

# Coach operator's technology tactics set best-practice benchmark

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**Richard Bamber**  
Managing Partner, Anthony's Travel



An innovative approach to technology and training has seen Anthony's Travel improve fuel efficiency, reduce maintenance costs, and lower insurance premiums by 35% through the successful defence of false claims. The Runcorn-based coach operator, which has a fleet of 16 vehicles and staff of 30, has won industry acclaim and recognition as a best-practice provider.

## Driving better business with driver buy-in

The operator is a strong advocate of using on-vehicle data to improve the customer experience it offers, based on insights from the Synectics Genius telematics platform. This monitors the harshness of acceleration and braking, as well as ride stability and route performance, to continually enhance operations.

The company has subsequently developed a strong reputation for customer service and safety.

However, it is a recent development that has pushed this approach to new levels. "Investing in technology is

fantastic and has enabled us to do great things," explained Richard Bamber, Managing Partner of Anthony's Travel, "but to really harness the full potential you have to achieve something very rare in our industry – driver buy-in.

"Technology predominantly offers business and service-level benefits, but you have to ask yourself why a driver should be accepting of greater levels of scrutiny. We did this, and we quickly realized we needed to find a way to make our investment benefit drivers as well."

Anthony's Travel introduced an incentive scheme offering drivers rewards based on data captured from their journeys,

using their existing Synectics technology. An average score of above 90% on the monitored KPIs means drivers are eligible for a monthly paycheck bonus. Other prizes include meal vouchers for the two highest scoring drivers and the driver that does the least idling.

The scheme has been so successful that the company has been able to incrementally increase its driver bonus in line with the amounts saved on fuel, insurance, and maintenance. The reward is now triple that of when it was introduced.

Richard continued: "If the business is doing well, we want the drivers and

## PROJECT DETAILS

**Client**

Anthony's Travel

**Location**

Runcorn, UK

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staff to feel the benefits of that. Our staff are the most important part of our business. Without them we wouldn't have been able to develop – or protect – our reputation as a friendly, family operator."

### **Upholding standards – protecting reputation**

Safe, smooth driving is not the only way to ensure a high-quality customer journey. Passenger experience is also improved by deterring offensive behavior with CCTV capture. This has the added benefit of enabling operators to verify on-board events, deal with complaints, and, where necessary, feed observations back into driver training. The results of this setup have been clear for Anthony's Travel.

Richard said: "Our Synectics surveillance and telematics solution provides a true and accurate reflection of events. It enables us to investigate complaints without bias."

The technical setup allows Anthony's Travel to improve the service drivers deliver, not only by giving them feedback, but also by demonstrating that the company "has their backs" when other road users drive erratically or when customers have behaved unreasonably. The operational insight gained is also used to feed into training, enabling the company to take its drivers through video-based scenarios that prepare them for the types of situation they can expect to encounter.

"This approach to training, plus the incentive scheme, means drivers are now fully aware of the benefits of the system. Often, they proactively ask us to save footage that may be needed to prove they are not blameworthy", added Richard.

"Most importantly, the system enables us to keep a handle on customer experience, guard against insurance claims, and improve standards of driving. These are the pillars of our ability to survive and thrive."

### **Staying in the operational fast lane**

The company's success with technology stems from its ability to secure full workforce buy-in to the idea

of technological benefit, meaning hardware and software can be used to their full potential. As such, the standards upheld by the surveillance solution mean customer service feedback is excellent, while drivers at Anthony's Travel attain consistent high-performance scores.

Iain Stringer, Divisional Director at Synectics, said: "Anthony's Travel is an operator that has achieved something huge. Many bus and coach operators have on-board technology – but what is exceptional here is the innovative way in which the company has harnessed and utilized it to maximize both company performance and driver engagement. It's a truly trailblazing approach that could not only help to revolutionize the coach and bus industries – it could help to improve safety and customer experience throughout public transport."

Anthony's Travel do not view any of the technology on their fleet as an optional extra. As Richard explained, "It has become as integral to our performance as the wheels the coach is fitted with."

He concluded: "Synectics has played a major role in helping us to raise our game, and we are confident our ongoing relationship will keep us at the leading edge of service, safety, and commercial performance."

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