

Blakemore Logistics drives transport efficiency, service improvement and strategic planning with Paragon



At a glance

SECTOR: Distribution / 3PL

COUNTRY: UK

PARAGON PRODUCTS:

- Multi Depot routing and scheduling
- Single Depot routing and scheduling
- Multi Period Planner
- Route Execution

Benefits

- Cut 1,000,000km from delivery routes
- Reduced fleet size by 10% through removing overcapacity from the distribution plan
- Lowered carbon emissions
- Automated tachograph data entry
- Enhanced business modelling for continuous improvement

“Blakemore Logistics has consistently grown 10% annually in recent years. Paragon’s dynamic system has enabled us to effectively manage this expansion whilst achieving significant benefits in terms of cost, customer service and environmental responsibility.”
Marc Deakin, Logistics Manager.

About Blakemore Logistics

Blakemore Logistics distributes to 1,100 SPAR stores located across England and Wales as well as supporting the needs of the A.F. Blakemore Group, a family-owned food and drink retail, wholesale and distribution business. Collectively the A.F. Blakemore Group distributes to more than 8,500 delivery points across the UK via a network of 10 distribution centres that occupy 860,000 square feet and carry over 13,000 food and drink lines.

The grocery distribution operation to SPAR stores operates from three distribution centres in Willenhall, West Midlands; Talbot Green, South Wales; and Hastings, East Sussex. Blakemore Logistics uses a dedicated fleet of 170 HGVs consisting of tractor units and rigids that have multi-compartmented double-and single-deck trailers. In recent years, the profile of SPAR stores has diversified and now includes locations at motorway services and petrol station forecourts, as well as the traditional convenience stores, confectionery shops and newsagents.

Dynamic routing and scheduling

Blakemore Logistics took the decision to use Paragon’s routing and scheduling software to switch from pure fixed route planning to full dynamic daily route optimisation. With the business growing on average by 10% year-on-year and delivery volumes often fluctuating by as much as 30% on a weekly basis, the company needed a means of flexing routes to better control transport costs, minimise environmental impact and meet the needs of a growing customer base.

The dynamic system has made it possible for Blakemore Logistics to efficiently plan the delivery of ambient, chilled and frozen produce, factoring in periods of low and high demand to make the best use of available resources. This has resulted in a one million kilometre reduction in delivery miles, significantly reducing fuel usage and carbon emissions. While a 10% reduction in fleet size has been achieved by removing overcapacity in the distribution plan.

Blakemore Logistics has typically operated a two-day service for ambient goods and a next-day service for chilled produce. However, the company has been able to use Paragon's software to explore and trial a same-day solution for chilled produce where orders made by 9am are delivered by 9pm. This has given stores greater flexibility to meet demand and faster access to food with a short shelf-life. It is also enabling Blakemore Logistics to double shift vehicles to increase productivity and maximise the use of available resources.

"The UK grocery sector has been going through a period of transformation, which has resulted in increased pressure on the supply chain and changing customer expectations," explains Marc Deakin, Logistics Manager. "Implementing Paragon's dynamic route planning software is helping SPAR meet the added demands they face and keeping us at the forefront of the wholesale distribution marketplace."

Telematics integration

Paragon Route Execution has enabled Blakemore Logistics to integrate its Blue Tree Systems R:COM Fleet Management System with the route planning software, so the logistics team can compare actual delivery activities against the optimised plan. The system provides timed reporting with updated ETAs for customer services and management teams so that they can monitor and manage delivery performance in real-time.

Blakemore Logistics uses the integrated software solution to alert customers of delivery ETAs using text messages – something particularly important for stores at more than 200 petrol station forecourts – and communicate with drivers. Since its adoption, an online customer portal has also been introduced where customers can track the status of their order in real-time. Currently 400 stores are using the site, enhancing the customer experience and reducing call volumes into the contact centre.

With its unique Tachomaster Link module, Paragon has enabled Blakemore Logistics to directly upload electronic tachograph data into the system. This improves the process of managing drivers and vehicles so schedules match specific availability. It also allows the company to monitor historical drivers' hours to comply with regulations such as the European Working Time Directive.

Strategic modelling

Blakemore Logistics is targeting continuous improvement by using Paragon's software to model different aspects of its distribution operation to understand the benefits of any proposed changes. The company can create multiple scenarios using its own transport data to gain better operational insight and make informed business decisions regarding its network and fleet profile.

For example, Blakemore Logistics can confirm which stores should be served from each distribution centre factoring in associated costs, environmental impact and delivery performance. This is particularly useful for the introduction of any additional SPAR locations, because the modelling is able to help Blakemore Logistics to understand the potential costs to serve each store and the related impact on locations nearby.

Paragon is also being used to support any decision making regarding fleet investment. Blakemore Logistics is able to use the software to understand the potential benefits and impact of any new vehicle or trailer design, such as double-deck trailers. As a result, it can ensure maximum return on investment and achieve the expected operational gains.

"Having the ability to model multiple scenarios using real-world data is incredibly useful. It means we can see the impact of change before committing to any investment in time or money and we have visibility of the cost to serve on new business."
Marc Deakin, Logistics Manager.

About Paragon

Paragon Software Systems is dedicated to the continued development, implementation and support of routing and scheduling solutions that help businesses to cut transport costs, improve productivity, reduce carbon emissions and raise customer service levels. The Paragon support consultants have implemented more than 3,400 systems at over 1,100 client sites in 61 countries. Headquartered in Dorking, UK and with offices in Dallas, TX and Manchester, NH, Paragon is a respected pioneer in routing and scheduling with over 30 years of know-how.

Paragon



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