

Speeding suitcases

COMPANY:
Global Aircraft Dispatch

OPERATION:
Dedicated lost-suitcase
delivery service



PROBLEM:

Among its operations, New York City-based Global Aircraft Dispatch (GAD) runs a five-truck fleet dedicated to delivering suitcases lost during airline travel. In those instances, a bag might have been bumped to a different flight and the bag ultimately needs to be delivered to the owner's home. The firm's coverage includes New York's John F. Kennedy and LaGuardia airports.

"We have a fleet of five trucks," relates Amr Abdelwahab, GAD's principal software engineer. "On our busiest days, all the trucks are out at the same time. And one truck alone might have 30 bags, so we're looking at upwards of 150 stops for all five trucks."

"In our environment, everything has to be delivered the same day—and in some cases a 'rush' is placed on a bag so we have to deliver it within four hours," he continues. "When this happens, we have to immediately modify the delivery schedule and re-optimize the route." He says that since the firm sees a lot of change to the delivery schedule in the course of any given day, it was important to find a route-optimization solution that would "allow us to make fast changes to the delivery schedule and the route."



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SOLUTION:

Abdelwahab advises that GAD opted to incorporate **OnTerra Systems' RouteSavvy** route-optimization software into its system "to dramatically improve productivity and reduce fuel costs."

According to OnTerra, its RouteSavvy tool is based on Bing maps' web-mapping technology, and it can optimize routes for up to 100 stops. Users may input their destinations in three ways: uploading a spreadsheet with addresses; clicking on locations in the displayed map, which defaults to a user's home or business area; or manually entering addresses in an input box in RouteSavvy's web-map applications.

Once addresses are entered, users also can choose whether they need a round trip, or a one-way route. In addition, users can specify whether the route should be optimized for distance, time, or time adjusted for traffic.

And once users generate their optimal route, per OnTerra, the route-optimization software will generate the optimal route for the day or the week—along with providing detailed information on the total distance, expected driving time, and directions to each waypoint.

Abdelwahab relates that since GAD started using RouteSavvy, its delivery fleet's productivity has increased between 200 and 300%. "This is because the route-optimization software lets us deliver more bags per day now," he points out. Whereas GAD used to deliver between 2,000 and 3,000 bags per year, within months it exceeded that figure and now Abdelwahab forecasts that it'll deliver 10,000 bags annually.

"RouteSavvy also saves on fuel and it has shortened the workday of our drivers so the company is paying less overtime," he notes.

"One of the main reasons we chose RouteSavvy was its ease of use," Abdelwahab points out. "We were able to quickly and easily incorporate the RouteSavvy code into our own application. And within two hours of writing that code, we were able to optimize the routes for delivery of passenger bags."

"Yet another reason we chose RouteSavvy is its speed," he adds. "Once we plug in the suitcase owners' addresses, RouteSavvy optimizes the route in milliseconds."

—DAVID CULLEN