



ZETES CASE STUDY | Nightline

Nightline uses Track and Trace solution from Zetes Ireland

Nightline is Ireland's largest privately owned parcel delivery company and a specialist in the movement of higher value commodities both internationally and to domestic customers. Nightline, accustomed to offering extremely high levels of customer service to international customers, identified the need to offer domestic customers the same high levels of service in tracking and tracing of goods and understood the important role technology could play in ensuring its competitive advantage.

Nightline turned to Zetes Ireland to create a Track and Trace system with an online facility that uses mobile computers to capture tracking information in real time.

Background

Founded in 1992, Nightline is Ireland's largest privately owned parcel delivery company and a specialist in the movement of higher value commodities both internationally and to domestic customers. The company's clients include both end consumers and businesses including mobile phone manufacturers, fashion retailers and manufacturers of luxury goods.



Before 2000, when Nightline entered the domestic parcel delivery market in Ireland, the company was primarily known as an international courier and freight forwarder. Nightline was accustomed to offering extremely high levels of customer service including full tracking and tracing, as expected of international providers. Domestic couriers however did not usually offer such high levels of service and Nightline saw this gap as an opportunity for them to enter an already competitive marketplace and flourish.

From very early on, Nightline understood the important role technology could play in ensuring its competitive advantage. The company began investing in the 7600 series of handheld computers manufactured by Motorola during 2000 initially and then used this hardware as a basis for developing a bespoke proof of delivery solution. Technology has become embedded as an essential part of the company's value proposition, which centres on offering a very highly available, ultra reliable service with 100% transparency and traceability. Today Nightline uses the latest handheld devices supplied by Zetes Ireland.

The devices allow important data to be transmitted to a central database that in turn makes information available for customers on the Nightline website from where they can track the whereabouts of packages in real time. This is achieved because information can be uploaded directly from the driver's delivery van as soon as it is captured, representing a significant enhancement to customer service levels.

"We were launching a new domestic parcel delivery service in 2000 and wanted to bring world class standards of technology online. The domestic market was very well subscribed but service levels were low and we felt the industry was lagging behind in terms of the way technology could be used to improve customer satisfaction. Things you would take as a given if shipping a package internationally, we wanted to bring to the domestic parcel market in Ireland as a key way to differentiate the company" says John Tuohy, Managing Director of Nightline. Their strategy paid off and in a short 3 year timeframe, Nightline went from having a zero presence in the domestic parcel delivery sector to having about a 20% share.



How the system works

When the driver arrives at a final destination to deliver a package, he scans the barcode printed onto the parcel which immediately updates the system of status and delivery times. The customer then signs a physical delivery note to confirm receipt of goods. As Nightline specialises in the delivery of high value goods, the company understood its customers wished to continue receiving paper delivery records in the first instance but have the facility to view scanned delivery notes via a secure customer area within the company's website as an additional feature.

Zetes Ireland provided Nightline with Motorola handheld computers and a high level of support to ensure the implementation went as smoothly as possible. "We chose Zetes as our supplier for mobile devices because of their track record in this arena. Plus we knew they were the strongest service provider in Ireland for Motorola handheld devices" said John Tuohy. "Our working relationship with Zetes has spanned 7 years and they have proved a very professional supplier. They gave us invaluable assistance and support to configure the handheld hardware to work effectively.

Benefits of the system

Last year Nightline upgraded their existing hand held devices to models able to transmit data from the handheld to back office systems in real time. This has had an immediate positive impact on business operations. Customers can now go directly to Nightline's website to check on the delivery status of a package without having to call customer services agents to obtain this information. As a real time system, this means customers can get delivery information within about 5 minutes of the package actually being delivered. For Nightline the savings have been significant and the company has succeeded in controlling overhead costs within its call centres even though volumes of parcels being delivered are climbing. "We haven't had to increase the number of staff in our call centres because customers are increasingly using the website to get up to the minute information about their packages without phoning into the call centre," explains John Tuohy. In the past, a customer would have telephoned a customer services agent, who in the absence of up to date information, might even have had to contact a regional depot or a delivery driver for an ETA, or to find out if a package had already been delivered. "The system has reduced the amount of time and associated costs around the customer support function by introducing a real-time self service facility, and this has proven a very important benefit of our recent hardware upgrade."

Nightline's system has also been well received by employees. The majority of the company's delivery drivers are self employed and paid according to the volume of deliveries undertaken. Dedicated applications on the hand held computers help to calculate how much each driver has earned that day. Thus the system minimises paperwork levels because data is transmitted electronically through the hand held computer in real time.

Looking ahead

Using handheld computers and a proof of delivery solution has helped to differentiate Nightline from providers without a comprehensive solution able to convey information to customers in real time. In addition, using advanced communications technology keeps Nightline abreast of the latest innovations which can help to further streamline business operations.