



Santa Maria Organization of Transportation Helpers (SMOOTH)



Trapeze Browser-based, Web-enabled system increases productivity for SMOOTH

“Trapeze will take us years into the future! We can expand significantly from now on!”

Jim Talbott, Executive Director, Santa Maria Organization of Transportation Helpers (SMOOTH)

BACKGROUND

Over the past 34 years, Santa Maria Organization of Transportation Helpers (SMOOTH) has helped the elderly and handicapped by providing them with reliable curb-to-curb demand response transportation. SMOOTH received the designation as the Consolidated Transportation Service Agency (CTSA) by Santa Barbara County Association of Governments in 1999. Located in Northern Santa Barbara County, SMOOTH schedules and transports dozens of elderly or frail seniors in an effort to ensure a higher quality of life.

Before implementing Trapeze, SMOOTH's biggest challenge, was managing hand written driver manifests for its Senior Dial-A-Ride (SDAR) service. Although a small service at first, growing demand for the SDAR service had become increasingly difficult to be managed by hand.

The company's main goal was to replace its manual processes with an automated, reliable software solution to help increase scheduling and route productivity, and ultimately provide an opportunity to expand overall passenger ridership numbers.

SOLUTION

Following an analysis of SMOOTH's operational characteristics and performance goals, NOVUS—an easy to use, browser-based, Web-enabled solution for demand response operations—was recommended. The solution is capable of assisting dispatch staff from the point of receiving a passenger call to the actual passenger scheduling, and on through to route dispatching. NOVUS provides transport organizations like SMOOTH, the tools to plan, deliver and monitor their services efficiently, productively, cost-effectively and securely from almost any location.

When shown the solution, SMOOTH quickly recognized NOVUS's high level of user

friendliness, report writing capacity and the ability to expand to meet future demands.

SMOOTH Executive Director Jim Talbott commented “We were attracted to the management reports that NOVUS can generate for us and its expansion capabilities. Trapeze will take us years into the future! We can expand significantly from now on! Our Senior Dial-A-Ride is running about 600 passengers per month, but it's perfect for what we're able to do as a small service provider. We look forward to continue using it in the future as we expand.”

RESULTS

The Trapeze solution has helped SMOOTH increase efficiency from 1.5 passengers delivered per vehicle hour to 2–3.5 passengers per vehicle hour. This added productivity has enabled SMOOTH to incrementally increase overall passenger ridership.

“We jumped by 20% within 2 months of using NOVUS, and since then we've been able to increase passenger scheduling by 33%!,” said Talbott.

The on-site NOVUS implementation team received great reviews from the SMOOTH staff. As a sign of the level of this satisfaction, Talbott mentioned “The training provided to our employees was fantastic. Our dispatch employees were relatively self sufficient with the program by the time we reached our ‘Go Live’ day. And from that point, we weren't just hung out to dry; the backup support was there even after we went live with our product. The implementation and product training was fabulous and the NOVUS software has met and exceeded all our expectations.”

SMOOTH dispatchers now find themselves in a position to divert attention to other production and customer service areas. Productivity has increased and SMOOTH is now serving more seniors than ever before.

NEXT STEPS

In the future, SMOOTH is considering a NOVUS-compatible, GPS positioning component to better track and dispatch in-route drivers. The GPS feature is of particular interest in managing the number of will-call passengers, schedule changes, and last minute service requests.

BOTTOM LINE

“The product service and backup support has met and exceeded any and all of our expectations,” said Jim Talbott.



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