

Descartes' Route Planning Solution Helps Stephenson's Rental Track Their Fleet of Delivery Vehicles in Real Time



Company Profile

Stephenson's Rental Services
Construction Equipment Rental

Descartes Solutions

Route Planning, Execution and Mobile

More than 50 years in the rental business, privately-owned Stephenson's Rental Services has over 200 employees located in 21 locations in the Toronto region. Stephenson's roster of 30,000+ customers includes home builders, and general and commercial contractors providing demolition, electrical or mechanical services. Industry leaders such as PCL, Murray Demolition and Daniels Corporation are among the companies that rely on Stephenson's for rental tools and heavy industrial equipment.

Challenge

Stephenson's delivery vehicles are dispatched from one of five central hubs in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Stephenson's route planning process started with a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and evolved over time to a homegrown, manually administered dispatch planner that provided limited functionality. Since the software provided no visibility into the fleet management cycle and vehicle activities on the road, Stephenson's was not able to access critical supply chain information in real time. Nor were they able to effectively route orders as they came in throughout the day.

According to Tom Newell, Vice President of Operations at Stephenson's, "If asked by a customer for an estimated time of arrival (ETA), our dispatchers could not predict how long it would take. If one vehicle was responsible for four drops, there was no way of knowing when it would get to the last site. As a result, productivity was low and we had to outsource some of our deliveries to ensure that we could meet the tight delivery windows we promised our customers."

Stephenson's had a lower than expected on-time delivery percentage along with fairly substantial outsourced delivery costs. In addition, its delivery operations were not scalable, which meant adding staffing to manage deliveries as the fleet grew.

[READ ABOUT THE SOLUTION AND RESULTS](#) →

Solution

To address the need for visibility into its delivery operations Stephenson's began evaluating a variety of solutions, including software used by taxis. Stephenson's found that GPS tracking systems had prohibitive hardware startup costs and only provided a partial solution.

However, Descartes dynamic route planning, execution and mobile solution provided Stephenson's with two key elements it required: real-time visibility and the flexibility to plan on demand or as orders come in for the future. The cloud-based Descartes solution provided Stephenson's with an easy and affordable way to track and monitor its delivery fleets. This on-demand supply chain management solution, which combines sophisticated planning and tracking functionality with the simplicity of a web-based solution, provides dispatchers, managers and support agents with a real-time view of driver movement and order status across fleets of vehicles.

Results

Using Descartes' dynamic route planning, execution and mobile Solution, Stephenson's Rental can now track and monitor its fleet of delivery vehicles in real time, and is now setting the standard for "on time" delivery performance and achieving significant gains in productivity via engineered plans and real-time performance measurements.

Since deploying the solution, they have seen a 15% improvement in on-time delivery, enabling the company to deliver equipment within very narrow delivery time windows. "While our competition can promise same day deliveries, our mandate is to put product on a customer's site within two hours of an order being placed," comments Newell. The route planning and visibility solution has also delivered a 15% improvement in productivity and 20% reduction in outsourced fleet management costs."

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