



Case Study



Dunn Tire keeps fleet operations rolling with mobility solution



About Dunn Tire

With a 40-year track record, Dunn Tire sells, delivers and services approximately 24 brands of tires for consumers and wholesale customers. Headquartered in Buffalo, New York, the company has 31 retail stores and four distribution centers located throughout the state of New York and in Erie, Pennsylvania. Through its wholesale division, Dunn Tire serves 2,800 wholesale customers.

Situation

Dunn Tire used a GPS system to track its fleet of delivery trucks while drivers used cell phones to communicate with dispatchers. The company wanted to gain efficiencies with a more robust mobile management solution – integrating tracking and messaging capabilities together.

Solution

Dunn Tire has improved the management of its 71 delivery trucks and drivers with AT&T Fleet Complete running on the AT&T wireless network. Working with the Fleet Complete application, Garmin™ navigation units provide drivers with the latest delivery schedules and driving-directions assistance, when needed. Also, dispatchers are able to more easily communicate with drivers using text messaging to enforce safety standards and enhance customer service.

Deliveries Throughout the Day

Dunn Tire covers a lot of territory when it delivers tires. Whether replenishing its 31 stores from warehouse inventory or delivering to wholesale customers, this savvy retailer and wholesaler never stops moving forward, on the road and in its business. For more than 40 years, Dunn Tire has embraced change to survive and thrive. So when the economy took a downturn, Dunn Tire was ready – maintaining its retail sales while growing its wholesale business.

Vince Wagner, Director of Distribution, credits the company's success to an extensive product portfolio and responsive distribution system. Wagner understands the tire industry from multiple vantage points:

manufacturer, retailer and wholesaler. "I've worked in this highly competitive tire industry for 39 years," said Wagner. "We have competitors around every corner. To win, we have to have the right tire delivered in the right timeframe – not in days but in hours."

Dunn Tire offers 24 different brands of tires through its own stores. Its wholesale company, Exxpress Tire Delivery, provides an exclusive line of tires for its dealers. While many of the company's competitors deliver once or twice each day, Dunn Tire delivers as many as six times. "Increasingly, our wholesale customers are treating tires like auto parts," explained Wagner. "Auto parts are delivered every hour or few hours. We are one of the few tire suppliers that can deliver locally within two hours."

Dunn Tire Facts

Business Needs

More efficient management of trucks and drivers

Networking Solution

AT&T Fleet Complete working with Garmin navigation units for tracking and managing trucks and communicating with drivers – all running on the AT&T wireless network

Business Value

Expected to lower communications costs by \$14,000 annually; improved driver communications; provided more responsive customer service

Industry Focus

Retail and wholesale tire business

Size

31 retail stores and 2,800 wholesale customers

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As customer demands have increased so has the unpredictable nature of the tire business. The vast majority of Dunn Tire's sales come in autumn and winter months, yet, weather can turn a busy season into a slow one. "When we have a mild winter it can hurt our winter tire business," said Wagner. "Something totally unexpected in New York, much less in Buffalo!"

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– Vince Wagner, Director of Distribution, Dunn Tire

Pricing pressure is another major challenge. More and more, consumers are shopping for the lowest prices these days. "To remain competitive, we look for ways to improve efficiency," said Wagner. "To meet our customers' demands, we need more and more flexibility in our operations. AT&T is helping us do both."

More Capabilities for Efficiency

Before implementing the AT&T mobility solution, Dunn Tire used another company's GPS system in its trucks along with cell phones for its drivers. "We had GPS tracking capabilities for several years, but wanted more," explained Wagner. "Our contract was expiring so we took the opportunity to look at other providers and systems."

Wagner wanted to consolidate Dunn Tire's services into a single, integrated tracking and messaging system. He examined four other companies and what they had to offer, including AT&T. "We strongly considered AT&T based on our company's positive experience with AT&T wireless services," said Wagner. "We selected AT&T Fleet Complete since it offered everything we wanted – and at a competitive price."

