

Sycada case study

Vodafone Global M2M
Sycada gets the Netherlands
moving smarter

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Greener buses, happier drivers, safer passengers

If you're on a Connexion bus and you see the driver celebrating as he stops at a red light, do not be alarmed. Neither should you worry if he smiles as he steadily pulls away from a green light. It may be that he's just outscored his colleagues. Indeed, he may have just scooped a monthly bonus. Or secured the planting of 1,000 trees in Haiti.

The challenge

Track fuel costs

Since September 2013, around 1,500 buses run by the Connexion transport group in the Netherlands have been fitted with tracking devices delivering real-time feedback on driver performance. The system is provided by Sycada, a telematics solutions provider based in Amsterdam and it means that the drivers can compare their performance with colleagues. The drivers can earn incentives if they perform well, and many have taken it to Facebook to share their achievements. Sycada is even planting trees in Haiti to further reward the best-performing drivers.

But this is not just about making bus drivers happier.

Connexion hopes better driving will lead to at least 5% saving in fuel costs over a one year period. The business uses 60 million litres of diesel each year in the Netherlands, covering 240 million kilometres. Each percentage point equates to €600,000 saved.

Of course there are also CO₂ emission targets to meet. Public transport tenders, particularly those for large urban authorities, are demanding proof that transport firms are tracking and tackling emissions. Connexion wanted to make sure it was ahead of the competition.

The solution

Real-time feedback on drive style

The solution arrived in the form of a letter from Sycada to Connexion's CEO. Sycada was offering to trim as much as 15% off their companies' fuel bills – all they needed to prove it was permission to run a 12-week Proof of Concept (PoC).

Working with 10 buses, 15 pilot drivers and 100+ anonymous drivers, Sycada's Green Fleet solution quickly demonstrated a difference in fuel usage of as much as 35% between the worst and the best driver in the same bus, driving the same route. Using a wireless device attached to the bus dashboard, the Sycada solution registers vehicle and driver performance. The drivers see real-time feedback on a second dashboard device, allowing them to optimise their driving style. Once the journey is complete, a detailed report is sent to Sycada's cloud-based servers. This report can then be viewed by drivers and Connexion's operations managers.

The solution was rolled out to the entire Netherlands fleet and 4,500 drivers through July and August 2013, going live on 1st September. Kristian Winge, Managing Director of Sycada, says it is the first successful mass scale public transport initiative of its kind anywhere in Europe, and probably in the world.

Robèrt Weijers, the Project Leader at Connexion, says the solution has been embraced by the business and its drivers: "We're seeing drivers compare their results, which is leading to continuous improvement. We've already seen excellent results."

The solution is underpinned by connectivity from Vodafone M2M SIMs. "There is a trust in the quality of the Vodafone network," says Winge. "We're a European business running hosted software solutions for clients. It makes all the sense in the world to have a network partner on a European level."

Sycada has been a Vodafone partner for 10 years: "Our business is primarily European, but our clients often need global coverage. Vodafone ensures this."

The future

The next opportunity, says Winge, is to add further software to the devices, including remote diagnostic information from the buses. "We can lower maintenance costs by being far more proactive in terms of detecting and fixing technical problems before they lead to higher than necessary repair costs or even take buses out of operation."



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Robèrt Weijers , Project Leader, Connexion

Ahead of that, Winge is hopeful the Connexion solution can be rolled out internationally. Connexion is owned by Transdev, the French transport services group. Transdev has operations throughout Europe, and is growing in Asia and the Americas. “From an ROI perspective it would certainly make sense to copy the Dutch success to other cities and countries,” says Winge.

The decision may not be entirely up to Transdev to make. The European Union is moving towards insisting all transport logistics generate emissions reports, from public transport to parcel delivery. What is politically popular in Dutch cities may become business reality in the very near future.

The bottom line

International success

- Sycada solution on track to exceed Connexion target of 5% fuel savings over a one year period, saving the business €3 million
- More mindful drivers also mean fewer accidents and improved passenger comfort
- 1,500 Sycada devices installed across Connexion fleet within eight weeks, using 50 installation engineers at 20 locations
- Sycada has planted more than 8,000 trees in Haiti – one for every Connexion driver and bus using its Green Fleet solution, plus a bonus 1,000 for the best driver per region, per quarter
- Connexion also has the option to add further software from Sycada (including vehicle diagnostics) in the future

About the customer

- Sycada specialises in hosted telematics solutions
- Sycada.Green is a Sycada-owned Competence Centre for Sustainable Mobility Solutions based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Sycada has around 2,000 clients, mostly in Europe
- Offices in Netherlands, Germany and Greece
- Vodafone M2M partner in Netherlands and Germany
- www.sycada.com
- www.sycada-green.com



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