



Herefordshire demonstrates multi-functionality

▲ The Herefordshire Council Public Transport team uses OmniSTOP for bus stop displays



The Herefordshire Council Public Transport team has been using Omnibus software to prepare tenders and contracts for more than eight years.

The transport authority uses OmniTIMES to build their timetable database which is provided to Traveline. The data produced is also fed into OmniSTOP for bus stop displays and OmniEXPORT to produce the county-wide bus timetable book.

Previously, Herefordshire were using a temporary, non-database solution but needed a system that was more comprehensive in order to manage their timetable data. The authority concluded that Omnibus offered the best overall solution, particularly with regard to simplicity of use and its ability to meet their needs. Paul Williamson, Public Transport Officer for Herefordshire, comments: "We found that the Omnibus suite of software met our needs regarding storing, maintaining

and outputting all our data. Changes are very straightforward and all data is used consistently across all our formats."

The Omnibus solution provides Herefordshire with a single source of data. Timetable information is used in various formats, including printed material, bus stop publicity, PDFs on the website and exported to Traveline. The information generated by the Omnibus software is consistent across all these formats. As Paul Williamson explains, this was not necessarily a feature of all software solutions on the market at that time: "We found that Omnibus was able to offer us total functionality, particularly when we want to produce our stop-specific bus stop displays. We have more than 400 timetable displays across the county so

it was important for us that our data was consistent."

Paul Williamson and his team have found that the benefit of working with Omnibus is not restricted to excellent software that delivers fast, efficient results. He explains: "The after sales support offered by Omnibus is first class. Their staff are very conversant with all our systems and happily help with any problems. We just pick up the phone and our queries are often resolved within minutes."

Herefordshire is now in the process of installing the new TransXChange modules from Omnibus and Paul Williamson has kindly agreed to share his experiences with this system in a future issue of OmniNEWS.

CASE STUDY IPSWICH

One of the first companies to install OmniDAS was Ipswich Buses. The company, which runs 76 vehicles within Ipswich and the surrounding areas and employs 169 drivers, also uses OmniTIMES, OmniSTOP, OmniROTA and OmniBASE.

Ipswich Buses switched to the Omnibus system from a manual one, after it was recommended by a colleague of Dean Robbie, Operations Manager, who has found that it saves a lot of time. He comments: "Our schedules used to take weeks and weeks to prepare. Now they are done in a day, which saves us an immense amount of time and money."

The company initially installed OmniBASE and OmniTIMES, adding the other modules later. Now everything is computerised, with all the data automatically filtered through into the relevant software packages for output to schedules, rosters, timetables and bus-stop displays.

Drivers access OmniDAS for information on their work schedules and holidays and as Dean explains, it has changed the way he and his team work: "It's a fantastic piece of kit. We added the final three elements of the system and now everything is fully automated and everything simply works exactly as it is supposed to."

Dean has a lot of praise for the Omnibus development and support teams: "We really can't fault the way Omnibus has worked with us to install the system and train our key users. Their after sales support is first class and I would be more than happy to show anyone our system in action."



▲ Wayne Ambrose, Duty Allocations Officer for Ipswich Buses



▲ Newport Transport needed a software system that would keep pace with change

Newport Transport invests in Omnibus

Making an investment in a new software system is a major decision and when Newport Transport wanted to upgrade their Depot Allocation systems it was important for them to work with an industry specialist.

The company claims that it was therefore an easy decision to invest in an Omnibus system because the company is recognised throughout the industry as a market leader.

As Newport Transport's operations expanded they decided they needed a software system that would keep pace with change. Because the scheduling and allocation of drivers and buses is a key part of their operations, they chose to install OmniDAS as a comprehensive solution that would integrate the Scheduling and Depot Allocation operations.

OmniDAS is rapidly gaining a reputation amongst operators as the definitive 'on the day' solution for buses and drivers. With real-time control at its core, OmniDAS manages all aspects of depot operation.

The backbone of the system is the Personnel module. Driver and other employee information is recorded and fed into the Time and Attendance module. Automatically linking this with stored rota information, a template is created for the weekly payroll and activity. The Crew Allocation and Vehicle Allocation modules use this information for future and on the day allocation.

Swipe card data is also collected to monitor staff movements and absences to create a real time picture.

Scott Pearson, Managing Director of Newport Transport, comments: "The implementation of OmniDAS has gone very smoothly and the operations and scheduling teams are very impressed with what can be done with all the software. We have also found it to be very user friendly, which is important because it has allowed us to bed the technology into our operations quickly and seamlessly."

He continues: "We have found the team at Omnibus to be exceptionally helpful. They are knowledgeable of their market place and communicate this effectively with their clients."

Newport Transport has already started to reap the benefits of using OmniDAS. As Scott explains: "For us the technology allows us to be a lot more effective and efficient in planning and implementing our schedules."

Newport Transport has a 102-strong fleet, employs a team of 170 drivers, and operates nearly 50 services covering a network area of some 200 square miles.

Omnibus will be at this year's ALBUM Conference which is being held at the Belton Woods Hotel, near Grantham, Lincolnshire on Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th May 2013.

"Attending ALBUM provides an excellent opportunity for us to catch up with our existing clients" explained Business Development Manager Michael Meilton "as well as showing our solutions to new ones."



How to tell if the computer is right!

Computers don't always give the answers you expect. It's not their fault, they can only work with the information that they are given. Spotting when something isn't quite right is a vital skill if inefficiencies are to be avoided.

Omnibus sends all new members of staff on a training course run by Jim Hulme of Transact. The course gives an insight into how to produce timetables and schedules manually, which might seem counter intuitive for a company that specialises in scheduling software.

The reasoning behind sending all staff, including developers, on the course is to give them an appreciation of the principles involved with manual scheduling.

By understanding the manual process, it gives an ability to know what answer to anticipate from the computer and becomes easier to spot anomalies, usually caused by restrictive or incorrect parameters.

Peter Crichton, Managing Director of Omnibus, is a big advocate of the course. He comments: "You would never ask someone who didn't know how to do accounts to run your year end figures. Likewise with scheduling, you shouldn't expect someone with no knowledge of how the process works to get the best from the software."

The course lasts for two days, is open to anyone interested in planning and scheduling, and takes place throughout the year. It is run by Jim Hulme, often based in Omnibus' own training rooms, offered to Transact in recognition of the importance of the course.

If you are interested in the next course (on 30th April and 1st May) or one in the future please contact Jim Hulme on 01942 895 500 or email transact@btinternet.com

Contact

Omnibus
Hollinwood Business Centre
Albert Street, Hollinwood
Oldham, OL8 3QL
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)161 683 3100
www.omnibus.uk.com

omnibus