CASE STUDY

Van Tran Of Tucson

Building Efficient, Integrated Paratransit Services

"Trapeze has met all challenges and exceeded our expectations. They are evolving transportation, making things possible that were not possible before."

Gary Clark
Information Technology Manager, Van Tran

BUSINESS PROBLEM

Van Tran of Tucson Inc. has been providing quality ADA paratransit services for the City of Tucson, AZ since 1987. The company makes approximately 310,000 trips annually using 56 paratransit vehicles.

Since 1994, Van Tran has been participating in a major initiative for the greater Tucson area to develop intelligent transportation systems (ITS) that integrate transit services in different sectors and create a better, more efficient overall system.

GOALS

Since the mid-1990s, Van Tran has pursued a number of goals directly related to the ITS initiative, the first being to upgrade its old scheduling system to a faster, more user-friendly, and extensible solution.

Beyond that, the agency wanted to integrate the latest global positioning system (GPS) and other in-vehicle technologies so that vehicles could be more easily located and schedule changes could be executed and communicated to drivers in real-time.

As well, Van Tran wanted the system to be more tightly integrated with both the ADA office that handles client registration and, eventually, the public transit system.

SOLUTION

In 1996, Van Tran chose Trapeze's DOS-based demand response scheduling software. According to Gary Clark, Information Technology Manager at Van Tran, the Trapeze system "outshone" the old trip booking and scheduling system.

In 1997, the agency migrated to Trapeze PASS, a Windows-based demand response scheduling, booking and dispatch tool. This was augmented with Trapeze CERT client certification module in 2000 and interfaces with third-party automatic vehicle location (AVL) and mobile data terminals (MDT) in 2001.

An upcoming project will integrate the scheduling data of the City of Tucson's fixed route service to enable closer collaboration between the two operations.

SNAPSHOT

Weekday daily trips:	1,200
Weekend daily trips:	400
Peak vehicles:	56
Passengers per month:	25,833
Passenger trips annually:	310,000
Employees:	165
Revenue hours annually:	150,000
Payroll hours annually:	280,000
Trapeze products used:	PASS, PASS-MON (AVL, MDT), CERT

RESULTS

According to Clark, every stage of the implementation has proceeded smoothly, largely because of three factors: "We worked very closely with Trapeze to develop a strong plan of action, and Trapeze ensured a strong contingent of people to provide on-site support when the systems went live."

Clark highlights training as the most important part of the success at every stage of the project. "We trained, trained, and trained again," says Clark, "and made sure that everyone thoroughly understood their own role as well as the larger system."

Clark reports significant productivity gains for end users, who are very pleased with the performance of the system. As a result of the integration of PASS with AVL and MDT technologies, dispatchers have better control of the fleet and are able to dispatch vehicles based on real-time information.

Van Tran has been able to significantly reduce the number of inside dispatch staff and reservationists and reassign duties that used to be performed by temporary workers to remaining staff, reallocating those savings to on the road service.

PASS also provides quicker, more complete access to customer information, helping drivers and dispatchers deal with common problems such as no-shows.

BOTTOM LINE

Trapeze is enabling Van Tran to do its part in developing a larger intelligent transportation infrastructure for the Tucson region.

"Trapeze has met all challenges and exceeded our expectations," says Clark. "They are evolving transportation, making things possible that were not possible before."

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