

Putting Mattress Manufacturer's Routing Worries to Bed



After a period of rapid growth, Relyon set out to overhaul its delivery fleet to bring it in line with the company's multi-purpose needs. Shortly thereafter, the decision was made to find a solution to automate its manual routing and planning processes, and reduce overall costs and complexity in its delivery operations. After a comprehensive search, Descartes was selected as Relyon's single source supplier for its routing, planning and tracking needs. The Descartes solution not only met the company's criteria – it showed how their solution would help us improve business processes, save costs and be configured to fit Relyon as they grew.

“Descartes not only met our criteria – they were also able to show us how their solution would help us improve our business and save costs.”

Chris Vaughan, Logistics Manager, Relyon

Company Profile

Relyon®
Bedroom Furniture

Descartes Solutions

Descartes Route Planning
Descartes Sales & Territory Planner™

About the Client

Relyon Limited is the UK's largest bed manufacturer, whose brand name has become synonymous with the very highest standards of quality. Today, Relyon employs 500 people and has two manufacturing facilities in Somerset and Devon counties. All distribution is managed through a main operating facility in Somerset. Deliveries are made to more than 500 bedding companies and retail store customers throughout the UK and Ireland. Relyon's fleet of 23 trucks is managed through a third party supplier.

Quick Overview

Challenge

Changing with the Times

Solution

On the Road with Descartes
Routing and Planning

Results

- Operational Flexibility
- Built-in Efficiencies
- Cost Savings
- Better Controls

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Challenge: Changing with the Times

According to Chris Vaughan, Logistics Manager at Relyon, "Although we were using spreadsheets and filters to arrive at the base information we needed to map our routes, that still left a huge amount of manual planning that had to be done to manage our logistics processes."

An added challenge was the fact that delivery requirements were variable. Relyon's business was split between major and independent retailers, each of which had their own delivery demands. "Deliveries to distribution centers is generally a one-stop exercise, but could require single or multiple truck loads per day," says Vaughan. "Since independent retailers buy smaller quantities, that could entail several special trips a day. Depending on the schedule, a driver could do anywhere from five to 18 stops in a day." He adds that many of the major retail customers were on static routing schedules, with guaranteed lead and delivery times. "The variables are infinite for independent retailers, and very much depend on their lead time and when an order comes in," notes Vaughan. "No two days are ever the same."

The biggest challenge was keeping pace with integrated production and delivery schedules. "Beds are ordered individually, so to schedule production you have to schedule delivery. As a result, planning is a constant process." One Relyon dispatcher would spend a majority of their working week just planning vehicle routes for the following week. This was especially challenging during peak delivery seasons when weekly truckloads almost doubled.

Solution: On the Road with Descartes Routing and Planning

The Descartes implementation was rolled out in stages, beginning with sales and territory planning, followed by route planning, and finally tracking using personal digital assistants (PDA).

Planning and routing functions are already much easier and quicker, says Vaughan. Rather than spending an entire week on route planning for the following week, Relyon can build each day's route in less than five minutes. Last minute modifications – such as added routes or a single client request for a specific delivery time – can also be made easily. "This cuts out a huge amount of time so our team can be proactive rather than reactive to situations," says Vaughan. He estimates that the company has already realized a 10% reduction in mileage.

Once the final phase of the initial implementation plan is completed (i.e. integrating the tracking system), Relyon dispatchers and customer service agents will have real-time visibility into vehicle and driver activities on the road. "When the tracking system is up and running, we will be able to pull up a screen, pick a route and know where a driver is, what deliveries they made and what they will be doing next," explains Vaughan. "That will lead to a major reduction in workload."

"Now that the system is in place and addressing our immediate priorities, we can start looking into the additional features we can add to make our business run even more efficiently," says Vaughan.

Results:



Operational Flexibility

Last minute modifications – such as added routes or a single client request for a specific delivery time – can be made easily.



Built-in Efficiencies

Rather than spending an entire week on route planning, Relyon can build each day's route in less than five minutes so the team can be proactive rather than reactive.



Costs Savings

Automated route planning generated an estimated 10% mileage reduction.



Better Controls

The Descartes solution automates and streamlines business processes for increased efficiency and enables on-time performance monitoring.