Fleet Tracking Solutions for Timely Delivery of Essential Goods

Summary: Due to the supply chain disruption caused by extended lockdowns, retailers in many parts of the country are staring at their depleting stocks, and the consumers are wondering as to how they can procure the essentials safely. To ensure that goods keep reaching points of sale and customers' doorsteps, wholesale suppliers and e-commerce businesses can leverage a GPS-based fleet tracking system. It enables them to track their trucks in real-time and ensure that the drivers choose the right routes for deliveries.

The COVID-19 crisis has challenged businesses to redesign their standard operating procedures in unique ways. The disruptions that resulted from the outbreak of this pandemic have dramatically changed consumer behaviour and demand patterns. Buyers are now more cautious on what, how, and from where they buy. With the surge in demand for essential products, companies across the world have been trying to restructure their supply chains and secure their direct operations.

There is a need for multi-scenario planning and to align operations in real-time. Grocery and essential goods retailers must also address significant out-of-stock issues for several vital products. This is because, on one side, their customers have been responding to the uncertainties (created by lockdowns) by hoarding supplies. Additionally, they are facing delays in getting their supplies from distributors and distant warehouses due to restrictions on transportation.

It is critical, therefore, to enhance the visibility on the inflow of essential goods. Suppliers can build more meaningful business relationships with retailers by offering them up-to-date information on inventory levels and shipment details. They must work as a team to foresee possible material flow disrupting situations. Tracking the progress of their supplies is also critical for e-commerce businesses that are directly sending products to their customers.

One of the solutions to make this process more effective is an IoT-based fleet management system that can offer real-time details on the movement of goods-carriers via a software or app. It can be a valuable tool not only in addressing the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 lockdowns but also to make supply chains more resilient in the long run.

What is the Fleet Management System?

Powered by the global positioning system (GPS) and sensor technology, fleet management software gives a business a bird’s-eye view of its fleet operations, round-the-clock.

The GPS device fitted in a vehicle works in synchronisation with the global navigation satellite system. The device contains a SIM card, and the data packets captured by it are sent through a cellular network to the secure data server maintained by Tata Tele Business Services. Meanwhile, the backend application team works on coding so that the fleet tracking software users can effortlessly view the different key performance indicators of their vehicle – these include its speed, current location and the distance travelled.

By deploying the fleet management system designed by Tata Tele Business Services (TTBS), suppliers transporting goods across the country can closely monitor their trucks or other commercial vehicles with near-real-time location data displayed on the Google Map. Users also get breadcrumb trails of where the truck had been and how efficiently it was being driven.

Because the complex processes of collecting and processing information occur in the background, all that the monitoring team for the business needs to do is to log in to their web interface or mobile application and set up alerts for the data that is relevant to them. Such alerts may concern speed, excessive idling or fuel drop.
The key benefits of using the fleet tracking system for supply chain include:

**Higher productivity of drivers and more control over their behaviour**

With the right knowledge of their trucks’ and goods’ location, the supplier need not disturb a driver by frequently calling him to check on the whereabouts. He also stays aware of driving behaviour.

By following the pre-designated routes allocated through the software and staying compliant with traffic rules, the driver, too, can be more productive. Following the right routes is even more important during the Covid-19 lockdowns where movements are restricted in 'containment zones'. For compliance on regional regulations, the business can geo-fence the containment zone on its map and set up an alert to check if a vehicle has entered the area.

**Cost-effective vehicle tracking and reduced upkeep costs**

The TTBS fleet tracking system comes with a low cost of ownership and does not call for significant upfront investment in the device. By giving reports on driver behaviour, it helps suppliers to check that their vehicles don’t suffer damage due to reckless driving. It also allows them to keep the fuel costs in control by sending an alert whenever there is excessive idling or if the driver is unnecessarily taking an inappropriate route.

**Reduced losses due to theft and fuel pilferage**

By gaining visibility into the transportation of their goods, suppliers can mitigate the losses that happen due to theft. They receive an alert if a truck stays still for unusually long at any location. Also, once the route to be taken by the vehicle has been defined clearly by the supplier, its monitoring agents will be alerted if the driver goes on roads that were not a part of the planned route. In case of such incidents, the suppliers can check with the driver to know the reason for the discrepancy. At times, this may be purely due to traffic or unsuitable road conditions and is, therefore, excusable. However, if there is a serious problem, the business can inform the law enforcement authorities and give them the vehicle’s location as alerted by the software.

With the TTBS fleet management software, transporters can also address the challenge of fuel pilferage, which is a significant concern in their business. The constant rise in the price of diesel and petrol has made fuel a considerable expenditure for logistics companies, and efforts must be made to realise all possible savings.

The advanced telematics system that comes with our GPS tracking solution sends an alert if there is a sudden drop in fuel levels – this may indicate leakage, pilferage or any unusual situation that the management should be aware of. They can take appropriate remedial actions and also reduce fuel costs in the long run. Economical usage of fuel is also necessary to reduce the carbon footprint of the business.

**Improved supply chain efficiency and customer service**

A GPS fleet tracking software brings more predictability in transportation. By monitoring the location of their good in transit, suppliers and distributors can enable better logistics lifecycle management. They can utilise their fleets optimally with a balanced distribution of routes and total trips taken by each truck.

In times when businesses are taking all possible steps to have greater control over logistics and supply chain management, the utility of the fleet tracking system cannot be underestimated. This GPS solution
will continue to remain relevant even in the post-corona world where we will need to fundamentally rethink our supply chains with more transparency in operations at every point in the product lifecycle.

The TTBS fleet management software comes with a host of features to support companies supplying or transporting essential goods. It also includes a tracking device with special sensors to monitor the temperature of the products stored in the truck.

To know more about these aspects of the software, click https://www.tatateleservices.com/business-services/iot-solutions/fleet-management-tracking-solutions.