



Editors note: Teletrac Inc. and Navman Wireless are now merged as a global telematics powerhouse. This content was created prior to the unification of both brands.

Keeping track of the trucks

Merv Hooper, owner of Stratford-based truck rental firm Rigs N things, knows his trucks – and he knows how to keep track of them too. He had Navman Wireless install GPS tracking which proved very useful when one of the trucks was stolen. He picks up the story...

"One night before getting into bed I checked our GPS tracking system on my phone and noticed a light moving that shouldn't have been. I rang 111 but the police informed me they didn't have a unit available to respond. So I informed them I was going to go and find the truck myself.

"My wife drove the car while I tracked the truck on my phone. We found a police car parked on the side of the road and I asked the officer to call HQ and tell them where the missing truck was. He asked, 'Are you psychic?' I said, 'No, but my cell phone is.' And I showed him. Twenty seven minutes after I discovered that the truck was missing we were alongside it and the occupants were under arrest."

Using the GPS tracking system, Merv was able to give the police a report of exactly where the truck had been driven in the time it was stolen. It turned out that it was more than a vehicle theft.

"The people who stole my truck had taken it on a drug run. Over the next few days the police checked all the places they'd stopped while driving my truck, and the driver and passenger were convicted."

Tracking the trucks

Rigs N Things has been in business 15 years and has a range of trucks which carry from 2 to 8 tonne loads. It's also the only company in Taranaki which offers ferry tie downs on its trucks so they can be taken across on the Cook Strait ferry. The company is a qualified coach builder and is NZTA heavy vehicle manufacturing certified.

Merv has Navman Wireless GPS tracking units installed in 17 of his 19 trucks and also uses Navman Wireless OnlineAVL2 software to monitor and manage his fleet.

Cashflow and leasing

A number of Merv's trucks are on long lease, so it's important that he can bill monthly for the lease, kilometres and road user charges.

"Navman Wireless makes it so simple. I just print a report out of the system and give it to my clients along with the bill. It has really helped us with cashflow. There are no arguments with our customers now, the GPS tracking resolves any potential disagreements."

The Navman Wireless system also helps Merv offer flexibility to his customers.

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Merv Hooper,
Owner, Rigs N Things

"Some of my long lease customers don't use the truck every day. Using the Navman Wireless system I can draw a geofence around their premises which allows me to see when the truck goes in and out. This means I can bill them only for the days they actually use the truck."

Managing maintenance

Merv says that servicing and maintenance is really crucial in the life of a truck, particularly for rental trucks.

"I've set up alerts in the system so I know when the CoF is due for each truck, and when routine servicing and maintenance is required. If it's a truck out on lease, then I call the customer and get them to bring it in, then simply swap it over. So they still have a truck to use and I can get the maintenance done on time.

"Navman Wireless has really helped us with improving our servicing. I had tried another GPS tracking company, but we couldn't monitor the servicing easily, so I moved to Navman Wireless."

Careful monitoring

Merv keeps an eye on how his trucks are being driven by his rental customers. "If our customers are driving at excessive speed we ring and talk to them. We fine our customers if they go over 105km, \$50 per offence. It's in the contract.

"We also monitor the truck battery. For example, if we see they've been using the tail lift without starting the engine, we know that's likely to run the battery down, so we call and warn the customer before they flatten the battery completely. It's a big saving for us because we don't have to go out and rescue them."

Improving customer service

Geofencing also helps Merv get more done without compromising customer service. "We drew a geofence around our own yard in the GPS tracking system, which means that as soon as someone drives one of our trucks back into our yard, we know they've arrived. If I'm out the back I can head straight down to the office and greet the customer. It makes my life a lot easier and it means we sort out any issues straight away."

Overall, Merv says it's about being smart about managing the business.

"We're in a small economy and things are tight so you have to make your gear work for you. Navman Wireless allows me to manage and monitor the two most important parts of my business – staff and vehicles/plant. You can't make money without them. I really do think that Navman Wireless products and services set the standard for other GPS tracking firms."

Benefits

- Increased cashflow through accurate billing
- Better service and maintenance scheduling
- Greater monitoring for safety and service
- Improved customer interactions

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