

WETTENHALLS & GUARDIAN – FOR THE DRIVER, IT’S JUST ‘GET IN & DRIVE.’

“ I could not contemplate operating a heavy vehicle fleet today without Guardian. ”

MIKE LEAN, CEO WETTENHALLS



CLIENT PROBLEM

- ZERO HARM vision = the Wettenhalls commitment to safety
- A large fleet providing logistics solutions across an extensive geographical area
- Ongoing fleet upgrade to embrace new technology in interests of safety and environment
- Culture of rigorous driver training to promote well-being, personal development and safety awareness
- Wettenhalls sought a solution to meet stringent criteria: proactive fatigue/distraction event intervention; ease of use and maintenance; and crucially, no burden for the driver

GUARDIAN SOLUTION

- Algorithms monitored the driver's eye and head movements in real time; with a forward-facing camera monitoring the road
- Immediate in-cab seat vibration and audible alarms alerted drivers
- 24/7 event reviewing and support by 24/7 Guardian Centre
- System data allowed continuous safety improvement

CLIENT OUTCOME

- Fatigue events decreased when implementation across the fleet increased
- ‘Significant improvement in driver safety environment’ supports ZERO HARM
- Drivers understand Guardian is for their safety, and are arriving for work properly rested
- Drivers need only ‘get in and drive’
- Management are not burdened by maintenance or operational issues
- Guardian data and videos were powerful learning tools for management and drivers

Wettenhalls has been providing transportation solutions across the eastern and southern regions of Australia for over 90 years. The fleet, which comprises 120 prime movers, 10 rigids and more than 250 trailers, services primarily the dairy, food and beverage, wharf services, construction, and general freight (local and interstate) markets.

Wettenhalls has a range of vehicle and equipment options – among them single and B-double taut liners, open top, refrigerated vans and walking floor trailers – allowing them to provide, in their words, ‘responsive, safe and innovative transportation solutions’ that cater to individual client’s needs.

The Wettenhalls ZERO HARM policy informs the company’s proud culture of rigorous staff training in health and safety, and driver support and education. The Wettenhalls driver training program is a clear investment in the well-being, upskilling and personal development of their truck drivers. The program is conducted in the truck cab – the driver’s ‘office’ – by a dedicated driver trainer, who helps each driver improve their driving skills, cab upkeep and awareness of road etiquette.

Safety and the environment are central to the Wettenhalls operation. The driver training program is one aspect of this; the other is ongoing fleet reinvestment and the implementation of new technology. Approximately 20 per cent of the

Wettenhalls fleet is replaced every year to ensure that the company keeps pace with technological advances and new safety features and reduces its environmental impact.

Always looking for ways to improve the driver safety environment, the company developed a set of criteria by which to assess proposed new solutions. The driver safety solution should:

- operate without driver intervention; it should not add another task burden to the driver
- be integral to the truck, rather than an ‘add on’ feature
- focus on fatigue and distraction, two key high-risk factors in heavy vehicle accidents
- aim to prevent, rather than record, accidents
- not represent a maintenance burden for the company.

Wettenhalls management found that there was nothing on the market to compare with Guardian, in terms of these

criteria. Nothing even came close to Guardian’s ease of operation and its ability to proactively alert the driver and managers about a fatigue or distraction issue.

Wettenhalls found Guardian simple to install and easy to operate. The drivers have no need to interact with the technology, and they have no extra tasks; all they need to do is ‘get in and drive’.

Since the initial roll out of Guardian in 2016, the incidence of fatigue events in the fleet has been dropping in inverse relationship to the number of installations: as the system is fitted in more and more trucks, the number of fatigue events drops lower and lower.

Wettenhalls management has been able to use data generated by Guardian to adjust schedules and rosters to reduce fatigue. Although they realize that fatigue can strike at any time, no matter how long the driver has been on shift, they have used Guardian data to change the shifts of certain drivers who – rested or

not – regularly struggle with fatigue at specific times of the day.

In fact, there is a new understanding of fatigue across the company, and crucially, drivers are now making off-duty decisions to ensure they are properly rested before coming on shift. In ongoing discussions with drivers, management emphasises that the implementation of Guardian is, first and foremost, aimed at improving driver safety through reducing their distraction and fatigue.

Distraction events too, are monitored by Guardian, and Wettenhalls is now working with individual drivers to reduce their susceptibility to, and eliminate where possible the causes of, distraction.

The Guardian Fatigue Management System, which supports the camera operation, is tailored to the Wettenhalls fleet operation. This, against a backdrop of ‘excellent’ responses from the 24/7 Guardian Centre, eases the operational burden for management. Videos which show Guardian preventing micro-sleep events from becoming major accidents

CASE STUDY WETTENHALLS

have proved powerful – and positive – learning tools, especially where drivers recognise themselves in the video and realise that no one is exempt from fatigue behind the wheel.

Wettenhalls has committed to installing Guardian across their entire fleet. Already, with Guardian fitted in 80% of the fleet, the company is able to state:

‘Wettenhalls has significantly improved its driver safety environment and this has gone a long way to assisting us achieve our vision of ZERO HARM’.

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