

SUPPLYING CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE COMPANIES IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS



"A trip planning system can lead to significant cost savings, even in an organisation with a small fleet."

Patrick Oude Heuvel, Logistics Manager at Mastermate Brinkman



For many years, the technical wholesaler Mastermate has been using fixed routes for its nine vehicles operating in the northeast of the Netherlands. The vehicles used to leave the distribution centre in Deventer to complete the same routes every day, delivering metal goods to construction companies, building sites and maintenance companies. Sometimes the schedule for these vehicles would be 80 percent full, while at other times it would be 120 percent. "The latter would result in some deliveries being delayed. As we made the same rounds every day, it was always the same customers who suffered from the delays," explains Patrick Oude Heuvel, Logistics Manager at Brinkman Bedrijven Group. The company

is the biggest member of the Mastermate cooperative.

INCREASING EFFICIENCY

It was the Logistics Manager Oude Heuvel who convinced Brinkman to implement the trip planning system PTV Smartour. They traded their static trip schedule with fixed routes for a dynamic and more efficient system. The result was a reduction in the total number of vehicles required in Deventer from an average of 6.5 to 5.2. "That means we are actually cutting down on the use of an entire vehicle. We have kept hold of the sixth vehicle, but we transferred the driver to another position. On days where we need to use the sixth vehicle, we now put a

temp worker behind the wheel and pay them by the hour." The customers directly benefit from increased efficiency: "We schedule an extra period of five minutes per stop to give the drivers time to serve every customer properly."

GREATER INSIGHT

As well as more efficient trip planning and improved delivery performance, PTV Smartour has also provided significantly greater insight into operations. The planner in Deventer can now trace exactly on which trip each delivery is included. When customers call to ask where their deliveries are, they can be quickly informed of the planned delivery time.



Mastermate is a technical wholesaler of metal goods, installation materials, hinges, locks, tools and other equipment. The cooperative consists of seven regional companies operating a total of 34 shops, and supplies both construction and construction-related companies, as well as housing association maintenance companies. With 13 shops in Deventer and Groningen, Brinkman Bedrijven Group is the second-largest member.

And if a driver runs into unexpected delays or a vehicle breaks down, PTV Smartour provides information on the consequences for the remainder of the trip. "We never used to have this level of insight and couldn't say for sure, which deliveries were being made on each trip. The drivers would sometimes swap deliveries between vehicles or decide on their own initiative to miss out a less urgent delivery during a trip. Now we can rest assured that everything will be delivered by the end of the day," explains Oude Heuvel.

LESS STRESS

Naturally, the planner and the drivers had to get used to working with a trip planning system; however, this only took a short time. "It is important not to forget that our planners only devote part of their working hours to planning. They work in the warehouse until three o'clock in the afternoon, and only after that do they log into the trip planning system. One of our planners had barely any experience at all with computers, but still managed to get to grips with the system within two weeks. That shows you how user-friendly PTV Smartour is," says Oude Heuvel. The drivers now have much less opportunity to rearrange their trips themselves. When they get into their vehicles in the morning, they find their trip

schedules waiting for them on the passenger seat. They also receive their schedules via email the night before so they can see what time they need to leave. "They have to comply with those schedules, but they do still have a say in the process. If they inform us that they are running late somewhere, we try to take that into account. In any case, the drivers are glad that their stress levels have been reduced. They now know that they can deliver everything on time. They used to have to deal with some angry complaints, especially because the fixed trip schedule meant that it was always the same customers who received their deliveries late."

EXPANDING THE SYSTEM

One year after successfully implementing PTV Smartour in Deventer, the Brinkman Bedrijven Group introduced it in Groningen. Here, too, the fixed trip schedule was replaced by dynamic trip planning. As a result, thirty man-hours per week have been saved across three vehicles. Instead of the twenty hours of overtime that the drivers used to record, the technical wholesaler now has a surplus of ten hours. "This proves that a trip planning system can lead to significant cost savings, even in an organisation with a small fleet," concludes Oude Heuvel.

Other family companies in the Mastermate cooperative have also discovered the benefits of dynamic trip planning. Three family companies with four shops in North Holland have entered into an intensive logistics-based partnership, supported by the version of PTV Smartour that runs on the Brinkman Bedrijven Group servers. "These three companies each had customers throughout North Holland, which resulted in their trips overlapping significantly. They have combined these trips and now only need four vehicles instead of six," explains Oude Heuvel.

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