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WORLD'S ASSETS



Keeping Fruit Fresh on the Road for Keelings Retail UC

How Keelings uses ORBCOMM telematics to streamline its fleet management and ensure on-time deliveries.



Fruit grower and distributor Keelings Retail UC uses ORBCOMM's telematics system to reach its refrigerated transportation goals and ensure on-time deliveries.

Keelings Retail UC, operating out of Dublin in Ireland, is a family-owned fleet that produces fresh fruit and vegetables for the retail sector. Its team relies on ORBCOMM telematics solutions to manage its fleet of trucks, refrigerated trailers and vans delivering to locations across the island of Ireland.

The company

Originally founded in 1926 as a farm, Keelings has grown into one of the most recognised food brands in Ireland. The company takes an innovative approach to their supply chain and uses state-of-the-art facilities to supply fresh produce to the Irish retail sector. Delivering fresh fruits, salads, vegetables, flowers and plants, the company is well known for the quality of its produce, supplying supermarkets with strawberries, blueberries, apples and other fruit. Keelings also has purpose-built ripening facilities where over three million bananas are ripened each week, along with other fruit such as peaches, pears, plums and avocados.

The challenge

With fresh fruit and vegetable deliveries 24/7, the challenge for companies like Keelings is to get produce on to the shelves as quickly and safely as possible. The priority is to ensure the produce gets where it needs to be, in the right condition and that all safety guidelines are met.

In the early 2000s, the company looked to innovate with technology in order to scale up their production. Using advanced supply chain methods and software solutions, Keelings has consistently adopted technology for effective distribution to customers. For its telematics solution, the company engaged Blue Tree Systems - now part of ORBCOMM - in 2005.

With fresh produce rolling out for delivery seven days a week, the challenge for Keelings is ensuring on-time deliveries, keeping produce in tip-top condition and delivering a great service to customers.

The solution

Keelings uses ORBCOMM solutions to constantly monitor their deliveries, ensure compliance and deliver best-in-class service to their customers. Dermot Byrne is National Transport Manager with Keelings. He oversees all the outbound vehicles that they use, including trucks, rigid reefer trucks, refrigerated trailers and vans. "We have live tracking of all the trucks and trailers, we can see the fuel levels, we can see the drivers' names, tacho, digicard - all that information. For the trailers themselves, we have the live downloader with the refrigeration unit on it as well, so we can see the graphs and downloads when we need to."

Keeping things fresh

There are strict rules around the transport of perishable goods in Ireland. Keelings has evolved as a company alongside the range of regulations. ORBCOMM's temperature management is something that the company uses daily. Byrne says "if we have audits coming up, we check the temperature downloads (reports) from all of the trailers, or a specific trailer we loaded. We want to make sure they were loaded on time, they were at the correct temperature, everything like that."

Byrne says "it's definitely easier if there's a claim. It's an instant download. We don't have to wait two or three days to get the information or get external people to analyse the data. It's all there for us."

Ensuring on-time deliveries

Geofencing is key for ensuring timely deliveries. "We use geofences a lot," says Byrne. Geofencing effectively draws a line around an area such as a yard or a retail delivery point, giving peace of mind to transport managers like Byrne. "We get an email to say a delivery has arrived at its location," he says.

If a threshold is crossed, the system triggers custom alerts and notifications. The Keelings team can keep a close eye on each and every load from a distance. "The geofences ping with time and location information. It's very useful. We have set delivery times for each customer. For instance, if we take one of our supermarkets in Dublin, we have up to 15 loads per day there.

We have trucks travelling there constantly. Geofencing helps us to distinguish between drivers and makes sure they're going in at the right time." Geofencing also helps with ensuring their fleet of drivers is compliant in managing their tachograph cards. "We use it to monitor tachograph usage, for example to look for trucks driven without a tachograph card. If it's driven outside a certain location without a tacho card in place, we get an alert. If they forget cards or they lose cards, they must do manual entries."

A safe bet with driver performance scoring

By working with ORBCOMM for over a decade, Keelings has discovered real value in another key area for fleet managers: driver performance scoring. Byrne says this is vital for the success and safety of the Keelings fleet. "We use driver performance scoring a lot. I'm a qualified eco-drive trainer, so we use it often." ORBCOMM's Driver Performance Scoring enables fleet managers to closely monitor driving behaviour and assigns the driver a score based on their driving habits and actions. The system monitors drivers in 26 categories including acceleration, idling, over revving and harsh braking.

"For training the drivers to drive safely and use less fuel, it is a very good tool. It gives us a real-time performance view. You can see how many times they hit the brake, the clutch, if they are coasting, we like to monitor observation... things like that. There are a lot of reports there. We can say (to the drivers, that) these are the areas you can improve on." The data that flows through the system enables Keelings to promote a better, safer, and more efficient driver workforce. "Quarterly we sit down with drivers and go through their performance scores. We have definitely seen improvements in driver safety and compliance in using the system."

Watching fuel levels

Managing fuel costs is a concern for any fleet. Keelings finds it easier with ORBCOMM's platform.

About ORBCOMM

ORBCOMM is a global leader and innovator in the industrial Internet of Things, providing solutions that connect businesses to their assets to deliver increased visibility and operational efficiency. The company offers a broad set of asset monitoring and control solutions, including seamless satellite and cellular connectivity, unique hardware and powerful applications, all backed by end-to-end customer support, from installation to deployment to customer care. ORBCOMM has a diverse customer base including premier OEMs, solutions customers and channel partners spanning transportation, supply chain, warehousing and inventory, heavy equipment, maritime, natural resources, and government. For more information, visit www.orbcomm.com.

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The company uses the Watchbox feature to keep an eye on fuel levels. It sends an alert when a vehicle enters or leaves a location within time periods. The platform will monitor fuel tank levels, the fuel consumed by each vehicle and real-time fuel data. It detects any abnormality which could point to a fuel theft. Byrne says, "We watch fuel levels. If you take the fuel levels on the trucks, if they dip below a certain percentage each time the key is turned, we get a notification. It's there to stop people stealing diesel. We haven't had any incidents so far, so we are lucky with that."

The future

In delivering reliable fleet data and driver performance information, Keelings has uncovered huge value in ORBCOMM's telematics solutions. Byrne can see the innovation on ORBCOMM's side as well as with Keelings. "I've seen a lot of changes. I can see the differences and the improvements that have come up. Things like live temperature tracking, TachoVision, Working Hours Analysis, the Critical Events. These are useful and I can see it all at the click of a button."

With their experience, the Keelings team knows it can rely on ORBCOMM's solutions to ensure the right product is delivered to the right location at the right temperature. The ORBCOMM team is happy to help Keelings to minimise temperature related load rejections, reduce claims due to spoilage and provide critical reporting to determine location and optimize refrigerated performance.