

# CASE STUDY



*"The technology provides the flexibility of operation essential to the successful delivery of a demand responsive transport system."*

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# Nexus Call Centre

## Building an Urban DRT Service

### BUSINESS PROBLEM

Nexus is the Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) responsible for transport in the Tyne and Wear region of England. In addition to operating a light rail and ferry service, Nexus oversees the commercially-operated public bus routes in the region and runs Nexus Care, a door-to-door service for residents who cannot use conventional transport. Nexus also manages Traveline, a regional transport information service covering all of North East England.

In 2002 Nexus received funding to establish an urban demand response transport (DRT) service in west Newcastle. "We recognized at this point that we would need to consolidate our call centers," recalls John Usher, the Call Center Customer Service Manager. "We had one center for the Care services, another in a different location for Traveline and were about to build a third for UCALL, the DRT service."

### GOALS

Nexus decided to build a multi-function call center where staff from the three divisions could share resources and spend more time on customer care and less time on administration. "Our benchmark is to answer 90 percent of incoming calls within 30 seconds," Usher explains. "We needed to be able to deliver all of the information passengers require, including fares, timetables, trip planning, DRT trip booking, and special needs information. To do this, we needed to harness technology to bring extra benefits to our customers and drive the growth of our call center and our services."

### SOLUTION

Nexus decided to install Trapeze PASS to automate the booking, scheduling, dispatch and client management for its door-to-door

### SNAPSHOT

<b>Type of operation:</b>	Multi-modal regional transport services including door-to-door and DRT
<b>Specialized vehicles:</b>	24
<b>Registered clients:</b>	14,300
<b>Trips per year:</b>	296,000
<b>Calls per month:</b>	60,000
<b>Trapeze products used:</b>	PASS, FLEX, MON/MDC, Mobile Computing Applications and integration with Mobile Data Units
<b>IT environment:</b>	15 workstations, running Microsoft SQL
<b>Calls answered within 30 seconds:</b>	97.5%

service. Ten percent of the region's residents are unable to use conventional transport, and Nexus handles 2,500 calls per week for its 20-vehicle Care fleet. "PASS allows us to create an extensive database of all our service users, taking into account regular trips, pick-up and drop-off points and special needs. Previously, we scheduled the service manually; with PASS, staff spend more time responding to customers' calls," Usher says.

To manage the new UCALL service, Nexus chose Trapeze FLEX, an application which routes its four DRT vehicles to handle 1,000 trips per week. "UCALL is one of the first applications of DRT in an urban context in the UK," he says. "We built it from scratch in just seven months and now have 1,500 registered clients."

### RESULTS

In May 2002 Nexus opened its consolidated call center and the next month launched its UCALL DRT service. "PASS and FLEX automatically generate schedules and itineraries based on staff input and GIS databases," Usher says. "Once a booking has been scheduled, the data is sent to in-vehicle Petards MDCs. The Windows CE devices have colour touch screen displays and use GPRS

communications to interface with the Trapeze software." Operators accept bookings and the system monitors the delivery of the trip. Customers are automatically allocated to either the UCALL or Care service depending on available resources at the time of the trip.

The center receives approximately 12,000 calls per week with 97.5 percent being answered within 30 seconds — far exceeding the benchmark of 90 percent.

Staffing has been streamlined as well. The call center is open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week and receives 60,000 calls per month. By consolidating the three services, Nexus is able to overlap its 41 staff on three teams. "This allows for best use of resources and also makes for a fulfilling working environment," Usher says.

### BOTTOM LINE

"The technology provides the flexibility of operation essential to the successful delivery of a demand responsive transport system," Usher says. "The multifunctional nature of the call center provides a tailor-made service ranging from initial enquiries about public transport schedules through to individually customized trips."