

Networking is the key for a dedicated chauffeur web booking system

Denise Long is the Marketing Manager for Chauffeur Drive Systems, and, as you might expect, is all for technology. She said: "Our drive at Chauffeur Drive Systems has been to provide any chauffeur company the full range of booking, dispatch and management facilities using advanced web-based technology. Our application is exclusively for the chauffeur industry, and the system is constantly in evolution.



Denise explained further: "We believe that the chauffeur industry is based on developing, nurturing and maintaining loyal and trusted client relationships. As such, it needs a dedicated system to reflect this client-centric approach, instead of prioritising client throughput, evident in the taxi industry."

She continued: "We are happy with how well our system has been received, and now we want to consolidate that success and grow to meet increasing demand. We find most of our clients come to us through word of mouth, and we are becoming well known for our high level of customer service. This is important to us, as we know that we are working with people that are not necessarily tech savvy, and we work hard to ensure the system is usable by anyone."

She added: "Our research of the market revealed a desire for networking between chauffeur companies. This allows the smaller chauffeur company to create their own alliances, so they can appear bigger and encourage company growth through giving and receiving jobs."

"Therefore, we have also developed CDS Connect. This allows our users to push work to trusted partners personally vetted by them, earning them a commission for having provided the work. Thanks to the system being entirely web-based, the partner receives a job straight into their dashboard to accept or reject, regardless of where they are in the world."

Giving operators the Freedom to build global relationships

A further company at the helm of technology in the industry is Catalina Software. Catalina has continued to grow over the last 21 years, investing into Freedom, which is the market leading logistics software system, powering the executive travel and courier markets around the world.



Graeme Whiting

"New technology has played a significant role to our business," explained Richard Hardy, the company's head of product. "If we look back 10 years, Catalina embraced the emergence of apps, and developed this technology specifically for the executive travel and courier markets as a key gateway to Freedom. We created a driver app which today is widely known as Freedom Mobile, and a passenger app called, Freedom Go, so customers can make bookings from the convenience of their phone."

He continued: "From our own experience in blue-chip logistics IT, electronic interfaces have always been important, and indeed Freedom was structured from the start to support these. Freedom now has 30-plus

booking interfaces, plus standard published interfaces, allowing our customers to receive and send bookings anywhere in the world."

Graeme Whiting, founder of Catalina Software, added: "The flexibility Freedom offers means that customers can go global, but still achieve the personalised local service experience to their customers. As we operate in an increasingly global market, Freedom Global allows you to partner with a multitude of global businesses to enhance a customer's offering, taking and processing more bookings, and therefore maximising revenue."

REDUCING EMPTY MILEAGE BY OPTIMISING THE WORK FLOW

Another company driving technology in the industry forward is Magenta Technology. The company's Echo solution is designed to deliver greater value to private hire and taxi operations. It deploys an advanced logic engine, which considers a lot of customisable factors in its decision as to which driver to allocate. Magenta calls this optimisation system 'Autonomics'.

Unlike conventional dispatching systems, its performance and productivity is not limited by looking at surrounding zones for empty cars. It constantly looks to reduce the mileage cost to the whole fleet by making hundreds of calculations a minute. By continually optimising at fleet level, rather than job by job, the system maximises productivity and minimises costs, ensuring both operators and drivers can boost income.

The deployment of such a sophisticated logic engine has allowed Magenta to leverage the technology within Echo further and provide another feature called 'Dynamic Delays'. Traditional delays (response times) are static in nature, based on experience to inform a fixed agreed pick up



Philip Batten

time in any area.

Dynamic delays are based on a database of historical journey times. These are overlaid with real time traffic incident information to supply accurate times to customers from whichever portal they choose to book from. This means that there's no longer a need to provide unrealistic response times. Gone also is the need for an awkward follow-up call to tell customers that the time quoted on their booking is unachievable.

Magenta Technology's business development manager Phil Batten commented: "Our understanding of constraints and the need for forward-planning was the motivation for including a capacity management module within Echo – another unique feature for dispatching systems. For Echo to make arcuate decisions it must be able to understand what resources it has available - and when. Echo supports fixed shifts - you can enter them into the system and Echo will know when each driver comes off shift, or opens shifts in which the driver can enter their finish time when he or she logs."

He added: "A graphical format shows how close you are to overbooking at certain times of the year, month or day. It also provides thresholds for warning operators or blocking new jobs to ensure you only exceed your ability to cover work if you choose to do so. In short, Echo breaks new ground in the deployment of functionality not seen or used previously within dispatching systems."