

The Bradfords Group: User-friendly tracking for U.K. fleet

Published on January 31, 2019

The challenge: Need for comprehensive tracking

The Bradfords Group, one of the largest independent supplier of building materials in the U.K., needed a more comprehensive telematics solution for its commercial delivery fleet. To support its goal of delivering first-class, responsive customer service, the company was seeking a way to better monitor vehicle location, and improve driver behaviour and overall safety. Geotab provided the tools — including customized reporting — for the company to meet its safety and monitoring goals. As fleets become ever-more reliant on fleet tracking, they are finding that in every solution can deliver the detail and insights they need for management.

This was the position that The Bradfords Group, based in Yeovil, Somerset, U.K., found itself in about a year ago, when Martin Caddick joined the company as Head of Transport. The company already had a telematics system in place, but Martin found that it wasn't comprehensive enough.

“The previous system did not provide the key metrics we required, and was difficult to use,” he says. “The lack of user friendliness made the system virtually unworkable.”

Because of this lack of simplicity, Martin says that it was difficult to monitor the company's vehicles. Knowing the precise location of vehicles is essential for communicating delivery status to customers or retracing a vehicle's movements. Martin also wanted to uphold the Bradfords brand by monitoring and minimizing non-compliant driving behaviors such as speeding.

The company, which has a unique heritage of being established in 1770, is a progressive organization with over 40 branches throughout the South West of England, including Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The Bradfords Group currently operates a fleet of 700 vehicles that range from forklifts to cars to pickups and Large Goods Vehicles (LGVs).

The solution: Informed by experience

The transition from the previous telematics solution to Geotab was also informed by Martin's experience implementing a telematics solution for a previous employer — so he knew what to look for when choosing the right fit for Bradfords.

“Obviously, I have had some experience of other solutions in the market, but I think our Reseller went above and beyond in terms of support and demonstrating to the business what can be achieved if the Geotab solution gets used properly, which is always the problem you have with telematics. Everyone wants it, but no one wants to use the information or doesn't know how to use the information,” observes Martin. “Our Reseller has been very, very good, and has remained very good in terms of the backup and the support that they've given us.”

Ultimately, it was the combination of Geotab's capabilities and the Reseller's superior customer service that convinced Martin and his colleagues that it was the right choice.

The company implemented Geotab about 12 months ago, and Theresa Heal, Transport Manager for The Bradfords Group, said it was a painless process.

She also notes that there was little driver pushback — reflecting both the way fleet and company leadership implemented the solution and the realities of the U.K. fleet market in regard to telematics.



Benefits of the Geotab solution:

- Ability to create customized reports
- Driver safety scorecard
- Strong customer service from the Geotab Reseller
- Consistent and comprehensive connectivity

“For anyone who has been less than positive about it, we've explained that it's a level of protection to them as well, and I think they buy into that once they've seen it. Generally, telematics has been in the U.K. market for quite some time,” she says. “So, every single driver who is qualified in the U.K. will be aware that it's just a thing that you learn to accept in a company. Maybe 10 years ago, there was a lot of push back about having a tracker. But the reality is its pretty non-existent now and everyone is quite open to it.”

The Geotab solution has been installed on all of the fleet's commercial vehicles — vans, pickups, and LGVs.

The results: Measuring the "magnificent seven"

With the Geotab Solution in place, Martin and his team have developed a customized reporting tool that they've named “The Magnificent Seven,” which is a scorecard that monitors seven key driver behaviours — among them speeding, harsh cornering, harsh braking, idling, and over-revving. The custom scorecard promotes safe and conscientious driving and also identifies drivers who may need additional coaching.

The weekly report identifies the top 10 best drivers and the 10 worst drivers in the business. The company generates scorecards for all of the drivers monitored by the Geotab solution at its 40+ locations throughout the U.K.

“We leave it up to the manager as to whether he shares that information with the drivers or not, and publicly shares it with his or her Team or whether he/she just has a one-to-one conversation with the drivers,” says Caddick.

The Bradfords Group boosts safety and efficiency with custom driver scorecard

The Magnificent Seven scorecard has led to improvements in driver behaviour and safety — with speeding a particular area of focus and success. As a result of drivers obeying the posted speed limits, The Bradfords Group was also able to cut fuel costs.

Successful results:

- Cut fuel costs by 2-4%, which they will continue to improve upon
- Data used to dispute false incident claim against driver

Several months ago, the company received a substantial bill for damage one of its drivers had reportedly caused after colliding with a railway bridge. Using Geotab data, Martin was able to vindicate the driver — his truck was unladen and therefore could not have stuck the bridge — and thereby saved the company from all associated costs.

“I believe that our insurers take a positive view of having a tracker units in our vehicles,” he says. “I would say our insurers, when we renewed, viewed the fact that we had such a good system as Geotab within our business as a positive.”

Looking ahead to new fleet goals

With that said, Martin expects that it may be some time before he'll be able to fully quantify all of the benefits the company has netted from using its Geotab solution, but with his experience using telematics and managing fleets, he can make some educated predictions about other benefits the company can expect.

“I would expect that we would see some reduction in brake wear because of the reduction in harsh braking,” he says. “This is because people are driving the vehicles differently and they know they're being monitored. In terms of what else have we actually experienced, it's hard to say because we haven't got that much data behind us, but I know what we are going to experience and that will be a reduction in cost and, hopefully, fewer incidents.”

With the reduction of speeding events, Martin says that his next goal is to cut the amount of idling the fleet is experiencing, particularly in the winter months. For example, by reducing drivers' vehicle warm up time routine from 15 minutes to five minutes, across 180 or 250 vehicles, the fleet could save literally thousands of pounds a month in diesel.

With a committed Transport Team at the helm, in partnership with Geotab and their Reseller, The Bradfords Group can look forward to further fleet improvements and more business success.

From the group head of transport

“I have had some experience of other solutions in the market, but I think our Reseller went above and beyond in terms of support and demonstrating to the business what can be achieved if the Geotab solution gets used properly.”

— Martin Caddick, Head of Transport, The Bradfords Group



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