

CASE STUDY



"RidePro has facilitated our growth by giving us the scalable tools we need to manage our customer information and provide quick, accurate ride-matches."

Patty Carlson
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Metro Commuter Services

Building a successful TDM Service

BUSINESS PROBLEM

Since 1977, Metro Commuter Services (MCS) in St. Paul, MN has been promoting Commuter Choice programs in the Twin Cities area. In addition to ride-matching services for carpools and vanpools, MCS has built innovative programs for commuters who use bicycles and/or public transit for travel to work or school. These include daily bike locker rentals and premium parking spaces for rideshare vehicles at transit lots.

By 1992, the popularity of the service had grown to the point where, MCS needed a software application to more quickly match riders to carpools or vanpools. MCS also needed to give local transport management organizations (TMOs) and transit agencies access to the software.

GOALS

The application needed to provide customer service agents with immediate ride-matches using a variety of parameters, and had to help manage the bike locker rental and parking permits programs. The software also needed to track costs and funding sources for the Guaranteed Ride Home program and measure the effectiveness of MCS marketing activities.

SOLUTION

MCS chose Trapeze RidePro software for its powerful ride-matching and program management tools. It also made the application available to remote users in neighboring TMOs, allowing for a more closely integrated regional commuter management program.

SNAPSHOT

Type of operation:	Commuter Services
Registered commuters:	25,000
Trapeze products used:	RidePro with Web interface
IT environment:	Windows 2000 on 10 workstations plus remote users

By the late 1990s, MCS was again looking for ways to improve service while keeping costs down, and in 1999 they added the Web interface to RidePro, which allowed other TMOs and transit agencies to do their own registrations, ride-matching, and employer tracking in a secure environment. Many local businesses also use the site to register their employees for shared rides to work. In early 2003, MCS began allowing commuters to do their own online ride-matching.

"When you deal with commuters, you need to be available when they are, and that means early morning, late night and weekends," explains Patty Carlson, MCS Program Manager. "The Internet is an ideal platform since it's accessible anytime and reduces our overhead by decreasing call volumes and paperwork."

RESULTS

MCS is acknowledged to be one of the most innovative commuter programs in the country. With more than 25,000 registered users, it is also among the most successful.

By allowing all TMOs and transit agencies into RidePro, MCS has seen greater participation in regional programs and a more

cohesive working arrangement with all of the various agencies promoting Transport Demand Management (TDM) in the area. "Since all numbers, activity and other required status information can now be pulled out of RidePro, the paperwork for contract compliance has been reduced and the staff are able to spend more time on the development, implementation and evaluation of programs," Ms. Carlson says.

BOTTOM LINE

Metro has one of the highest ride-matching success rates of any TDM service with 50% long term placement of registered commuters. "RidePro has facilitated our growth by giving us the scalable tools we need to manage our customer information and provide quick, accurate ride-matches," Ms. Carlson explains. "It is also a valuable tool for helping us manage multiple funding sources for our Guaranteed Ride Home Program and for measuring how well our marketing activities are working."