



Muncie Indiana Transit System (MITS) Meets Mobility Needs With a Paratransit Software Solution



MUNCIE INDIANA TRANSIT:

Agency in charge of a paratransit service called MITSPlus



CHALLENGE:

Old on-board computers weren't working and paper manifests caused scheduling errors and driver dissatisfaction



SOLUTION:

TripSpark Mobile Data Terminals and specifically designed paratransit software



RESULT:

Satisfied drivers and passengers (rise in passengers per hour)

A Transit-Friendly Community

The Muncie Indiana Transit System (MITS) offers its riders remarkably affordable fixed route and paratransit services. With door-to-door van transportation to help meet the needs of mobility impaired persons in Muncie, MITS is a strong supporter of community transportation that strives to create a transit-friendly community. MITS is committed to promoting the health, environmental and cost benefits of public transit within their community. The MITSPlus van service is a paratransit addition to their city bus system, supporting MITS' mission. Their goal is to provide affordable, safe, comfortable, and dependable transit options to those who would otherwise not be able to access public transit.

The Problem

Despite being named "Outstanding Public Transportation System" by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) in 2005, MITS' paratransit service was using obsolete and malfunctioning on-board computers. Maintenance and repairs were ongoing and as a result,

some consoles were simply not used, or ceased to function altogether. This led dispatchers and drivers to resort to an even more obsolete method of using paper manifests for their scheduling requirements. The size and scope of MITS' service made this an incredibly inefficient system, leading to an overall dissatisfaction among their drivers. This unsustainable process eventually trickled down to negatively impact service to riders.

The main problem with using paper manifests and communicating via radio is that information is slow in getting to those who need it. Unfortunate MITSPlus drivers would get schedule changes and assignments way too late in the day. Without a functional computer on board, direct radio communication was the only way to maintain schedules. However, this led to much confusion, errors, and radio congestion. Things urgently needed to change.



The Paratransit Software Solution

The first thing that the TripSpark's **paratransit software solution** NovusDR helped to alleviate was the stress involved with taking calls and dispatching vehicles. The full power of the total solution, however, was realized when MITSPlus installed TripSpark's **MDTs** in their vehicles. The workload and stress heaped upon drivers who had been forced to use paper manifests, suddenly vanished. The computers helped drivers stay on schedule and become totally in synch with dispatch. Notifications and even personal messages could be sent to the MDT screen, greatly reducing radio congestion. Because of total synchronization of data, the dispatcher's schedule was accessible to drivers as well. The web-enabled abilities of TripSpark paratransit solution allowed dispatchers the flexibility of working from home. With less confusion when it came to last minute calls and re-routes, drivers were able to focus entirely on the needs of their riders and the job of providing safe and reliable service.

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“I never want to go back to using a paper manifest again.”

—MITSPlus Driver

Results

Dispatch time has been greatly reduced. Work hours have also been shortened because the web-enabled dispatch connectivity has allowed for a night dispatcher to supervise MITS' fixed route as well as paratransit operations. Time that had previously been spent simply maintaining a schedule, could now be focused on other areas of customer service. Because of the reduction in last-minute call confusion, driver satisfaction also increased exponentially. MITS' paratransit service has improved so much so, that MITSPlus now offers an “On Time Guarantee” to their riders.

“I wish I could tell you how the service was during a major software outage, but that has never happened.”

—MITS employee

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The issues that MITSPlus had with their on-board computers is a thing of the past. The resiliency of TripSpark's hardware virtually eliminated breakdowns and worry about a collapse of their software or hardware systems. TripSpark's commitment to maintenance, training, and updates for life on its software solutions also means MITS employees can rest easy.

From streamlining scheduling to bolstering communication between drivers and dispatch, the TripSpark **paratransit software solution** has completely transformed MITS and MITSPlus.

“We are also very satisfied with the value we get for our money.”

—MITS operations employee

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TripSpark Technologies is a community transportation technology company focused on helping mid-sized transit agencies and private operators increase rider satisfaction, drive revenue, and address specific operational needs. TripSpark makes this possible by nurturing strong partnerships with our customers, offering the latest technologies and providing exceptional support.

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