

Implementing Telematics

A "Right First Time" Approach

Save Time, **Save Money**, Drive Safe

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Ideas



Strategy



Implementation






Operations



Review

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Introduction

You probably know some competitive companies in your industry who have implemented vehicle tracking and Telematics for their fleet or have read about others who have successfully made a difference in improving fleet performance and reducing costs.

So if they can do it why haven't you?

To get the best results from a telematics solution in terms of either operational benefits, reductions in driver risks or a return on investment it is vital to select the right solution and get the Implementation right the first time.

This eBook provides some tips and guidelines on how to define your telematics goals, identify the right solution for your business, get the solution up and running and review results and performance to ensure you're getting full value for money from your telematics solution.

In other words, improve your fleet and reduce costs as others have done.

Although there are no hard and fast rules to this process there are several steps every company should follow to ensure that they benefit from tangible operational and financial benefits.

Key Stages

The following key stages are from our customer's experience that they have found critical in ensuring success and they start before you even talk to potential telematics providers and see demonstrations.

- Where do we start? - Ideas
- Telematics Strategy - What are your goals?
- Requirements Specifications
- Implementation & Project Management
- Live Operations
- Benchmarking & Management Information
- Operational Review & Recommendations Going Forward



Where do we start?- Ideas

Every company with mobile resources, vehicles, equipment and people has differing operational requirements, different problems to resolve, a different financial cost base and, of great importance, a different set of goals and objectives for the future.

Implementation of a telematics solution can help improve operations, resolve problems, reduce costs and help achieve company goals. This is done by using the information telematics can provide to review and learn from “yesterday”, manage “today” and plan for “tomorrow”.

At this stage ensure you get the views of all stakeholders and discuss issues and needs.

Different parts of the business will have differing needs.

So when deciding what you need from a telematics system why not start by asking some questions?

- What are our current issues and what are they costing our business?
- Is fuel usage and the need to reduce consumption the most critical issue?
- What are our largest fleet expenses?
- Do we have a high level of insurance claims and will monitoring driver behaviour and vehicle usage improve this?
- Do we have contractual commitments that we are missing through poor vehicle routing, allocation of tasks or lack of monitoring arrival/departure times?
- Do we know the utilisation of our vehicles allowing planning for the future, such as moving to EVs?
- Are there any safety concerns with loan workers?
- Can we improve our environmental impact via better management of vehicle usage?
- Are our mobile assets at risk from theft and what is the operational cost of losing an asset?

It's also a good idea to look at what other companies have used telematics for.

Maybe they are your competitors, so do they now have a competitive advantage?



Telematics Strategy - What are your goals?

Having a clear set of requirements makes it easier to find the right solution at the right cost.

At this stage, you will have a host of ideas and have identified issues where you believe a telematics system can help make improvements so you now need to define these as goals you want to achieve.

If you don't set any goals or targets, whether that's reducing fuel costs, vehicle mileage, overtime costs, own-fault accidents or increased productivity, how will you know if the telematics system has proved worthwhile?

Requirements Specifications

Once a Telematics Strategy has been defined the next stage is to translate this into a set of product and service requirements to be able to identify a suitable product and supplier.

Do this before getting a sales demonstration.

A specification of requirements that is too simplistic and vague can confuse, potentially leading to the implementation of a solution not fit for purpose.

Too much detail may lead to having to compromise or be offered bespoke developments. Potentially at a high cost or with extended delivery time.

If you have a small fleet there is no need to have pages and pages of technical requirements but you must have a list of the key things you are looking for.

A one-pager with bullet points of a few key requirements based on your telematics goals will do.

A good supplier will be able to discuss these with you and in turn demonstrate how they can meet each one.

A big mistake often made by smaller fleet operators is to ask for the impossible.

Be realistic, ensure the requirement helps meet your defined goals and always remember if the requirement does not make a change in your fleet operations or business it won't give you a return on investment.



Larger fleet operators may need a more detailed requirements specification, but only, as with smaller fleets, if these detailed requirements again keep in mind the defined goals.

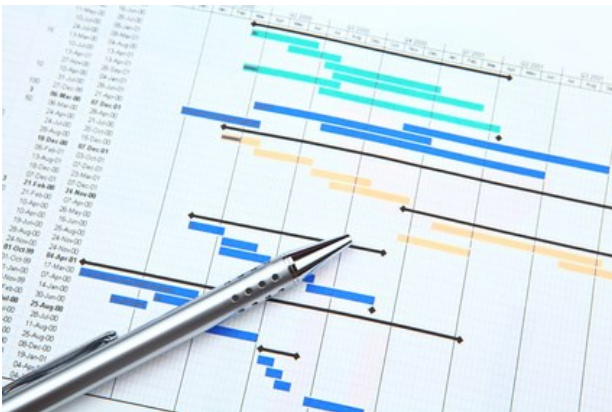
A recommendation here is to divide the requirements specification into sections so that the tracking requirements are separate from the non-tracking requirements.

