



FLICKR.COM

PLOIESTI, ROMANIA

Telematic innovations for Public Transport

Background/context

Integration of software management systems is one of the main factors in the optimisation of the overall transport system in the urban area.

The effective use of transport resources is quite often strongly linked with the quality of communication and the efficiency of systems or people connecting users and the transport system.

Moreover, current and future communication technologies are useful in this domain.

The key features of the projects in Ploiesti were:

- to improve the management of traffic within the city centre;
- to improve the quality of travel information;
- to reduce traffic congestion; and
- to increase the number of public transport users.

The measures concern:

- the development of a database for the public transport operator in Ploiesti;
- the establishment of a reliable data collection system to feed other information systems with real-time data; and
- the implementation of real-time, on-street information systems to help passengers.

Case description

RATP Ploiesti has been implementing GPS system since December 2001 in order to introduce telematic innovations in dispatching. Forty-one buses were equipped with GPS and worked on two lines which crossed the centre of the city.

The information gained through the GPS system was displayed on 10 real-time information panels located in the main stops.

In 2005 RATP Ploiesti became partner in a CIVITAS-SUCCESS project. One of the work packages in this project refers to telematics. Therefore, RATP continued its activity to implement GPS throughout its bus fleet. The European Commission, through the CIVITAS programme, co-financed this activity and, as a result, by the end of 2006, 156 GPS units were installed on buses and 28 panels were put up at stops.

Since 2007 the entire bus fleet has been monitored via GPS and 38 real-time information panels have been placed at stops.

What did we gain using this dispatching system?

A single dispatching centre co-ordinates all of RATP Ploiesti's buses.

Before GPS was adopted, 46 dispatchers worked at the end



FILEKRC.COM

of each route. They had to confirm the accuracy of the data written down by the drivers and this meant a high level of subjectivity.

Now there are 26 traffic dispatchers working in three shifts, 24 hours a day, and there is no subjectivity in their work. There are 11 monitored lines.

Despite reduced staffing, the communication between the drivers and the dispatching centre increased significantly and, as a consequence, unexpected problems stemming from accidents, mechanical failures, etc. are resolved more promptly.

Public transport quality in Ploiesti continually improves because drivers adhere more closely to timetables.

STAFF RECONVERSION

In 2004 the company's organisational chart was modified. The 46 route dispatchers had to be retrained to become traffic dispatchers or staff members of other departments.

After a rigorous selection process, 17 dispatchers were invited to train up on the new traffic dispatching system. By means of professional conversion, the employees who had worked as dispatchers at the ends of the routes became dispatchers within the Traffic Dispatching Centre.

Another 14 dispatchers were retrained for work in other departments within RATP Ploiesti according to their professional skills and the company needs.

Nine employees left the company on their own volition. Unfortunately, six employees were dismissed.

Barriers and problems

Staff attitudes were the biggest challenge. The drivers resisted the GPS system as they initially felt it would impose too much control on their work. There were several misunderstandings between drivers and dispatchers but the problems were solved eventually. These difficulties stemmed were rooted in a lack of information and poor understanding about the benefits of the system.

Lessons learnt

It is very important to have a promotion campaign inside the company. Both drivers and dispatchers must understand their responsibilities as well as their benefits under the system.

It is important to organise a training session to explain the dispatching system and its significant advantages compared with the old-dispatching method.

It is very hard to change attitudes. Tolerance and open-mindedness are key.

Conclusions

Even if passengers don't really know how the GPS system works, they notice an increase in service quality. The buses run according to the timetable, with just a tolerance of \pm two minutes per route.

The drivers are controlled all the time and, as a result, they are more conscious than they were before GPS was adopted.

Staffing costs were reduced as number of the dispatchers dropped from 46 to 26.

For further details

Contact: Mr. Radu Popescu, General Manager

E-mail: radu@ratph.ro; office@ratph.ro;

radu@erfgroup.ro

Company: RATP Ploiesti

Address: 88 Gageni st., 100137, Ploiesti, Prahova, ROMANIA

Fax: +40-244-513-228

Tel.: +40-244-543-751, ext. 101; +40-721-571-156

Web: www.ratph.ro