

SIG plc Improves Customer Experience and Fleet Productivity with Descartes' Last Mile Solution Suite

SIG plc, a leading European supplier of specialist building materials, is using Descartes' solution suite as part of its broader strategy to become a true market leader in the UK. SIG UK has deployed Descartes' comprehensive last mile delivery solution suite including route planning and execution solution, mobile electronic proof-of-delivery (ePOD) and telematics with remote download of tachograph data. The solution has enabled SIG to increase On-Time-In-Full (OTIF) deliveries by 10-15% and increase the volume of deliveries by 25% using the existing fleet.

Fleet Optimisation & Cost Reduction

SIG is a leading European supplier of specialist building solutions operating across the UK, Ireland and mainland Europe and acts as a unique intermediary for contractors in the supply chain. Within the UK, it has a fleet of approximately 500 vehicles and 180 operating centres which help to support its customers to smooth out a fragmented supply chain. As part of its transformation journey since 2019, SIG deployed Descartes' software to increase the efficiency of its fleet, improve service for internal and external customers and - consequently - grow sales.

Initially, SIG chose Descartes' last mile delivery solution, internally known as its Vehicle Routing & Scheduling (VRS) system, during a period of consolidation within the business. By gaining more data and insight on how the fleet could be optimised, Descartes was able to support SIG's aim of achieving a 25% improvement in capacity. Subsequently, the VRS has unlocked on-demand route scheduling functionality to increase SIG's agility and support the intelligent growth of the business through better visibility, planning and improved communication. Indeed, since 2020, the system has enabled SIG to increase On-Time-In-Full (OTIF) deliveries by 10-15% and increase the volume of deliveries by 25% using the existing fleet.

"Descartes' last mile delivery solution suite has allowed us to be agile, forward-thinking and work optimally with our fleet with benefits on costs, sales and satisfaction across the business and with our customers," says Edward Corbett, Head of Programme, SIG. "Achieving this improvement in capacity and increase in volume of deliveries shows a real forward movement for us and the data we now have from this system gives us the ability to make informed management decisions to optimise the fleet and our business."

Improved Customer & Driver Experience

The VRS has also acted as an enabler for other Descartes' hardware and software solutions to further drive operational efficiency and customer service enhancements, while Hand Held Terminals (HHTs) have improved the experience for their drivers. Formerly relying on paperwork, SIG has been able to transition to a paperless environment, using 'sign on glass' to allow for a contactless experience - an essential during the pandemic.

In addition, SIG has adopted Descartes' mobile electronic Proof-of-Delivery (ePOD) software, which provides the ability to give instant confirmation that a customer order has been received. Together, the software and hardware solution provides a multitude of benefits, from real-time customer notifications and access to improved tracking, to better driver-client interaction, as well as faster and more accurate payments and better stock control.

“The Descartes solution is a real end-to-end offering that has improved our ability to track and offer services with increased visibility,” Edward Corbett says. “The introduction of HHTs and ePOD software improves the interaction for drivers and therefore their ability to connect with clients and provide more visibility throughout the process. This also became a vital component during the pandemic to offer contactless delivery services, allowing us to prioritise the health and safety of both drivers and clients.”

The latest addition to the suite, SIG is currently implementing Descartes’ telematics solution to provide a best-in-class service to drivers, with 100% of the fleet now fitted. Providing an opportunity to identify challenges, improve driving practices & behaviours, transport compliance and accurate tachograph information, SIG is aiming for a 20% reduction in idling time and 40% reduction in accidents.

Sustainable goals

Alongside operational efficiency and sales growth, SIG is acutely aware of its sustainability credentials and the growing importance of showing demonstrable commitment to ESG values. Through Descartes’ comprehensive solution suite, SIG is able to transparently communicate these values to clients, partners and employees, showing a reduction in unnecessary mileage by optimised route planning, therefore reducing carbon emissions as well as time wasted. It has also contributed to a significant reduction in the use of paper, supporting SIG’s corporate sustainability.

Lorna Stork, ESG Director, SIG, concludes: “Descartes’ software has played a significant part in our steps towards some of our sustainability goals. At SIG, we strive to improve our operations to reach a net carbon zero target and look to work with partners who can help us to reduce or eliminate unsustainable processes. We have found Descartes extremely helpful in allowing our fleet to reduce the environmental impact while enhancing operational efficiency.”