



Greater Wellington Regional Council

Automating Public Transport Information

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Steve Budd, Major Projects Manager
Greater Wellington Regional Council

BUSINESS PROBLEM

The Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) in New Zealand delivers multi-modal services to the more than 450,000 residents that make up the region.

Approximately 37% of the population in Wellington utilises public transport; more than anywhere else in New Zealand.

GWRC prides itself on being extremely careful of the environment and any encouragement to use public transport is seen as an integral part of their effort to be green.

To encourage increased ridership, GWRC knew they needed to improve access to public transport information.

Online journey planning was not available from their Web site and their call centre used paper timetables and was highly reliant on a few experienced people.

As a result average call times and call loss rates were relatively high as was stress and staff turn over.

SOLUTION

In 2003 GWRC selected AIM to supply an end-to-end Journey Planning solution that included bus stop data capture, electronic registration of services to build a full Passenger Transport Database, data processing, an Enquiry Management System for the call centre and an Internet Journey Planner Web site.



Above: The New Metlink Journey Planner

The first phase of the project saw a complete audit of Wellington's bus stops using a GPS-equipped vehicle to pinpoint stop locations so that more accurate information on stops, timetables and routes could be generated.

Armed with accurate data, the Enquiry Management System was installed in the call centre enabling agents to easily handle much more than just journey enquiries.

Agents could now automate requests for new bus stops, report on damaged bus stops and handle complaints.

Later in 2005, the internet journey planner was set up using the same data as that supplied to the call centre.

SNAPSHOT

Type of Operation:	Multimodal (rail, bus, school buses, ferry, cable car)
Number of Services:	110
Size of Call Centre:	11 seats
Number of Calls Each Month:	40,000
Number of Web site Visits:	33,000
AIM Solution Deployed:	Enquiry Management System, Journey Planner Web site, Bus Stop Data Capture, Electronic Registration of Services, Data Processing

Steve Budd, Major Projects Manager with GWRC had this to say: "We found AIM to be very good to deal with and the distance involved has not been a great issue, given the VPN connection and e-mail communication. The AIM implementation was done in conjunction with a strong local support team, and was rated by one Senior GW exec as 'the most successful and painless system implementation' they'd ever seen.

RESULTS

According to GWRC's 2006 annual survey, customer satisfaction is high at 94% versus 80% in 2003 before the AIM solution was implemented. In addition 90% of residents rated access to customer information as "easy" and 50% of residents rated the Web site as their main information source in 2006 versus 25% in 2003.

Explains Budd, "There has been significant patronage growth in the past year - partly petrol but also... due to the Metlink branding and the associated improvements in information services we have introduced."

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

GWRC are planning further developments to the public transport information they can provide such as fares information and one-way walk links to accommodate their hilly terrain.

"We are continually looking for ways to improve the Web site and have recently added a tickertape that scrolls at the bottom of every page for urgent service alerts, added school bus services to the site (the first time these have been published) and have added a feature to look up bus routes and timetables based on the bus stop number," explains Budd.

"Aside from facilitating all of the above, one of the biggest paybacks has been the ability to produce all bus stop timetables in house - a very major saving."



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