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Illinois State University Fleet Success Story



An Insider's Look at Illinois State University's Fleet Success



Lauren Palmer, Fleet Customer Service Representative for Illinois State University oversees the university diverse fleet of 280 vehicles and was instrumental in automating its fleet services resulting in added services and increased profit.

Q Tell us about the Illinois State University fleet & motor pool operations.

A Illinois State University Fleet Services has 44 vehicles in the university rental fleet for travel purposes and 236 for trade workers and departmental vehicles. ISU fleet vehicles are available to faculty, staff, and students for use on official Illinois State University travel. Currently, we assist 8 university departments and numerous registered student organizations across campus. Our fleet includes 12 passenger vans and our 15 passenger mini buses. Fleet Services also provides the University with school bus and charter coach services. These reservations with outside vendors can be processed and tracked through the Agile FleetCommander reservation system. Examples of our vehicles include our Ford minibus, Ford Fusion hybrid, Dodge Avenger, Ford Transit and my favorite, The Reggie Van, which is one of our Dodge Caravans. Reggie Redbird is our mascot. These vehicles are used for a multitude of purposes, academic and athletic, recruitment, sporting events, student supervision, research, field trips, performances, conferences, and donor visits. Facility management and fleet services here at Illinois State University take pride in our fleet and how we represent our university. We strive to provide, not only well-maintained vehicles, but also quality customer service that sets up our faculty, staff and students for success.



Lauren Palmer
Fleet Customer
Service Representative

Q How do you ensure drivers are qualified to drive certain vehicles and how do you track training course completion?

A ISU Fleet Services provides required vehicle training courses for the 12 passenger vans and our 15 passenger mini buses. The course itself is hosted on Illinois State University's academic site and completion of training can be recorded using the Agile FleetCommander reservation system. This training certification can be posted on the user's profile in the FleetCommander reservation system, which includes an expiration date if necessary.

Q Is your motor pool automated now?

A Yes, the Agile FleetCommander reservation system has been an integral part in the Illinois State University Fleet Services success. This reservation system has allowed for easier streamlining to the manual vehicle reservation process. The vehicle optimization chart displays a day-to-day chart of all reservations currently processed or being processed. I like to call this chart my daily jigsaw puzzle. This chart allows me to visualize all current reservations and visualize how to make all the reservations fit. I am proud to say that due to this feature along with communication to the customers, Illinois State University rarely has an issue with accommodating vehicle requests.



Q How do you keep track of budgeting and manage billing?

A Here are some of the fiscal requirements we faced and how FleetCommander has helped with automation: Each reservation that is dispatched from Fleet Services is provided with a travel sheet to record information needed to process that specific reservation. One of the challenges we have faced, and I believe we will continue to face unless we can automate the process, is when the travel sheet is not completed or turned in to our office. This travel sheet is an important billing document.

Our policy states that mileage reporting is required by the driver. Fleet Services will not be responsible for overage of charges if the travel sheet is not turned in. This is the proof of mileage and the only documentation for the Appeals process. By implementing that policy, it allows us to complete the reservation in the reservation system based on our record of mileage in order to bill for that specific reservation.

Illinois State University has and is continuing to look into a device that Agile Fleet has to offer to assist with automated mileage collection to address this issue. Illinois State University has chosen to do a monthly posting of charges. The FleetCommander reservation system allows for a quick and easy report which is exported into Excel with all the pertinent information including the reservation number, driver name, destination, mileage and any charges that are associated with that rental. This report allows the University to keep appropriate and thorough records of all transactions being processed by our university controller office.

The Agile Fleet reservation system allows for the rental fleet to delegate a specific individual responsible for submitting reservations for each specific department. This user is designated as a requestor for the department which is usually a fiscal agent or office support agent, the individual who is responsible for the monies budgeted in their account for travel expenses. All other users in the reservation system are designated as drivers only. This is a safeguard to make sure the department is aware of the vehicles used and for the department to be aware of the costs associated with it.

Student activities here at Illinois State University helps students find their way by providing a multitude of opportunities to get involved on campus. One of those opportunities is for students to get involved in registered student organizations (RSO). Historically, the state insurance policy has prohibited RSOs from utilizing university vehicles, but in order to better serve these RSOs, our university has procured commercial insurance that would apply to the use of fleet vehicles by university RSOs. When reservations are submitted, our website identifies which vehicles have this insurance which is a crucial process for a seamless reservation approval. Billing was another obstacle for renting to these types of groups.

Through the collaboration with Agile Fleet, we have enabled the deposit feature as a safeguard for renting to these groups. Finally, Illinois State University has recently been asked to review how often non-Illinois State University passengers are present in our university vehicles. Agile Fleet assisted us in adding a usage type (Guest) to the reservation system and this has allowed us to run reports in order to meet the university's request. Also, Illinois State University has high customer service ratings with a continuous increase in rentals per year. In fiscal year 2015, Fleet Services had an estimated 277 reservations per month.

In fiscal year 2016, we had an estimated 298 and finally as of Spring, 2017, we were at 336 reservations per month. We have utilized this reservation system more efficiently to reduce the need for costly rentals through outside rental companies, which has resulted in 79% less enterprise rentals. This was accomplished by utilizing the FleetCommander vehicle optimization chart and by having an open line of communication with customers to determine accurate pickup and return times as well as the accurate vehicle type requested. These successes along with the continuous growth of our fleet has allowed Illinois State University to maintain a newer, updated fleet.



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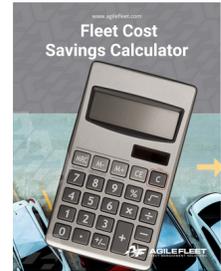
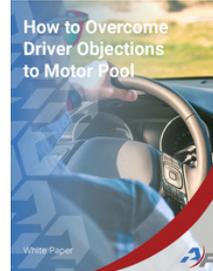
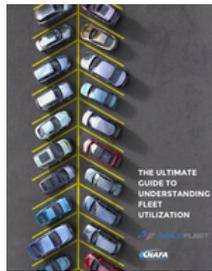
Q Any last words of advice or best practices to follow?

A I always suggest that we track fuel costs. We use Wright Express credit cards for any fueling that happens off campus and we determine whether or not the customer needs to bring the vehicle back full using that card or if it would be cheaper for us to use our on-site gas station.

It is important to have an open line of communication with your customers. It will benefit your business, and most importantly, your customer. Familiarize yourself with each customer. Be proactive in terms of their reservation, know the purpose of travel, who the customer is and what they do to represent your organization. A customer needs to understand your commitment to their needs, level of competence and ability to deliver what they are looking for. You will find that building this relationship will not only set your customer up for success, but also your business. Offer a seamless experience. Your customer has enough to worry about when they are in your vehicle. The vehicle itself should not be one of them.

It is also important to utilize the Agile Fleet team as your support system. They are here to personalize your site and to make the most of what you have to offer. Every business is different, and they are here to make the site work for you.

Resources for the Fleet Management Community



Ready for the next step?

Schedule a consultation with our team of fleet experts. We'd love to learn more about your specific needs. We can provide a 10-year fleet savings assessment, provide a demo, and share stories of how we've helped other organizations. Scan the QR code to get started!

