

November 2015

Vista Hire

Active monitoring makes for safer drivers

No. of Staff: 4

Fleet: Hire fleet – 100 vehicles – all 4WDs

CASE STUDY



NRSP
NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY

PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM

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Case Study:

Clients want more than just safe vehicles, they want safe drivers

Key Outcomes:

- Companies that care about their employees want the safest vehicles which are designed for the task, and the environment they are operating in.
- Providing a safe environment for a driver starts before the vehicle even leaves for its job.
- The inclusion of In-Vehicle Monitoring Systems (IVMS) in vehicles alone does not influence the driver to behave safely – they need to know the data will be monitored to influence behavior.
- The client and driver need to work together to ensure the safest vehicle is provided and the IVMS parameters are understood and developed.
- Safe vehicles that are driven safely ensure everyone benefits.
- The installation of IVMS is about safety and not about being 'big brother' – which most clients appreciate.

Synopsis:

When you operate in the vehicle hire market it is incredibly competitive, yet safety can provide a clear market edge. Leading companies want the safest vehicles which are fit for purpose and they want their employees to drive in a safe manner. Clients accept Vista Hire will provide the safest options with IVMS fitted to help ensure they are driven in a safe manner.

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Introduction

Encouraging safer driver habits is at the heart of Vista Hire's business model. As an organisation operating in a highly competitive environment Vista Hire actively encourages the safe driving of its vehicles by its clients. The founder of Vista Hire established it in 2008 out of frustration because he Stephen Dimitrios, recognised the demand for safe vehicles that were ready to work. Working previously for 20 years on telecommunications projects, he could not find safe vehicles fit for the job without having to fit them out himself – the result was the establishment of Vista Hire.

Vista Hire's core value proposition is providing safe work vehicles and encouraging them to be driven safely.

Since Vista Hire is in the business of providing vehicles it makes sense that they want to promote safe driver behaviour. Having those vehicles immobilised due to road incidents or events impacts the company's business operations. Further, if the vehicles are driven in a safe manner then there is less wear and tear, reduced maintenance costs and improved re-sale value. As a result Vista Hire went further than just providing the safest vehicles but also added IVMS to all its vehicles.

The approach has seen that for the seven years of operation, no one has been seriously injured or killed in a Vista Hire vehicle. For the owners, who are passionate about vehicle safety, this track record makes them proud.

Company overview

Vista Hire is a specialist 4WD hire operator based in Brisbane. It has a varied client base – from major national organisations to individual contractors

working on projects to private hirers wanting to tow a horse float, mobile accommodation vans, and rally cars. Regardless of client size, Vista Hire aims to provide the safest and most reliable vehicle for the clients' purpose. It takes a risk-based approach to what the vehicle will be used for and ensures it is fit-for-purpose to protect the driver and meet the client needs.

The staff at Vista Hire all have several years of experience in driving 4WDs and also project delivery, so understand the importance of providing fit-for-purpose vehicles.

The make-up of the fleet includes traybacks, dual cabs fitted with lockable canopies, wagons, and more – all fitted with a customisable range of safety accessories and options.

Safer vehicles

The fleet works across a range of industries including telecommunications, mining, civil construction, environmental management, and surveying. These vehicles are typically built to a specification that requires a range of safety features, including IVMS, wheel nut indicators, amber beacons, or fire extinguishers. Most of these commercial clients have an appreciation of safety.

Vista Hire also hires vehicles to the public for towing and transporting a range of items including food trucks, mobile, boats and caravans. For these clients, vehicles may be equipped with electronic brake controllers, trailer stability control, and heavy duty tow bars.

In 2011, Vista Hire made the decision to only purchase 4WDs that have been awarded 5 star safety ratings from ANCAP, unless the category of vehicle being purchased is not available in 5-star guise (like the Toyota Land Cruiser Ute). Vista Hire made this decision because, again, it wanted to provide the safest possible vehicle options for its clients. Vehicles are equipped with many safety features to improve vehicle visibility (e.g. reflective stripes), make others alert to the vehicle (e.g. reversing beeper), or safely move a load (e.g. cargo nets).

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Safety before departure

The safety approach begins even before the vehicles leave the depot. Before each hire vehicle leaves the Vista Hire depot, a comprehensive 50-point safety check is completed – this is to ensure all elements of the vehicle's safety systems are operating as expected. After all, there's no point having elevated tail lights if they are not working. Vista Hire also provides a pre-start logbook in the vehicle's glove box which is a comprehensive checklist of items that should be examined prior to commencing a journey.

