

Company info

Sector:
Retail Distribution

Location:
Durham

Implementation date:
2006

Microlise Modules:

- Transport Management Centre
- Microlise Proof of Delivery
- Journey Planner
- Vehicle Tracking (in the case of rigids) and Microlise Trailer Tracking (in the case of articulated trailers).

The Co-operative Group selects Microlise as their Transport Management Solutions Provider.

The Co-operative Group is the largest mutual retailer in the UK. Its food division operates over 1,000 vehicles, which carry out, on average, 1,300 trips per day to 3,300 retail outlets around the country.

With such a large scale operation, The Co-operative Food was looking to streamline the management of its transport and delivery operations, improve customer service, and reduce paperwork.

After an extensive evaluation and pilot process, The Co-operative selected Microlise as their Transport Management Solutions Provider.

The main business driver for implementing the Microlise Transport Management Centre was to increase fleet visibility, improve fleet productivity and utilisation and to improve service to stores.

The co-operative

Distribution Planning

The Microlise Transport Centre receives plans from The Co-operative routing and scheduling package, via their warehouse management system; these plans include both route information and confirmed / picked manifests. Routes are planned on a fixed route basis and reviewed periodically, (using Microlise generated route and schedule adherence data to help analyse where plans might be improved).

On a tactical, day-to-day basis, any one-off routes are managed via the Microlise Journey Planner, which plans the trip using its own routing engine. Likewise, this module is used to make ad hoc changes, (like re-sequencing drops, moving or changing drop times, and adding back-hauls), to the plan rather than incurring the overhead of trying to re-spin the plan via the 3rd party Routing and Scheduling software.

Any such changes to a planned route are communicated to drivers automatically via messages to and from the driver's Mobile Data Terminal.



Route and Schedule Adherence

Routing data imported to the Microlise Transport Management Centre includes the Route ID as well as the vehicle and trailer allocated. (The driver links himself to the route when he logs onto the route via the Microlise Proof of Delivery application on his mobile data terminal).

Microlise's tracking units then track the vehicles as they execute these planned routes. Progress can be observed via the Microlise Map Client, however, the key operational tool is the Microlise Transport Management Centre which allows the transport operation at each distribution centre to not only manage each route "by exception" but also collect a large amount of information relating to both how the schedule and planned route was adhered to.

Management by exception means the transport operation is automatically prompted by the system when a route appears to be not conforming to schedule windows.

The Co-operative is also trialing automated SMS messaging to stores advising of impending /



Temperature and Doors Monitoring

The Microlise Tracking units are also connected to the temperature-controlled vehicle's temperature logger, in this way any temperature exceptions can be flagged and temperature logs downloaded automatically for each route.

These temperature events are also linked to door open and close events, with each truck's rear doors being fitted with sensors, which tell the Microlise Tracking Unit when its doors are opening and closing. This information is also used to alert the office when doors are opening outside the store and depot Geofences.

Proof of Delivery

The Microlise Proof of Delivery Module is a mobile application which runs on a rugged Mobile Data Terminal. This core Microlise application has been configured to suit The Co-operative's precise operational needs.



This software provides The Co-operative with delivery and non-delivery task management, trip sheet and site information, delivery consignment information, the ability to process planned and unplanned collections. The driver is able to 'positively' unload at a store using barcode scanning; each delivery is signed for using 'sign on glass' functionality. Any delivery failures are captured using configurable reasons codes.

The practical benefits of Microlise's Proof of Delivery modules are increased accuracy, the removal of driver paperwork and a reduced administration costs.

Data from completed tasks and deliveries is uploaded, via GPRS, in real-time. As well as storing the PODs, the Microlise Transport Management Centre exports these to The Co-operative system for further processing.

Driver Debrief

Every route and schedule exception captured for a trip in the Transport Management Centre is presented to transport clerks in each distribution centre's traffic office so that feedback can be obtained from the driver during a debrief at the end of the trip.

The system will typically flag: early and late arrivals and departures, missed or drops out of sequence, excessive turnaround times as well as driving style exceptions.

As with the tracking data, the POD data is also used at driver debrief to identify and capture further information and reason codes should delivery issues have occurred.

This ongoing collation of tactical performance data, allows the operation to build up a picture of how routes are being executed, how effectively fleet resource is being utilised and what level of service is being provided to stores and, where patterns of service issues are emerging, what the root causes of these are.

Reports

All of the fleet performance and store servicing data, plus any associated debrief information, captured each day for the thousand or so routes and the 3,000+ deliveries carried out, can be accessed either directly, or via The Co-operative's MIS systems.

The Co-operative has developed a suite of reports and procedures which allows it to review 'planned versus actual performance' by depot and across the fleet to look at areas where either the routing and scheduling optimization rules can be changed to make plans more efficient (in terms of vehicle fill, vehicle utilisation, mileage, store time-windows, leg time and so forth) and where tactical operational changes might also be made to.

"Delivery in full and on time is especially important in the convenience sector. We are normally limited to one delivery per day so accuracy is key and with small stores in store staffing is aligned to match pre-agreed delivery windows. The Microlise solution immediately highlights problem routes and provides the appropriate management information to allow us to re-plan. As a result we are constantly improving the quality of our planned routes ensuring that they are realistic and achievable. The system has also proved a great benefit to our drivers with integrated Sat Nav and the future prospect of removing all driver paperwork."

John Newton, Logistics Systems Manager, The Co-operative Food Retail Logistics