AT&T Fleet Complete now supports Dunn Tire's fleet of 71 delivery trucks and drivers. A rugged device is mounted on each truck for tracking its every movement. "We not only know where the truck is, we now have access to all sorts of helpful data about its operation," said Wagner. "For example, we know when the engine – not just the key – is turned on and off for monitoring idle time and fuel usage. We are also alerted when a driver exceeds the speed limit or floors the gas pedal, and that's just a few of its capabilities."

Monitoring Truck Operations

Dunn Tire has a Safety First program – something Wagner takes seriously. "We occasionally get complaints from people about a driver's driving," said Wagner. "With Fleet Complete, we can access reports that help us truly understand the situation. It helps us proactively coach our drivers; now we don't wait to get a complaint before taking action to correct drivers' actions."

Using the AT&T Fleet Complete application, Dunn Tire dispatchers monitor their trucks and drivers in real-time, capturing data like engine on/off status, battery voltage, harsh braking, rapid acceleration and hard cornering. "Fleet Complete also has posted speed limits for most major highways pre-loaded in the system," said Wagner. "The assigned warehouse dispatcher gets an alert when a driver has exceeded the

speed limit or, let's say, gone more than five miles over the speed limit. With immediate notification, we can contact the driver to curtail any potential problems."

Wagner also intends to monitor the fleet's engine idling times. While some trucks can be loaded in five minutes, others take much longer.

"I want to know about the engines that idle for more than five minutes," explained Wagner. "We can get significant fuel and cost savings by making simple modifications to drivers' driving habits – no jack-rabbit starts, speeding and excessive engine idling."

Tracking mileage for tax reports was once a manual, time-consuming task at Dunn Tire. Before the Fleet Complete solution, Wagner would collect drivers' mileage logs and summarize them for Dunn Tire's controller. "AT&T Fleet Complete saves us time and helps to ensure the accuracy of our reports," said Wagner. "It's also fair to say that Fleet Complete will help us control our insurance rates as we continue to practice safe driving behaviors."

Fleet Complete helps Dunn Tire's dispatchers stay on top of deliveries. "When customers call asking about their deliveries, our dispatchers pull up the truck's location on the AT&T Fleet Complete portal," added Wagner. "It takes a matter of seconds, and our customers appreciate knowing 'the truck is five minutes away.'"

Integrated, Complete Solution

Wagner stressed the importance of another capability offered by AT&T Fleet Complete: its integration with a Garmin navigation unit in each truck. "This function was one of my major requirements for the new solution," said Wagner. "We will have the ability to input truck delivery schedules into Fleet Complete and it uploads the information into each truck's Garmin unit, making our process more efficient," explained Wagner.

"With the AT&T Fleet Complete and Garmin system, we intend to phase out the use of cell phones in the majority of our trucks for a savings of about \$14,000 a year."

– Vince Wagner, Director of Distribution, Dunn Tire

Equipped with Garmin units, drivers can now get text messages from dispatchers, no longer relying solely on their cell phones. "The Garmin system is invaluable," said Wagner. "With the new Fleet Complete and Garmin system, we intend to phase out the use of cell phones in the majority of our trucks for a savings of about \$14,000 a year."

Driver turnover can also be high for Dunn Tire. With the Garmin units in place, new drivers get driving directions to unfamiliar locations. Also, different drivers drive different trucks each day. When the next driver jumps into a truck to make a delivery, he uses the Garmin unit to log in. "Before, if I needed to contact a driver, I had to find out who was scheduled to drive, look up his cell phone number and place the call," explained Wagner. "Now, I just send a text message to the truck's Garmin unit, using its Garmin identification number. It's much quicker and I know the driver receives it."

In the future, Wagner plans to integrate the Fleet Complete application with the company's warehouse dispatching system, making the scheduling process even more efficient. Delivery confirmations can also be automated. "Now I can see when trucks depart, which triggers the invoicing process," said Wagner. "In the future, we plan to have

our drivers scan the delivery tickets. This will immediately send back a signal advising of 'real time' delivery confirmation. AT&T Fleet Complete will be able to tie all this together for us. It's a 'complete' solution, giving us all we need and more."

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