

Sapphire Coast Buslines Experiences 50% Growth

Background

 55 employees

 38 buses

 35 routes

 3,500 passengers a year

 6,279 km² served

Industry

Bus

Challenge

Operations management

Solution

Enterprise Resource Planning system

Results

- ✓ Saved \$30,000 a year
- ✓ Saved 30 hours a week
- ✓ Grew by 50%

Sapphire Coast Buslines (SCB) switched to an integrated operations management solution and drastically reduced administration costs, process inefficiency and human error.

Background

SCB is a medium-sized, family-owned business based on the south coast of New South Wales, Australia. It operates an extensive fixed route and demand response timetabled service for the local community which includes 38 timetabled mid-week routes and six on Saturdays, as well as school bus services to 14 schools in Eden, Bega, Wolumla, Pambula, Pambula Beach, Merimbula and Tathra. The company's mission is to provide the Sapphire Coast's people with safe, reliable, accessible and comfortable transport.

SCB has been a customer of Trapeze Group for 11 years.

Challenge

When Jamie Klemm and her husband Anton bought the company from her parents in 2005, she knew something had to change. SCB, or Deane's Buslines South Coast as it was named then, was entirely reliant on manual processes and paper records for administration and operations.

"Because everything was done manually, we would miss charters, miss shift and bus changeovers, miss things on the road or forget about staff leave requests," said Jamie.

"We had a manual paper system for complaints – if you wanted to look something up, you'd literally have to flick through the pages to see if you could find any other paperwork."



"We were just hanging in there at the size that we were. We knew that if we wanted to get any bigger, we needed to change the system. It wasn't sustainable."

Jamie Klemm, Managing Director, Sapphire Coast Buslines

The arduousness of these processes was further exacerbated by the use of multiple, disparate systems that could not communicate automatically with each other. Staff members were using a variety of specialist programs, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word and paper records in inconsistent ways to complete tasks, causing confusion, version issues and duplication of work.

"We had a lot of people doing a lot of different things, making a lot of errors and taking a lot of time – there was a lot of wasted man hours spent on long processes," said Jamie.

"Our payroll information was sitting in one system and it didn't talk to MYOB. The fleet manager system we used was standalone, so we didn't have an inventory of components or purchase orders or receivables – just invoices in MYOB, which meant nothing to the workshop staff.

"We were using a manual diary where drivers would write out their charters every day. Every week, an admin person would have to sit down with the book and do all the charter invoicing manually by keying in information on every charter into MYOB and then printing the invoices.

If you only have five or six charters a week, it's not so bad, but my record was 104 charter movements in one day so you can imagine manually typing that into MYOB at the end of the week."

Additional complexity came about in the form of contract key performance indicators from the government. SCB was required to report accurate data on a variety of statistics such as early and late running, on-time performance, all company feedback including complaints, compliments and timetable enquiries, school student behaviour, vehicle maintenance records, lost property and staff rosters. Failure to meet these KPIs had a financial implication for SCB, as they were liable for fines if they were not able to provide this information.

"Over the years, the government has become a lot stricter with KPI compliance, but even back then you just wouldn't be able to do it without a system," said Jamie. "We did a lot less data-keeping then because it was just so hard."

Solution

Jamie's goals were to grow SCB's fleet size, increase productivity and reduce costs. Following an analysis of how long it was taking for staff members to complete tasks and where processes were failing due to manual systems, she decided an integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system that could automate processes and streamline record-keeping was the solution to SCB's challenges.

"As soon as I did the financial case study of what we would gain with an integrated operations management system, it was a no-brainer."

Jamie Klemm, Managing Director, Sapphire Coast Buslines

"If you're doing things manually, your data entry is just way too hard. Your error rates will be so much higher than you realise it is – you won't even know half the errors you're making," said Jamie.

"If you've got an integrated system, it will cut all of that down and give you time to work on your business instead of in your business."

Jamie needed an ERP that could handle the school, finance, charter, workshop and rostering aspects of the business. After a lot of research, she shortlisted Trapeze and another software company. However, after poor experiences with the latter's customer service and support teams in another bus company, Jamie was eager to move away from them.

"When you have a software system that runs your whole business, you've got to have a good relationship and agree with the

business philosophy of your software provider and I just didn't have that at all with them," explained Jamie.

"We got Trapeze to demonstrate their software to us and we were just blown away by it. The fact that the charter module talks to the debtor module, and the fleet management module talks to the creditors module – that was the missing link that we were searching for."

SCB chose to install all modules of Trapeze's ERP software in one implementation. Jamie was particularly pleased that she immediately sparked a very good relationship with the people at Trapeze.

"It took us six months to get all the data from our manual-based systems into the new software and there were some teething problems, but we got a huge amount of support from Trapeze staff.

"The software itself is fairly easy to use once you've got your head around it – once you know how to use one module, you'll know how to use the rest."

SCB began experiencing the benefits of using technology almost immediately after the software was implemented. Jamie listed some quick wins for the company:

"We were able to get our operations staff on the road a bit more regularly because they could do their jobs quicker, services in the workshop became more simplified and we could make claims more effectively.

"The biggest win was knowing that our data was more accurate. We were able to meet our KPIs more efficiently, avoid fines and save costs with Trapeze."

Success

- ✓ SCB saved \$30,000 a year in administrative costs following the system's implementation
- ✓ The automation and streamlining of processes reduced administration time by 30 hours a week.
- ✓ SCB grew its fleet by 50% without incurring significant administration overheads thanks to the scalability of the software.
- ✓ Missed charters and claiming errors have reduced significantly as human error is minimised.

"Trapeze's software made a huge difference to how the company ran and what we could achieve with it. We really did bring Sapphire Coast Buslines into the future."

Jamie Klemm, Managing Director, Sapphire Coast Buslines

TRAPEZE GROUP

Trapeze Group works with public transport agencies and their communities to develop and deliver smarter, more effective public transport solutions. For more than 25 years we have been Here for the Journey, evolving with our customers around the world to helping them move people from point A to Z, and everywhere in between.

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