

How to cut fleet costs by 40%

7 STEPS FOR REDUCING FLEET MILEAGE ON DELIVERY ROUTES

These best-practice ideas will dramatically reduce your fleet operating costs. Use one or all to improve customer service, surpass competitors and grow the bottom line. Additional resources, tip and ideas are available at www.gomobileiq.com

I. Track fleet mileage and hours

Difficulty: ★

Impact: ★

Use daily route logs to track vehicle mileage and route hours for at least two weeks and review the results. This information tells you exactly what's happening on the street today without requiring an investment in GPS equipment. A spreadsheet or calculator can quickly summarize the data for each route and day.

This eliminates the guesswork when making route changes. By comparing different time periods, you'll know exactly how much many miles were dropped. Otherwise, it's just a guess whether the changes were effective or not. You can download sample Route Logs from the MobileIQ website.

2. Use mapping software

Difficulty: ★★

Impact: ★★

There are many free services that can help find customers in a flash. Some of the best are Google Maps, Microsoft Live Maps and Yahoo Maps. These are much better than desktop software for quickly finding places and getting accurate driving directions.

The major drawback is you can't easily import a file containing customer or route data. There are two

affordable ways of handling this: desktop mapping software or an online service such as Headlight™.

Microsoft's Streets & Trips and MapPoint products are two popular desktop packages. Both will import Excel spreadsheets, map deliveries and provide basic mapping and routing functionality. However, you can only work with one route day at a time and it's sometimes frustrating to get simple things done.

MobileIQ's Headlight subscription service is a customer service tool for managing unlimited routes and days. The online application uses Google Maps to quickly spot routing problems, evaluate changes and simplify common tasks.

3. Assign new accounts properly

Difficulty: ★

Impact: ★

Most companies route new accounts something like this: customer service or sales rep receives an order, service manager assigns the route and/or route day and sequencing is done by the driver. It seems like a good process, but relies heavily on expertise from the service manager and drivers.

There are typically hundreds and often thousands of accounts in the delivery area. Without detailed maps, it's impossible for anyone to consistently get it right.

Schedule a free 20 minute route analysis and savings estimate for your company

Contact Pat @ (866) 261-8600 x708 or email: pat@gomobileiq.com

Mapping software makes the process easy, quick and much more accurate. Start by importing your current routes into Streets & Trips, MapPoint or Headlight and shade by route or route day.

Next, look up the new customer address in Streets & Trips or MapPoint and zoom into street level. You'll see all the nearby deliveries. Click on several of them to identify possible route day candidates. The driver is usually still needed to assign the stop number.

Headlight makes the process even easier. After finding an address or current customer, use the Suggest Routes tool to instantly see the best route-day-stop recommendation(s) for the account. These can be filtered by date / product, so it also works well for "will call" deliveries. Just select the desired date range: today, tomorrow, next 3 days, etc.

4. Schedule "Will Call" deliveries

Difficulty: ★ Impact: ★★

There's a big difference between making occasional deliveries on an emergency basis and having them built into the delivery system. A customer who runs out of product or has a missed delivery probably deserves special consideration. But allowing customers to call for service at any time is an expensive proposition.

Such deliveries cost much more to fulfill than pre-scheduled deliveries and don't generate additional revenue. It's premium service at standard prices. Try asking the will call accounts about switching to a regular schedule. Our experience has been that many will readily switch (over 75%) and some actually prefer having specific delivery dates.

When you're ready to assign a permanent schedule, use the same process described earlier for assigning new accounts.

5. Use Google Maps for directions

Difficulty: ★ Impact: ★

This is a terrific way to quickly get detailed driving directions. Go to <http://maps.google.com>, enter two or more addresses and click "Get Directions". It instantly creates printable maps with turn-by-turn instructions that include exact street mileage and estimated drive times. And there are two little known features which make Google Maps even better.

#1. The suggested route can be easily modified. Don't want to take Main Street? No problem - just drag the route line to a different street.

#2. My Maps will store unlimited locations and annotations for future use. These can also be published for other people to view and print.

6. Ditch the route books

Difficulty: ★★ Impact: ★★★

Most route books hurt efficiency. They aren't properly maintained, don't include maps and new accounts are stuffed up front with no stop number. That might work for the regular driver, but what happens during vacations and sick days? Extra mileage, long work days and late deliveries - it happens all the time.

Instead, buy a portable navigation system like Tom Tom. These systems are low cost, provide audio/visual driving directions and will properly sequence an entire delivery route. Upload tomorrow's stops, push a button to route everything and start driving.

7. Balance existing routes

Difficulty: ★/★★★ Impact: ★★★

This step will make the single biggest impact for most companies. It often reduces route mileage and hours by over 40%. Download a free copy of the Route Balancing Project Guide from MobileIQ's website. It provides step-by-step instructions for planning your next project.

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