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Unlocking Fleet Success

How the University of Tennessee Transformed Fleet Operations

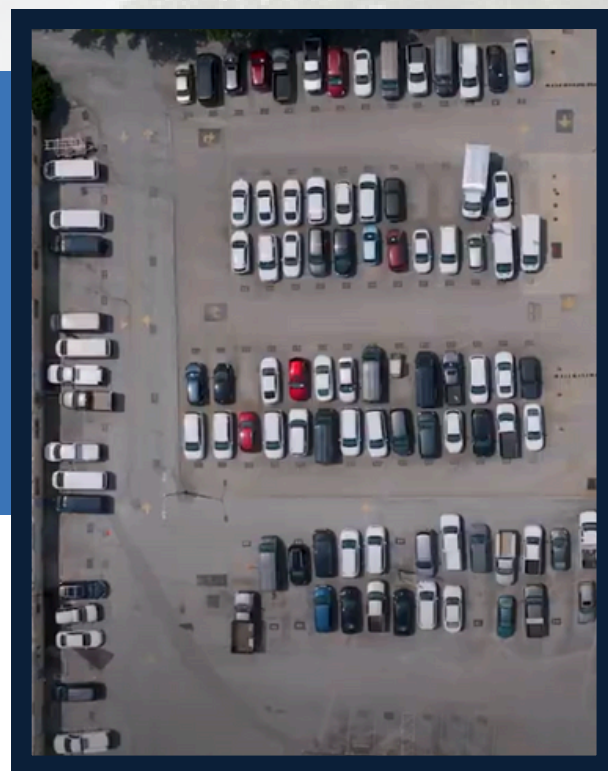




Unlocking Fleet Success: How the University of Tennessee Transformed Fleet Operations

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Situated in the heart of Knoxville, Tennessee, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) stands as the flagship campus of the state's university system. Sprawled across 910 acres, UTK's ten undergraduate and eleven graduate colleges are home to nearly 34,000 students.



Providing fleet services for an institution this large and complex is a daunting challenge, but UTK's Fleet Management Division has proven itself up to the task. Expertly guided by Director Sammy Parcell, the fleet division has revolutionized its operations in recent years, replacing traditional fleet management practices with efficiency-driven innovations powered by Agile Fleet's FleetCommander software. Embraced with open arms, this transition has created unprecedented success for the division. Whether measured by increased operational efficiency, cost savings, or user satisfaction, UTK's Fleet Management Division has both found its footing and become a leader in the fleet management industry.

A Diverse Campus, A Dynamic Fleet

With a potential driver pool as large and diverse as the university's academic programs and sprawling campus, UTK's fleet management challenges are formidable. By necessity, its fleet department must manage a wide variety of vehicles and cater to a range of different drivers. "We have the potential of up to 70,000 different drivers at any point," Parcell explains. "Predominantly, we'll see student employees, full-time faculty, and staff who will rent our vehicles."

Embracing diversity also extends to the fleet itself. Parcell elaborates, stating, "For our fleet, we've got two different sections. We have our short-term rental program which functions a lot like Enterprise. For this section, we've got 80 vehicles or so, ranging from a sedan up to an F250 or a transit 350." But UTK's fleet services also stretch far beyond users' short-term rental needs.

"Across campus, we actually support all of the departments here, anywhere from police cruisers to facilities, medium-duty trucks, to golf carts. We've kind of got the full spectrum," Parcell says. This two-tier comprehensive approach caters to the specific requirements of the campus community.

Navigating the Road to Innovation

Modernization in any industry is rarely an easy process, and the UTK Fleet Management Division's transition was no exception. In the early days, UTK's fleet operation relied on traditional 'pen-and-paper' processes and a homegrown software system. The need for change was evident, and over a span of seven years, the fleet department underwent three different software transitions. It was a laborious process, requiring software calibration efforts and process adjustments with each transition.

Then came Agile Fleet's FleetCommander, a robust fleet management information system. One of the key features that drew UTK to Agile Fleet was its fully integrated key box technology.

The key box allows for the elimination of manual programming, reduces the scope for human error, and extends accessibility beyond office hours. Additionally, the technical support from Agile Fleet staff made choosing FleetCommander an easy decision, according to Parcell. "The people at Agile Fleet really helped with our process all the way through, from beginning to end. The support from Agile Fleet staff, in addition to the software and the key box control, were really the main pulls," says Parcell.



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**Sammy Parcell, Director
UTK Fleet Management Division**

Informed Decision-Making with Data

Transitioning from outdated practices to FleetCommander's data-driven technology, UTK's fleet department experienced dramatic changes that were quickly noticed, particularly in two areas that were previous pain points for the team. "FleetCommander has made life a lot easier, especially for our rental operation and billing processes," Parcell states. The newfound ability to capture and track data allowed UTK to make informed decisions about its fleet size. Prior to FleetCommander, fleet acquisition and reduction efforts were based on anecdotal evidence. **With data-driven insights made possible by FleetCommander, UTK was able to reduce its fleet by 33%, from 120 vehicles down to 80.**

The billing process, another previous challenge, also notably improved with the implementation of FleetCommander. “We do our billing a little weirdly. We have tens of thousands of accounts that we deal with, dozens of general ledger codes, stuff of that nature. But, with FleetCommander, when I do my billing at the end of the month, I really just make a few different clicks, and out pops the file that I need. It’s a much easier process with FleetCommander,” Parcell explains.

A Welcomed Change

The transition from outdated processes to FleetCommander’s modern suite didn’t just empower the fleet management team. Its benefits extended to users as well. “Our customers love the product,” says Parcell. The system’s easy reservation process, seamless communications, and minimal staff interaction continue to generate positive feedback from users. “Even three years in, we still get compliments on the process. It’s so much easier than what we had done historically.”

Without FleetCommander, Parcell estimates that the department would have to double their staff - and their costs - just to maintain their current level of service.

In addition, another FleetCommander feature has garnered praise from drivers and fleet staff alike. FleetCommander’s “Grab & Go” feature empowers users to handle unforeseen situations independently, reducing the need for constant staff intervention. While such unplanned situations can be stressful, FleetCommander empowers users to troubleshoot and problem solve with confidence and ease. This empowerment is a win/win for UTK’s Fleet Management Division and its users. “The peace of mind with the software, especially over the weekend, is immense,” says Parcell.

A Bright Future Ahead

In the past few years, UTK’s fleet department has clearly gone beyond incremental change. When Parcell joined the team ten years ago, the division employed 32 staff members. Today, the department maintains its same fleet operations with only 8 people on site. This transformation has led to unprecedented efficiency, cost savings, and a streamlined user experience for the department. “If we had to suddenly walk away from our current setup with FleetCommander, we would easily have to double our staff and double our costs, just to maintain our same level of service,” Parcell asserts.

Positioned in the epicenter of Tennessee’s flagship university campus, UTK’s Fleet Management Division has demonstrated that the journey toward excellence begins with a single step, a step guided by innovation and nurtured by partnership. The successes of UTK’s Fleet Management Division serve as a model to other institutions, showcasing the positive impact of effective fleet management and data-driven decision making. With every vehicle that hits the road, UTK’s fleet department paves the way for a future where efficiency knows no bounds.