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CASE STUDY

CoPilot® Professional Assists the AA

"Choosing the most efficient route is a key component in our patrol arrival time. When a customer is stranded at the roadside, getting there by the fastest route makes a very big difference."

Chris Bailey, Head of Motoring Technology, The Automobile Association

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CoPilot® Professional helps the AA locate its customers efficiently, reduce cost and pioneer the way forward for motor association navigation.

Handling 3.5 million call outs annually and with 15 million members, the Automobile Association (AA) is the UK's largest breakdown assistance organisation.

It currently employs around 3000 trained and dedicated frontline patrol personnel, providing roadside assistance and relay vehicle support to its members 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Challenge

In 2009, a combination of technical, economic and legislative factors encouraged the AA to reconsider its worker mobility strategy.

Maintaining a competitive edge meant that advances in remote scheduling and roadside diagnostics needed to be rolled out to road side patrols while Duty of Care compliance imposed strict new guidelines on how field personnel could interact with any work-based mobility technology.

In addition, while familiar with the benefits and convenience of GPS navigation for their frontline patrols, the AA IT team were concerned with the support costs associated with their existing, Sat Nav strategy.

As Chris Bailey, Head of Motoring Technology, at the AA explains:

"We came from a situation whereby each of our Patrols would be equipped with both a laptop in the back of the vehicle for diagnostics and job scheduling and a Personal Navigation Device (PND) for appointment use.

A combination of escalating support costs and the requirement to swap out PND devices on a regular basis meant that for us, the days of the dedicated navigation device were numbered.

Our strategic vision was to simplify our support requirements and lower our costs. To achieve this we wanted to provide our frontline patrols with a single, integrated, multi-function unit capable of linking to our backend scheduling system while performing a variety of infield tasks, including navigation."

The decision taken was to standardise the next phase of the AA's mobile worker solution on the Panasonic Toughbook CF19. With its built-in GPS capabilities, the team at the AA could now accommodate Sat Nav software at an incremental cost to the overall project and lower the overhead on their device support.

As Chris Bailey notes, "Removing the need to equip all our patrols with a PND was one substantial saving; realising that we could integrate CoPilot Professional into out scheduling system was another."

The solution - Integrated Scheduling and Navigation

A customer call to the AA triggers a well drilled process. The call centre identifies the location of the breakdown and it is automatically geo-coded by the AA's in-house call handling system.

This data is then converted to longitude and latitude coordinates for pinpoint accuracy and passed remotely into CoPilot Professional on the relevant patrol's Panasonic Toughbook. This happens via a sophisticated dynamic dispatch system, ensuring the right patrol gets the next nearest job.

Chris Bailey explains: "Direct address input saves us at least 20 seconds of manual operation per job and as its wholly automated, it removes any possible error in address entry."

The result - a quicker customer response, with CoPilot Professional's accurate, voice - guided turn-by-turn instructions playing its role in helping the AA respond as quickly as possible.

"Choosing the most efficient route is a key component in our patrol arrival time", comments Chris. "When a customer is stranded at the roadside getting there in the shortest time possible makes a very big difference."

In addition to providing reliable appointment navigation, CoPilot Professional is helping the AA to deliver on its field worker Duty Of Care commitments.

On accepting a job, CoPilot Professional will calculate the quickest route and begin navigation.

Mounted on the dashboard, the touch screen on the Panasonic Toughbook then 'locks' while the vehicle is in motion, continuing to display the appointment route. Running alongside CoPilot Professional is the AA's messaging service, providing the driver with status updates relating to their next appointment including vehicle details and the nature of the breakdown.

Duty Of Care also extends to being able to locate all personnel at all time, serving the dual purpose of minimising 'down time' between patrol appointments and maximising efficiency.

"Having CoPilot Professional on board we're able to use the GPS coordinates it generates to monitor the exact location of each of our patrols at anytime" says Chris.

"Our automated, dynamic dispatch system uses the CoPilot recorded GPS coordinates to continually track the location of all our vehicles whilst they are in motion. It then uses this location data to send the most appropriate patrol to the member. If a closer, appropriate patrol becomes available, it will re-allocate the job to the nearer unit"

Collaboration on Existing and Future Navigation

The AA and the CoPilot Professional Services team worked closely on integrating navigation into the AA's existing systems and on to the Panasonic Toughbook – but the work does not stop there.

Being able to access the SDK within CoPilot Professional, opens up further opportunities for the AA to customise the navigation with additional useful services for their Patrol personnel.

Integration of customised Points Of Interest (POIs) is one project that will see the AA's own network of approved garages included within the core product. This will make it easier for patrols to locate the closest facility either within the immediate area or closer to the customer's home address.

The Estimated Time of Arrivals (ETA) feature within CoPilot Professional will also be utilised in a later phase of the project as a means of providing customers with a greater degree of arrival accuracy.

The Industry Pioneers

"We are really pleased with how CoPilot Professional has integrated into our call management systems and its performance on the Panasonic CF19 in the field" Chris comments

"We are pioneering this solution in the UK and we're actively recommending CoPilot Professional on the Panasonic CF 10 as a viable solution for use by other breakdown and recovery clubs in Europe"

Company

The Automobile Association is the UK's largest vehicle breakdown and recovery service handling around 3.5 million call outs a year

The Requirement

The AA's objectives were to replace multiple navigation and laptop devices used by its patrols and to lower support costs with one multi-function toughbook with a GPS application on board

The Solution

CoPilot Professional on a Panasonic CF19 Toughbook – integrated with the AA's customer management solution allows appointments to be sent directly to the Patrol's in-vehicle tough book without manual intervention

Efficient routing - audio and visual instructions helps the AA maintain their commitment to roadside customer support as quickly as possible
Resource tracking - CoPilot Professional provides GPS coordinates for tracking purposes decreasing patrol down time between appointments and effective deployment of resource

Technology

- CoPilot Professional SDK and Services
- Panasonic CF19 Toughbook

Deployment Size

- In excess of 2,600 vehicles

CoPilot® Professional

For Further Information Visit:
www.copilotgps.com/professional