Cal/Amp®

New York City School Bus Contractor Turns To Here Comes The Bus

Smarter Fleet Operations

Working as a fleet administrator for a school bus contractor in New York City is a daily barrage of challenges. From some of the worst traffic congestion in the country to high taxes and strict state regulations, transportation in the Big Apple is a serious challenge.

To help one of the nation's most unique school bus contractors stay ahead of the challenges, VP Bus Managing Partner Nick Vallone relies heavily on technology. From cameras in the buses to keep a watchful eye on students and drivers to sensors on the stop arm to monitor whether drivers are following the law, VP Bus leverages technology to optimize their operations and keep students safe.

After two unsatisfying experiences with GPS-powered fleet tracking solutions, Vallone turned to CalAmp to deliver fleet intelligence designed to save money, improve safety and enhance service.

Thanks to an award-winning school bus tracking mobile app and customized geofences, Vallone is confident he's running his business smarter and delivering some of the finest school bus services in the largest city in the U.S.

Geofences Slash Expenses

Many CalAmp customers rely on geofences to measure two important data points: tracking when buses depart the yard each morning and monitoring to determine if drivers are spending too much time at popular hangs-outs or other unauthorized locations.

The first data point is essential in a business where on-time arrival is vital to students getting to school on time, while the second tracks bus location to pay drivers only for running authorized routes.

But for Vallone, his team had a different approach to GPS-powered geofencing.

For those unfamiliar with a geofence, it allows one to draw a digital fence around a physical location, as well as send alerts or historical reports when a vehicle enters or exits the area. Geofences can help larger fleets know exactly which school buses are regularly starting the day late, even if they are just a few minutes late. They can also monitor for unsafe driving behaviors and document unauthorized routes once drivers are aware their supervisor will be alerted when the bus is somewhere it shouldn't be.

The CalAmp team worked with Vallone to establish where geofences could help his business and installed them during his initial onboarding, ensuring his investment in GPS-powered fleet tracking was

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> **- Nick Vallone, VP Bus Managing Partner**

delivering real, measurable savings from day one.

For Vallone and his team, the issue was far too many toll road expenses. While it may not be a familiar problem, it's a serious issue that cuts into profitability for VP Bus.

"Our policy was pretty simple to state but hard to enforce," Vallone detailed. "Drivers could use the toll road to save time when students were on board, but had to use the public road when the bus was empty. But we would get these massive spreadsheets from the toll company with all of our charges and it was excruciating to have to go line by line and determine which expense was legit and which was out of policy."

After the geofence was installed, Vallone was able to monitor bus location in real-time and dramatically improve driver behavior, translating to a stronger bottom line.

"We transport students in a challenging environment here in New York, so safety will always be number one—but we're also a business which has to make money and these geofences are making a real difference for our business," he said. "We saw our toll expenses slashed almost overnight, and our drivers simply don't take the chance anymore to save 20 minutes."

Here Comes The Convenience

New York City public schools became the first municipality in the nation this year to mandate a school bus tracking app for all of its nearly 10,000 school buses. The regulation passed by the City Council followed a rocky start of the 2018 school year in which students regularly arrived at school late and sometimes were stranded for hours after school while worried parents fretted over the whereabouts of their children.

Vallone, always looking to provide superior service to his customers, didn't wait for a mandate to provide the families he serves with a ride-sharing experience.

"We know it's just what people expect now and it's what we need to do to best serve our customers," he said. He initially worked with a local tech entrepreneur who developed a bespoke solution for his fleet, but was unsatisfied when it failed far too often.

"We worked with a very smart guy who had done very well on Wall Street, but it was harder than even he imagined. His software was decent, but the hardware kept failing and he was out in the buses having to replace units nearly every single day," he explained. "That's when we knew we had to call CalAmp. You learn by experience that it's hardware and software working together that delivers the experience our customers expect. And with CalAmp, we knew both the hardware and software were top-notch."

Today, Vallone is the first New York City school bus operator using Here Comes The Bus to deliver a smarter and intuitive school bus experience.

Families get push notifications and email alerts when the bus is approaching their home or stop and can track the bus in real-time.

"New York families know how it is. They know it's crazy on these roads and the bus is going to be late and the bus is going to be early sometimes," Vallone said. "They just want to be aware so they can plan their mornings and know their children are home safe after school. Giving them that peace of mind is priceless."

Software Powered by Real People

Running historical reports to cut down on speeding, tracking an actual route versus the planned route to optimize operations and helping drivers avoid major traffic jams with real-time traffic data.

These are just a few examples of how VP Bus is using the GPS-powered software to enhance their business and make their fleet safer.

But it's the personal touch that's put their mind at ease the most.

"The CalAmp software is powerful and it's changed the way we do business," Vallone said. "But there's no substitute for the customer service and knowing that real people committed to our success are standing behind the technology."

His team has a dedicated Fleet Advisor, who understands their unique fleet requirements and keeps them abreast of software updates and enhancements.

"CalAmp is a serious technology company that we know will be around for a very long time to take care of our needs as we grow and evolve," he said. "They are invested in our success and we know we can count on them when we need support."

And this is just the beginning...

Our mobile app delivers many of these same powerful features on your smart device and has earned 4.7 stars on the app store with nearly 500 reviews. That's hundreds of fleet managers like you, who rely on the mobile app to stay connected to their fleet no matter where the job takes them.

Ratings and Reviews

4.7
out of 5
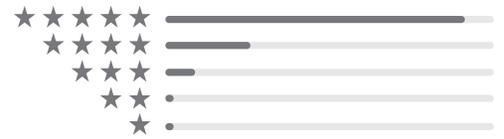
451 Ratings

Great app!
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Feb 12
mecacmom

Great way to monitor my vehicles on the go! No longer chained to my desk.

Love it
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Mar 15
AbsDoRight

I love it. I'm able to track my buses...

Pretty cool
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

May 2
Ebbarnes20

Love how I can watch the fleet and when they use the reds ambers and making a stop...

Convenient way to locate vehicles
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

May 16
tcpind79

Love how I can watch the fleet and when they use the reds ambers and making a stop...

About CalAmp

CalAmp (NASDAQ: CAMP) is a telematics pioneer leading transformation in a global connected economy. We help reinvent businesses and improve lives around the globe with technology solutions that streamline complex IoT deployments and bring intelligence to the edge. Our software applications, scalable cloud services, and intelligent devices collect and assess business-critical data from mobile assets, cargo, companies, cities and people. We call this The New How, powering autonomous IoT interaction, facilitating efficient decision making, optimizing resource utilization, and improving road safety. CalAmp is headquartered in Irvine, California and has been publicly traded since 1983. LoJack is a wholly owned subsidiary of CalAmp. For more information, visit calamp.com, or LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube or CalAmp Blog.

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