

CASE STUDY

How Bidfood changed focus to make the roads safer



BUSINESS NEED

Bidfood is a wholesale food distributor that delivers products to more than 15,000 customers. Its 642 vehicles travel millions of kilometres each year between the company's 28 branches and customer locations that include hospitals, residential homes, restaurants and fast food chains, among others.

With a fleet of that size covering such vast distances, occasional road incidents are anticipated, some of them caused by driver fatigue or distraction. With the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act highlighting the importance of workplace safety, including on the road, Bidfood looked for a way to further improve its practices without over-capitalising on technology unfit for purpose.

SOLUTION

Bidfood has always been an early adopter of technology. Dan Magrath, Bidfood's national fleet manager and a company director, quickly recognised the possibilities of GPS. He also trialled an alert system that let drivers know they were tired or distracted but which didn't route that information to the company and therefore failed to meet Bidfood's needs.

Bidfood had been using EROAD's Depot for providing daily, weekly and monthly reports on driving events for about 2 years. Dan was looking for a solution that would similarly provide data that enabled him to manage driver events actively, giving him peace of mind.

He chose to install the Guardian System with Seeing Machines into several of Bidfood's long-distance trucks to work in tandem with his EROAD system. Guardian's in-cab camera tracks face and eye movements; if the system detects the driver is tired or distracted, an alarm sounds and the driver's seat vibrates. In that event, Dan gets a notification too.



"We're putting technology in the trucks to save lives. And families have thanked me for putting it into the trucks, because they know it keeps their husbands safe."

Dan Magrath
Bidfood's National Fleet Manager and Company Director,
Bidfood, New Zealand



Organisation

Bidfood

Industry

Food distribution

"I sit quite comfortably knowing that in my most vulnerable trucks that do the longest hours, if I get an alert telling me there's been a fatigue incident, the driver's been woken up," Dan says.

Seeing Machines is working well in tandem with Bidfood's EROAD system. As well as being linked to a 24/7 safeguard centre in the United States, information from Seeing Machines is shared with EROAD's Depot, appearing on the Activity screen and providing data that appears in EROAD's driving events reports.

CUSTOMER BENEFIT

Now that Bidfood has Seeing Machines working in tandem with EROAD, Dan is certain his drivers are safer. If he receives an alert there are procedures in place to deal with it, and Dan knows that his company has done everything it can to prevent the unthinkable from happening.

"It makes you feel good," Dan says, "because you know that if the driver isn't alert, someone could die."

Since installing Seeing Machines, Bidfood has had just one major turnover, and because of the in-cab camera footage the company was able to determine that the cause was driver error.

The combination of EROAD Leaderboard with Seeing Machines is helping to create a culture of driver responsibility. Leaderboard lets Dan know how his drivers compare to others within the entire EROAD population based on the key indicators of speeding, harsh braking and sharp acceleration, highlighting those who are excelling and those who could use more support. There are financial benefits to that information. Bidfood takes part in insurance company NZI/Lumley's driver programme and a green tick at the bottom of Leaderboard indicates that, based on driver performance, Bidfood sits in the top 25 percent of companies using EROAD's system. As a result, Bidfood qualifies to have its excess waived in certain cases.

"We're putting technology in the trucks to save lives," says Dan. "And families have thanked me for putting it into the trucks, because they know it keeps their loved ones safe."