Implementation & Project Management

This stage covers both the selection of the supplier, evaluation of the proposed solution, if necessary, and the implementation of the solution to “go live”.

There are many potential suppliers of telematics solutions and several may already have approached you. The key is to only have discussions with suppliers based on your requirement of specifications and goals. A lot will propose features and solutions that may not be in your specification but always refer back to your initial goals to decide if they will give you any benefit, return on investment or value for money.

Just because a supplier has a feature they want to push does not mean that you will get benefit from it.



The supplier selection stages include:

- Identification of suppliers
- Audit of suppliers' proposals
- Commercial terms and service levels
- Rental, purchase, term of the contract, payment terms etc.
- Preferred supplier
- Pilot and evaluation
 - Pilots are not always necessary depending on fleet size and customer testimonials/ references. They can take a lot of your time and as you're not familiar with the proposed solution you may not fully understand the data generated. You will also be locked into discussions with a single supplier during any pilot and evaluation stage which is not always beneficial to your company.
 - Ask to talk to suppliers existing customers and see how their fleet has improved and if the supplier not only delivered what was ordered but supports them on an ongoing basis.

Like any other change in your business, the implementation of a vehicle tracking system requires management time and energy.

The level of project management required will be dependent on the fleet size and complexity of the required solution but it will require a project manager with a defined role.

The project is more than just getting tracking hardware installed in vehicles, although this on its own requires a lot of planning, time and effort to get right, it needs to cover other key areas such as:

- Driver briefings to ensure drivers understand why vehicle tracking is being installed and what information is being captured
- User training
- Management reporting—who gets what information and when
- Acceptance of the system
- Go Live

Live Operations

Going live with your system is not the finish but only the start.

At this stage, you will be paying for your new system and so want to see payback as soon as possible. There will not be an instant return on investment or significant improvement in operations but it is important to ensure that everyone involved is monitoring the way the changes in operations are working, reviewing the management information generated against the defined goals and taking action to change the way the fleet and business operates based on the results generated.

Once you are live to ensure continued measurable success Benchmarking and Management Information becomes critical.

The objectives of benchmarking are to determine what and where improvements are called for and to use this information to improve performance.

Benchmarking and Management Information

At the start of this process, we identified key operational issues and turned those into goals which we felt would make a difference to the business.

At this stage, as the system goes live, the capture of benchmarking data, based on your goals, will be the measure against which we can prove the system is making a difference.

Before the system was installed there were probably various figures available for vehicle mpg, distance travelled, time on site, hours worked, complaints about poor driving and own-fault accident costs, among others. Initial management reporting gives us a benchmark from which we can measure improvements over time and potentially one depot with another or driver verse driver.



Operational Reviews and Recommendations Going Forward

Now that you have successfully selected a product and supplier and you've been live for a while it's time to review if the original goals and return on investment are being achieved.

It may also be that once you've had telematics operational for a while or are approaching a contract renewal date with your supplier, a fresh review of the operations is a sensible idea.

With existing implementations it is sometimes the case that there may be a change of focus, company goals change or personnel move on. All of which may contribute to a reduction in the success, or perceived success, of a system.



Reviews, which should be regularly, remember you may be running the system for several years, should include:

- Analysis of KPIs
- Telematics Service Provider performance
- Operational issues with the system
- Changes in requirements
- Management reporting review
- Staff knowledge

Summary

There is more to achieving an improvement in your vehicle fleet, changes in operations and a return on your investment than having all your vehicles tracked and staff understand how to find out where they are and run a report!

By following the stages in this eBook we believe that you will get more from your investment in vehicle tracking and see real improvements in vehicle and operational management.

And finally.....

The objective of whichever type of system you select is to:

Save Time, Save Money, Drive Safe



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Nigel Porter has over 30 years of experience in telematics and mobile data with roles in development, sales and operations. Ranging from the early days of GPS tracking over analogue mobile phone and Private Mobile Radio networks to current GSM GPRS and satellite communications he has seen telematics evolve into an essential management tool for companies with mobile assets. His telematics experience is with both start-ups and large international public companies covering all aspects of product development, sales, and technical and customer management for both commercial telematics and high-level security applications. Currently, he provides independent advice to companies seeking to implement telematics, supports investors looking at telematics opportunities and acts as an Expert Witness in insurance claims and Court proceedings.

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