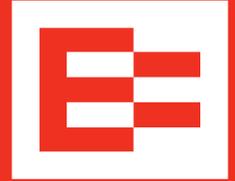


CASE STUDY

How EROAD brings out the competitive streak in Ritchies' drivers



BUSINESS NEED

One of New Zealand's most recognisable brands, Ritchies is a family business that's been around since the 1930s. But don't let the 'family business' tag fool you into thinking this is a small-time operation – Ritchies has approximately 1200 vehicles, ranging from five-star luxury coaches that travel the length and breadth of New Zealand to small buses doing the country school run. Between them, they account for more than 20 million trips each year.

Keeping track of a fleet that size is no easy job. Knowing where a vehicle is at any given moment is crucial for a service carrying passengers. But Ritchies doesn't just need to juggle its vehicles; it's important the company knows what its drivers are up to. As well as having a duty of care to its employees, Ritchies must ensure that drivers comply with work time rules set down by the NZ Transport Agency.

SOLUTION

Ritchies installed EROAD products into 497 vehicles. Tim Briscoe, general manager of coaching, and the person in charge of Ritchies' long distance tour fleet, says the company regularly makes use of the Activity screen that pinpoints a vehicle's location in real time.

"I need to know where the drivers are – how're they're going for time on their next transfer, that sort of thing. We use the Activity screen so that if anyone rings up we know exactly where the vehicle is."

The drivers, meanwhile, get real-time feedback about their driving style through the Drive Buddy function on EROAD's Ehubo2 in-vehicle unit. The drivers are ranked on Leaderboard, which assesses their driving based on speeding events, sharp cornering and acceleration and harsh braking.



"I used to text drivers to ask if they had any more hours left for the week. Now I can just look it up and see if someone's got extra time."

Tim Briscoe
General Manager Coaching, Ritchies



Organisation

Ritchies Transport Holdings

Industry

Passenger Transport

CUSTOMER BENEFIT

"They've all embraced Leaderboard," Tim says of his drivers. It turns out they're a competitive bunch. "They're a little bit competitive by default," he admits. "It's part of what makes a good tour driver. You need to have a big personality because you're interacting with visitors all day. You can teach anyone to drive but you can't teach them personality."

Tim prepares and then emails reports to the drivers every couple of weeks detailing how they have fared. With Drive Buddy giving them real-time feedback, they probably have a pretty good idea already. "They're all quite proud of being able to do a trip without the little red icon coming on inside their vehicles."

That Drive Buddy icon changes colour to indicate speed, harsh braking and so on; it's a friendly reminder to help drivers remain mindful of their own welfare, and that of their passengers and others on the road.

The laws around driver safety also mean no one can be behind the wheel for more than 70 hours per week. Tim uses Fleet Summary reports as a way of seeing if a driver needs to rest or can fit in an extra shift.

"Before, I used to text drivers to ask if they had any more hours left for the week. Now I can just look it up and see if someone's got extra time."

Time is very much of the essence when you're operating a passenger service, but traffic plays by its own rules, and it's not always possible to guarantee a vehicle will be where it should, when it should. The map on the Activity screen gives people peace of mind.

"We'll use that a lot when we get back into cruise boat season. The boats get a bit excited if a group's gone to Waitomo on a day trip. They're scheduled to sail at a certain time, but you know what it's like when you get caught in Auckland motorway traffic. This way we can look at the map and know exactly where the bus is and give that information to the ships," Tim says. "It's technology that's working for us."