

First Class Cars Case Study

VIPs get First Class transport with the help of SupaTrak

When time is critical, it's a great help to know where your vehicles are and be able to accurately gauge whether they can make their deadlines or whether you need to start planning contingency measures.

Luton-based company First Class Cars faces this challenge on an almost daily basis as it transports VIP clients to and from private jets at the airport in its fleet of luxury cars. With planes to catch and customers often working to very tight personal schedules with minimal margins, the company provides a key service that needs to be closely controlled and monitored at all times.

Realising that a suitable vehicle tracking system could help alleviate many of these concerns and improve customer service, First Class Cars set about finding someone who could supply this important component. Initially, it fitted its fleet of S Class Mercedes, Bentleys and Chrysler Grand Voyagers with a tracking system that provided position updates at five minute intervals, but found this too slow. Moreover, if it just missed an update the company might need to wait up to nine minutes for the next reliable fix – simply too long for the schedules it was trying to meet.

After examining several more systems it chose SupaTrak from CMS Global Technologies in Swindon, whose basic system updates vehicle positions every 60 seconds and has the option of 30-second fixes.

First Class Cars says using SupaTrak has made a big difference to the way it now works, as Managing Director Graham Coate explains.

“Supplying VIP transport for private jets is a tricky proposition and one that has to be got right every time,” he says.

“With jets subject to delays for a variety of reasons and the majority of our customers coming from or going to London, which provides its own set to challenges, time is often the critical component in everything we do. The aircraft cannot afford to be kept waiting and our customers do not expect to be. At the same time, our business success relies on maximising the vehicles' use. It all adds up to a complicated set of logistics that could end up costing a lot of money if not correctly controlled.

“Since we have been using SupaTrak the task has become somewhat simpler. The system gives us the added flexibility we wanted to manage vehicle movements more effectively and we have found some of its other components very useful in operating the business more efficiently. Most importantly, it works and is easy to use,” he adds.

Mr Coate says the 60-second location updates of every vehicle displayed on the UK mapping system that comes with SupaTrak are vital to his business, as is the excellent back-up provided by CMS. Occasionally, his controllers will use the Post Code option to identify a pick-up or drop-off point and talk the driver to this location.

He can check drivers are where they should be and if they are not and falling too far behind schedule, he has sufficient advance warning to be able to plan alternative routes. The same applies if the controllers can see a particular route will take a vehicle near an accident, roadworks or other unexpected delay.

And once controllers see a vehicle has reached Junction 10 of the M1 inbound to Luton Airport, they automatically call the plane to give the Pilot 10 minutes advance warning of arrival: time they can usefully spend confirming a take-off slot, warming-up the engines or other measures to reduce delays.

Confirming that he will fit SupaTrak to the four new vehicles that will join the First Class Cars fleet soon, and adding that he is considering the 30-second update option, Mr Coates says the CMS system is the best he has found and is starting to explore its potential beyond that of just vehicle tracking. He is already using it to monitor driver hours, for example.

CMS acknowledges that SupaTrak is capable of much more than low-cost vehicle tracking. Its comprehensive reporting function, for instance, includes a variety of start/stop and historic 'snail trail' options that enable users to record where their vehicles have been, when and at what speed, which can be very useful in reducing administration time, producing reports and collating evidence on events.

Capable of being seamlessly linked to company's existing collection devices and back office systems, SupaTrak also offers a number of options such as full European mapping, satellite navigation and telemetry recording. Used together or in various combinations, this results in a system that is totally integrated, secure and capable of performing a great many additional operational tasks, particularly the mobile worker security that benefits a company with a business profile like First Class Cars.

Thanking First Class Cars for choosing SupaTrak, CMS MD Jason Airey says this is a typical example of someone testing the system to meet one set of requirements and discovering it can provide a great deal more.

"We have produced something that businesses with mobile assets want: a tracking system that is simple to operate, works in real-time, and which can communicate with anything already in-situ," he says.

"Customers have also told us they also like the fact that SupaTrak comes without ties to long-term contracts, which gives them the flexibility to try it out without feeling they are committed. We do this because we know that in the majority of cases, once they have tried SupaTrak they quickly see its potential and realise that it offers unexpected business benefits that far outweigh its cost.

"I'm sure this is why SupaTrak is rapidly becoming the preferred choice for a growing number of companies that see the advantage in being able to keep better control of their mobile assets - both workers and vehicles," he adds.