seen. It beats them out on price alone. Not to mention the fact that I don't need satellite tracking. It's all there in Descartes."

Summary

Challenge:

Piller's was unable to optimally sequence their delivery routes in an efficient manner, had no visibility into their delivery activities, and no benchmark against which to measure productivity.

Solution:

With Descartes, Piller's now creates routes with an optimal sequence and tracks actual performance against an engineered plan. Piller's also has real time visibility into their entire fleet, including vehicle locations, delivery status and delays relative to plan. With Descartes, they now have: Improved sequencing and ongoing performance tracking; an engineered labor plan; real-time visibility into truck and order status.

ROI=10x Annually:

Within three months: increased productivity of stops per on area hour by 12%; projected labor, fuel and maintenance savings of 8% per year; potential reduction in overtime of 10%; improved efficiency of customer service calls.