CASE STUDY

First Student First Transit uses Octave Attune EAM to enable digital work

Key facts:

Company: First Student First Transit

Website: workatfirst.com

Description: The largest passenger transportation company in North America with 1,200 locations across the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. Operating for more than 20 years.

Headquarters: Cincinnati, Ohio

Industry: Transportation

Employees: More than 9000

Locations: 48 states and 11 Canadian provinces

Octave products used: Attune EAM *(HxGN EAM)*

This case study looks at how First Student First Transit, a leader in the transportation industry and a longtime user of Octave Attune EAM, a SaaS-based enterprise asset management solution, implemented the Attune EAM mobile application to boost efficiency, improve communication and reduce clerical work.

Attune EAM is at the core of First Student First Transit's maintenance strategy to meet or exceed maintenance service delivery levels while reducing maintenance costs. With the introduction of the mobile app, First Student First Transit discovered what it calls "the real power" of Attune EAM – its ability to be used as a communications system to provide clear, standardized communication across the organization.

Identifying goals

The key goals for First Student First Transit were to increase time spent on valuable work while getting rid of paper-based processes. Giving the maintenance technicians a highly configured tool with easy access to the information they need was identified as the way to do this. This would reduce the clerical burden on supervisors and foster improved communication across the organization.

The result: Technicians could do their work without wasting time running back and forth to the shop, hunting for parts or checking in with supervisors. Instead, with the help of the Attune EAM mobile app, the entire organization has the information they need at their fingertips.

The challenge

First Student First Transit's technicians had previously used Attune EAM to overcome some inefficient processes that had limited their ability to service vehicles as efficiently as possible. This was the first step in the right direction, but to meet the standards of their credo, "high quality through efficiency," First Student First Transit needed a mobile solution as well.

This was because the daily productivity of technicians was restricted by:

- Needing to go back and forth to the supervisor to ask about what they were supposed to do next
- Hunting to see which parts were available for specific jobs and locating them
- Figuring out which tools were needed and going back and forth to find them
- Unclear roles in connection with each job

"The Attune EAM platform enables us to eliminate communication siloes between upper- and middle-management, supervisors and technicians. Everyone has access to the same data and communications, giving all stakeholders transparency into what's happening and what needs to happen to support operations. For each work order, we now have visibility from top to bottom."

Nadia Stolfo
Senior Process Analyst, First Student, First

Another challenge was the need for a leaner information flow and work process between the maintenance technicians and floor supervisors.

Realizing results

Octave and First Student First Transit developed a clear set of screen views on Attune EAM that replaced the dashboard, key performance indicators (KPIs) and in-boxes. These set of views were based on user-access level and provided the supervisor with:

- Information on what work needed to be done, including preventative maintenance (PM) orders with deferred work that had to be managed, specific campaigns and recalls
- The ability to assign technicians to work orders based on an organized list of staff available during any specific shift
- An assessment of how much time technicians had left over in their day, as well as which technicians were over-assigned
- An up-to-date inventory list, including parts ordered during the previous shift

These functions enabled the supervisor to see the tactical situation on the shop floor and decide what needed to be addressed in each shift, all using a mobile, streamlined, intuitive dashboard.

The lean set of role-based screens provided the technicians with:

- A high-level view of what each technician should be working on now and which shifts they're responsible for
- The messages sent out regarding safety issues
- Standard operating procedures that need to be reviewed
- The history of the insights and messages shared in the app regarding the work order

Improved communication

Accessibility of this information creates a productive dialog around how much the supervisor can plan and how thoroughly the tech can understand what they need to do. Everyone involved in the process now is able to better understand how the day is going to flow. In this way, First Student First Transit reduces the need to react to things last-minute — making it possible to leave room for issues that need to arise last-minute, such as unexpected failures.

The Attune EAM platform is an ideal communication tool for First Student First Transit's technicians, enabling them to quickly get answers to questions and continue their important work. The platform also eliminates communication siloes between upper- and middle-management, supervisors and technicians and using the grids within the platform, decision-makers and supervisors can create the business questions that drive the fulfillment of each role.

For example, a supervisor can bring in a bus for a brake job but then note that it also has a few other problems. These issues can be added to the work order before any work begins. This reduces the number of trips technicians have to make to get tools and parts, saving valuable time.

Technicians also benefit because they get a full record of the work done on each vehicle. They can look and see what's been done since the last time it was serviced and gain helpful insights from that data. For instance, they can see if a bus has broken down multiple times due to a specific issue and then double-check that problem while they have the bus in the shop.

Improved efficiency

Attune EAM cut down on the paperwork and daily minutiae that often reduced productivity. For example, the time it takes for a tech to stop working on a bus, finish their paperwork, get their tools together, park the bus, get the next job, bring the vehicle in, get any necessary tools, and start the next work order can take at least 30 to 45 minutes.

However, with the information available on the platform, a tech can see everything that needs to be done with each vehicle they service. This gave them the freedom to make all the choices involved in transitioning from one job to another ahead of time. If, for example, that advance knowledge enables a tech to save just one trip in a day, that's valuable time they can invest toward being more productive.

Extrapolating those efficiencies to 10 techs in a single shop or 3,000 across the organization, the efficiency savings add up quickly.

During the Attune EAM app implementation, the driving lean principle was eliminating tasks that didn't bring value to the customer. If a tech is doing anything outside of the physical tasks involved in performing repairs or maintenance, that's not adding value to the customers and it needs to be reduced or eliminated.

Reducing the clerical burden

The combination of readily available information, user-defined screens and grids and the ability for techs and supervisors to ask and answer questions resulted in a powerful management tool. As a result, administrative staff has been able to save time on clerical work. There's no need for someone to invest a lot of time in reading a file and communicating what a technician needs to do. The screens are set up within the platform to automatically convey that information.

This reduced the chances of human clerical error, while also removing administrative tasks from valuable employees who could then invest their time in more important work.

For instance, they were now able to focus on sourcing parts, running warranties or finding ways of helping the business function more efficiently.

Moving forward

The Octave team has been making the solution even more robust by sharpening the solution using direct feedback from frontline techs. By going from one First Student First Transit location to another, Octave can get a full view of what works best for each individual team. Attune EAM also continues to evolve into an even more comprehensive, effective solution.

"Attune EAM helps us to streamline the communication process by giving supervisors and managers a tool they can use to disseminate crucial information to team members. It reduces the chances miscommunication derailing processes connected with repairs, maintenance, inventory levels and the overall performance of the operation."

Bill Olsen
Director of Maintenance Systems

About Octave

Octave is a leader in enterprise software, turning data into decisive action and intelligence into your edge. Our software solves for and simplifies complexity, from the design and build to operations and protection of people, property and assets – for any scope, at any scale. For decades, we've partnered with customers to sharpen performance, elevate efficiency and amplify results. From factory floors to entire cities, our solutions are tuned to scale up what's possible from day one onward.

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