

Ideal Supply

Driving Exemplary Customer Service with Descartes

Ideal Supply, a major wholesale distributor to the electrical, industrial and automotive industries, required a streamlined, integrated, and cost-effective logistics management solution. With the aim of delivering unprecedented customer service, the company implemented cloud-based Descartes Route Planner™ On-demand to increase operational efficiency and provide real-time visibility into order and fleet status.

The Challenge: Lack of Delivery Visibility a Roadblock to Customer Satisfaction

Ideal Supply has a delivery fleet of more than 100 vehicles, ranging from a Smart car to a 53-foot tractor-trailer, that service a large, mostly-rural area from its primary 75,000-square-foot distribution center. With same-day delivery expectations and a goal of optimizing the customer experience, the 91-year-old family-operated business required an integrated, automated route planning and execution solution that not only optimized delivery routes, but provided real-time fleet and order visibility to monitor driver performance and keep customers informed of the status of their deliveries.



With a large fleet and high customer expectations for world class service, Ideal Supply required a solution that could better route vehicles and track driver performance.



THE PEOPLE TO ASK

“ The level of thought that goes into how to integrate the technology really makes Descartes stand out. The cloud-driven model enables the use of current-generation technology like web services and APIs, and facilitates our ecommerce growth. And it really allows us to take the data we’re generating inside that platform and present it in a way that is meaningful and enhances the experience of our customers. ”

– Chris Moon, Director of IT,
Ideal Supply

ABOUT IDEAL SUPPLY

Part of the Montreal-based Deschênes Group, Ideal Supply Company Limited is one of the largest wholesale distributors to the electrical, industrial and automotive industries in Canada. Based in Listowel, ON, the company operates 30 branch locations in Southwestern Ontario and is Canada’s largest NAPA Auto Parts distributor.

The Solution: Route Planning with a View

In 2004, Ideal Supply was one of the first companies in its market segment to adopt a mobile, technology-enabled route planning system—Descartes' legacy Roadshow solution—to facilitate paperless dispatch and same-day delivery. More than a decade later, in response to evolving customer demands, Ideal Supply chose the increased visibility and integration of the cloud-based Descartes Route Planner On-demand solution to boost operational efficiency and enhance customer service.

Today, Ideal Supply delivers 2,100 to 2,200 orders daily across a mostly-rural geographic footprint of approximately 8,700 square miles. The Descartes solution optimizes the supplier's route planning and execution with advanced capabilities such as proof-of-delivery (POD) captured electronically, automated delivery-window alerts, and a customized delivery reconciliation process.

"The cost of inefficient routing is significantly higher in our rural environment than in an urban area. With Descartes, we're able to enforce more of a disciplined 'bus schedule' mentality around delivery operations—and we've seen fuel savings as high as 28 percent in some geographies. Plus, real-time GPS-based tracking and driver performance monitoring help us continue to improve," says Chris Moon, Director of IT at Ideal Supply.

Seamless integration between Descartes Route Planner On-demand and Ideal Supply's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system enables real-time visibility across the order lifecycle, from inception to delivery. "Customers want to see where their order is and when it will be delivered. And with Descartes' deep integration with our ecommerce platform, we can also look at historical order data to enhance the experience of customers and other stakeholders," adds Moon.

The Results



Enhanced Customer Service

Real-time visibility into order and delivery status enables proactive issue resolution and enhanced management of customer expectations. More efficient routing and an automated delivery reconciliation process ensure expedient delivery with fewer errors.



Operational Cost Savings

By consolidating route planning, GPS mobile tracking, and tracking of metrics data in the cloud, Ideal Supply realized economies of scale. Optimized route planning and execution helped save up to 28 percent on fuel costs.



Real-time Visibility & Tracking

Descartes Route Planner On-demand provides a real-time view into fleet and order status, enabling the company to monitor driver performance and capture POD electronically in real-time. Automatic notifications also keep customers informed of their delivery status.



Improved Productivity

From order inception to delivery, more agile distribution operations for Ideal Supply means customers receive their deliveries in a maximum of half a day. With more efficient and disciplined routing, driver performance improved and delivery volumes increased.