

ClickSchedule Enables Tomra to Optimize Service Scheduling



The Company

Consumers in states that charge a deposit for beverage bottles and cans are familiar with reverse vending machines, which automatically refund the money in exchange for the empty containers. Located in supermarkets, “big box” stores and other redemption centers, reverse vending machines, or RVMs, are common in states where recycling is legislatively mandated.

In the United States, the predominant RVM vendor is Tomra North America, which has sold and currently services more than 13,000 RVMs in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Maine, and Iowa. Headquartered in Shelton, Connecticut, Tomra North America is part of Tomra Inc., a Norwegian-based recycling giant with operations in more than 45 countries.

The Challenge

The majority of Tomra’s service calls are break/fix, with the number of calls determined by the density of the geographical population of any given area. Before automating service delivery, a home-grown, in-house system was completely manual – dispatchers would receive calls, log them in, decide who to give the call to, and manually dispatch it over a Nextel radio or a mobile phone.

“Calls were left to the technicians to schedule on their own,” explained Jerry Daniel, Tomra North America’s regional vice president, service. “We relied on them to manually route themselves during the day.” Once calls were complete, technicians filled out a service report on paper and returned it to the office – sometimes three to five days after the call had been completed. There was no visibility into real-time activity in the field, or real-time location of technicians.

Key Benefits

- 25 percent improvement in response times.
- 12 percent reduction in fleet mileage the first year; 5-6 percent reduction in every subsequent year.
- 12 percent increase in the number of machines serviced per technician.
- 12 percent increase in service calls handled per day.
- Reduced the number of technicians needed from 75 to 65, with no reduction in the number of machines serviced.





Today, each of Tomra's 65 technicians communicate wirelessly with dispatch via handheld or laptop computers. Instead of working with a daily call schedule, they now respond to one service call at a time, which enables ClickSchedule to continually optimize the schedule throughout the course of the day. Once technicians close an order, they send back pertinent information and receive their next call from ClickSchedule.

For Tomra, the return on investment was both fast and dramatic, with a 25 percent improvement in response times and a 12 percent reduction in fleet mileage in the first year. Subsequent years have seen a consistent five-to-six percent reduction in fleet mileage annually. "The reduced fuel and maintenance costs alone have really helped pay for the system," Daniel said. "We're just not putting the mileage on the vehicles that we used to." With the increased productivity, Tomra has also been able to cut the number of field technicians while increasing the number of calls per day by 12 percent.

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- **Jerry Daniel, Regional Vice President, Service**
Tomra North America

The Solution

Once Tomra decided to automate their field service operations, they conducted an exhaustive review of available solutions, deciding from the outset that ClickSchedule was a required component of any final decision. "Out of all the companies we looked at, we knew that we wanted ClickSoftware to play a key role, because of the real-time optimization in ClickSchedule," Daniel said.

With ClickSchedule's optimization technology, calls for RVM service are routed to an algorithm that takes into account the call, along with Tomra's business parameters, rules and objectives. The solution uses those parameters to schedule the optimal technician for the call. "Only ClickSchedule provided us with the ability to define how to best meet our own customers' needs," Daniel said.

The Implementation

Because ClickSchedule was integrated into a larger solution, teamwork between the vendors was critical. Tomra communicated their business objectives to the various solution providers, who then worked together to integrate their functionality. Overall, the implementation went very smoothly.

- For more information on Tomra visit www.tomra.com
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