

# Case Study

## City Sightseeing San Francisco

Bus tour firm drives stronger fleet management, improved rider satisfaction with GPS tracking solution Fleet Complete®

**City Sightseeing bus tours are known as the ‘original and the best’ and we are using Fleet Complete to ensure that we’re living up to the billing.**

- Chris Lovatt, Vehicle Operations Manager, City Sightseeing

### Background

There are many wonderful and famous attractions to see in San Francisco — Fisherman’s Wharf, Barbary Coast, Pier 39, Union Square, just to name a few. A visit to San Francisco just wouldn’t be complete without a ride aboard a San Francisco Double-Decker bus and City Sightseeing San Francisco is dedicated to providing a tourist experience like no other.

As the city’s top bus tour firm, City Sightseeing San Francisco is dedicated to giving tourists a customer experience to remember. Each year, more than 350,000 customers enjoy a live narrated 90 minute tour on the company’s famous red buses and can board or depart at any of the designated stops during the tour to browse, shop and take pictures.

### Challenge

The company’s famous San Francisco bus tour departs 9am to 5pm every 15–30 minutes, year round. Successfully managing the 20 vehicle bus fleet, says Chris Lovatt, City Sightseeing San Francisco’s Vehicle Operations Manager, revolves around the timely arrival and departure of buses on the fixed routes. While the majority of riders were well served, there was a small but vocal minority of riders who had complaints about the bus scheduling and would visit or call the Customer Service desk. The company

## At a Glance

<b>Country</b>	<b>Company</b>
United States	City Sightseeing San Francisco
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Website</b>
Bus Tours	city-sightseeing.us

### Customer Profile

As San Francisco’s top bus tour firm, City Sightseeing San Francisco provides sightseeing bus tours for more than 350,000 customers each year.

### Business Situation

To retain its number one ranking in the city, City Sightseeing San Francisco wanted to adopt a global positional system (GPS) tracking system for real-time insight into bus scheduling and location.

### Solution

City Sightseeing San Francisco is using Fleet Complete to improve day-to-day bus operations and customer service by being able to monitor and manage the fleet in real-time.

- Fleet Complete
- In-Vehicle GPS Modems

### Benefits

- Optimized operational efficiencies
- Cost-effective fleet tracking
- Enhanced customer service

## Complete Innovations

gives out voucher refunds in these circumstances and wanted to save costs around this practice.

Sometimes it can be a passenger who has waited just two minutes too long and they decide to complain; or perhaps it could be that the driver has deviated off his route or arrived early or late to the designated bus stop. In either case, says Lovatt, the company wanted to improve its fleet management to minimize customer concerns and ensure on-time route scheduling.

“Managing the bus fleet involves the timely arrival and departure of buses. A few customers were claiming that buses didn’t arrive according to the posted schedules,” says Lovatt. “While the customer is always right, we wanted to look at ways to deliver verifiable proof that the routes were running in a timely manner.”

To retain its number one ranking in the city, City Sightseeing San Francisco wanted to adopt a global positional system (GPS) tracking system. This would help the company know exactly where buses were at any given time and maintain its high standard of customer service. Using the real-time technology, Lovatt notes, would help ensure that the buses run as per the schedule.

“We started with three buses five years ago and right now we have a fleet of 20,” says Lovatt. “There are several competitors who have popped up over the five years that we’ve been here, but we’ve managed to maintain market share through the strong brand and commitment to customer service. We were looking at using technology to keep our market share in the city.”

## Solution

City Sightseeing is using Fleet Complete® — a leading GPS-based tracking and management solution — to improve day-to-day bus operations by being able to monitor and manage the fleet in real-time. The implementation first began in late 2010 with a small pilot deployment to three of the vehicles and is being rolled out to the entire 20 vehicle fleet by the end of 2011.

The integrated platform requires a wireless data plan and uses MGS200 hardware modems installed in the vehicle fleet. From

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head office, dispatch now has access to detailed, driver-specific information — including the driver’s last and current GPS location — to monitor route progress from head office.

Installation was easy and we love the fact that we can now easily track the movement of all the buses,” says Lovatt. Customizable alerts can be set up to notify the main office of vehicle location arrival and departure times. These real-time alerts can appear on a PC screen and sent via email and mobile device.

Fleet Complete helps the company cost-effectively track vehicles in real time and gather location-based information from the field to help improve route efficiency and scheduling. This helps the company ensure on time arrival at bus stops, which helps maintain a high level of customer service.

## Benefits

City Sightseeing San Francisco is using Fleet Complete to realize a host of business benefits.

## Optimized Operational Efficiencies

With the GPS tracking and dispatch solution in place, the company has been able to improve its overall operational efficiency. In the future, the company intends to use Fleet Complete to run reports and analytics to better identify more cost-efficient routes by tracking average speed over time and time spent at designated bus stops, says Lovatt.

# Complete Innovations

## **We use Fleet Complete as a tool to improve rider satisfaction. GPS doesn't lie - we can now show customers exactly where a bus was at a given time.**

"Fleet Complete provides us with real-time visibility into where buses are at any given time," says Lovatt. "This helps to give us the big picture and quickly identify any timing or scheduling issues. From there, we can more quickly adjust to make sure that our routes are more efficient."

### **Cost Effective Fleet Tracking**

The company is using the GPS capabilities of Fleet Complete to more accurately monitor and track the bus fleet and reduce early or late arrival and departures. The number of customer complaints have dropped along with the number of refunds the company has had to give out, says Lovatt, adding that this helps the company save money. The solution sends real-time alerts — allowing the company to improve driver adherence to routes using real-time GPS technology.

"In the past, if a customer phoned in to our Customer Service desk and wanted to know the location of a particular bus, you had

to radio the driver to find out where they were on the route. Now right from a computer screen, we can use the Fleet Complete solution to track exactly where the bus is located and how far it is from the destination, saving us time and reducing any customer concerns," says Lovatt.

### **Enhanced Customer Service**

Using Fleet Complete, the company can provide its customers with real-time information of when their bus will arrive. This helps the company maintain its reputation as the leading sightseeing tour company in San Francisco.

Fleet Complete also helps City Sightseeing in improving its tourism partner relationships; the company provides the real-time data to its local partners — namely the tourist businesses along the route — via an online site which enables them to know where the vehicles are located. Being able to leverage the real-time GPS technology helps to further drive business for all parties while also providing an enhanced experience for tourists.

"We use Fleet Complete as a tool to improve rider satisfaction. GPS doesn't lie — we can now show customers exactly where a bus was at a given time," says Lovatt. "City Sightseeing bus tours are known as the 'original and the best' and we are using Fleet Complete to ensure that we're living up to the billing."

## **About Fleet Complete**

Fleet Complete is a GPS-based tracking and management solution that collects vital on-board or in-field information from the vehicle or the mobile resource, and delivers this to the company's operations staff for real-time tracking, back-end integration and reporting. Through a combination of location-based services, back office monitoring and two-way communication, Fleet Complete enables companies to better manage their fleet, reduce fuel consumption, increase worker safety and regulate employee activities in the field.

Fleet Complete was recently integrated with Garmin Personal Navigation Devices, enabling customers to further streamline their operating costs with reduced out-of-route miles, real-time communication and driver status updates.

## **Complete Innovations**