

CASE STUDY



"The software makes me invaluable to my customers."

Philip D. Johnson

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DATTCO Inc.

Computerized Routing Helps Student Transport Company Grow

■ BUSINESS PROBLEM

Routing was a tedious manual effort for established student transportation provider DATTCO Inc. in Connecticut.

"We used to start planning on the last day of school in June, and pray we would finish by the first day of school in September," says Philip D. Johnson, the company's Director of Operations for Northern Connecticut.

Using pins and string, the company plotted its routes, wrote them up and tested them through the summer. Each fall, the inevitable problems would take weeks to resolve.

"We would plan for 60 kids and on the first day of school 90 would show up and we couldn't transport 30 of them," Johnson recalls. "It was embarrassing."

■ GOALS

The company realized that its growth depended on an ability to streamline its routing and build a reliable service for its customers.

The company also needed to be able to address redistricting issues and process the changes to student lists and routes that occur each fall.

■ SOLUTION

After investigating several solutions, DATTCO selected Trapeze MapNet, a routing and redistricting software package.

They decided to give the software a test-run by using it to generate routes for one community.

SNAPSHOT

Type of Operation:	Student Transportation
Districts Served:	13
Students Transported:	65,000
Number of Vehicles:	900
Trapeze Products Used:	MapNet, MapNet Redistricting Module

■ RESULTS

The results were dramatic. Basic routing took just ten days instead of two months, and by the second year, the community had saved more than \$200,000 in staff costs. Routes, locations, and driver information were all accurate, and vehicles arrived at schools within minutes of the projected route times.

Using MapNet, DATTCO's customer now processes between 300 and 500 changes per day to student addresses and routes at the beginning of each school year.

The initial experience with MapNet was so successful, DATTCO began offering computerized routing to all of its clients.

More recently, the company has been using MapNet to help clients with redistricting to achieve the legally required racial balance within schools. The redistricting module allows DATTCO to adjust pupil counts by street, calculate racial percentages by school and generate busing scenarios when new schools open and old ones close.

Today, DATTCO serves 13 school districts and transports more than 65,000 students each day.

Johnson credits their success, in part, to the efficiency and effectiveness of their computer systems. He cites how well MapNet adapts to new technologies, and he has further streamlined his operations by adding networking applications to remotely access the systems in each town.

DATTCO is considering expanding its services with another Trapeze product which uses interactive voice response (IVR) to allow parents to retrieve transportation information directly from the schools.

■ BOTTOM LINE

Student transportation management has come a long way from the pins and string approach.

As school boards look for ways to reduce costs and improve service, commercial transportation providers need to respond with powerful tools that work.

"The software makes me invaluable to my customers. We have the knowledge and experience to do it all for them," says Johnson.