For vehicles which are going to be utilised for public or heavy towing, through the risk-based approach these vehicles may be equipped with electronic brake controllers, trailer stability control, and heavy duty tow bars. Drivers are also educated on the correct loading to ensure vehicle and towing capacities are not exceeded. A key aspect of understanding the carrying capacity of the vehicle is knowing the gross weight of the vehicle with the add-ons before it departs. Clients can then make informed decisions on how many people or what additional mass can be carried by the vehicle to keep it within legal limits.

Clients depart understanding their legal responsibility in loading a vehicle – it's a form of Chain of Responsibility (CoR) approach to light vehicles.

Using IVMS technology to help drivers drive safer

When a vehicle is hired from Vista Hire, the organisation is actively encouraging safe driving habits by offering IVMS reporting to clients. It is up to clients whether they are willing to use the provided information. Vista Hire has found that drivers working for organisations who actively monitored IVMS reporting were less likely to speed and more likely to wear seatbelts than those who worked for organisations that do not actively monitor IVMS reports.

Really the M in IVMS does not stand for Monitor but Manage – as if you don't act on the data there is little point in monitoring.



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Implementation

IVMS was introduced into Vista Hire fleet in a few vehicles in 2011. The original purpose was for organisations working at LNG/CSG sites; however, Vista Hire soon determined that IVMS was a useful tool for fleet management purposes and was a powerful reporting tool for clients.

It's not just simply about having IVMS in the vehicles though, it's about setting up the systems and reporting correctly and utilising the information. At Vista Hire, the IVMS process is as follows:

1. Work with the client to set up the required reports and determine the parameters they wish to report on, e.g. event reporting.
2. Provide multiple IVMS driver identification keys to the client to allow the vehicles to be used by more than one driver and to ensure that each driver is monitored (not just the vehicle).
3. Alert drivers that IVMS has been installed as this, in itself, has a positive effect on driving.
4. Provide reports at the frequency requested by the client, or provide direct access to the system to allow real time monitoring.

IVMS is not set-and-forget technology – the data needs to be managed

Barriers overcome

The primary barrier to introducing IVMS across the fleet was cost – both the initial installation and set-up costs and then the ongoing telecommunications and maintenance costs. For Vista Hire, it was important to look at the whole-of-life cost of each unit, and determine if significant value could be extracted from the technology.

Since its introduction, IVMS is now part of the fleet's organisational management system; it helps with maintenance and vehicle-return scheduling, and for clients, it's a clear safety bonus that they know where the vehicles are at all times.

The second significant barrier to introducing IVMS was driver resistance. Some clients were resistant to having their vehicles monitored and some drivers even went to the extreme of removing the units. Vista Hire still occasionally encounters this resistance, but the organisation's position is firm on why IVMS is retained in the vehicles; most clients appreciate it's about safety and not about being big brother.

There are no surprises and being open with clients and their drivers about IVMS being fitted in their vehicles is a crucial component for its acceptance. Vista Hire provides one or several IVMS keys which need to be inserted into the vehicle and all vehicles contain a sticker advising the driver that the vehicle is being monitored. The individual IVMS key ensures the driver of the vehicle understands that driving behaviour is being recorded – not fitting the key results in a horrible beeping noise being set off.



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The Vista Hire benefits

- return customers
- reduced maintenance on vehicles
- increased resale
- asset protection
- reduced insurance premiums.

IVMS has become an important tool in managing the fleet. The technology allows odometer readings to be proactively obtained which assists with better planning of vehicle servicing helping save us, and our client, time and money. Insurance premiums have also been reduced due to having IVMS in vehicles.

For clients who actively monitor their IVMS reports, the wear and tear on the vehicles is reduced, resulting in a higher resale value.

In addition, Vista Hire uses IVMS for handling other safety-related issues, including:

- assisting clients to locate their staff when working remotely.
- managing infringements.
- estimating toll road account balance in real time.
- assisting law enforcement agencies with their enquiries.
- assisting insurance assessors by providing driver behaviour data prior to incidents.



Trial demonstrates the technology makes a difference

Vista Hire is acutely aware that as a fleet owner it contributes to the volumes of vehicles on the road, and therefore has a responsibility to ensure its vehicles are being operated in a safe manner. Using IVMS and actively monitoring the data does make a difference. To demonstrate, Vista Hire ran a small internal trial.

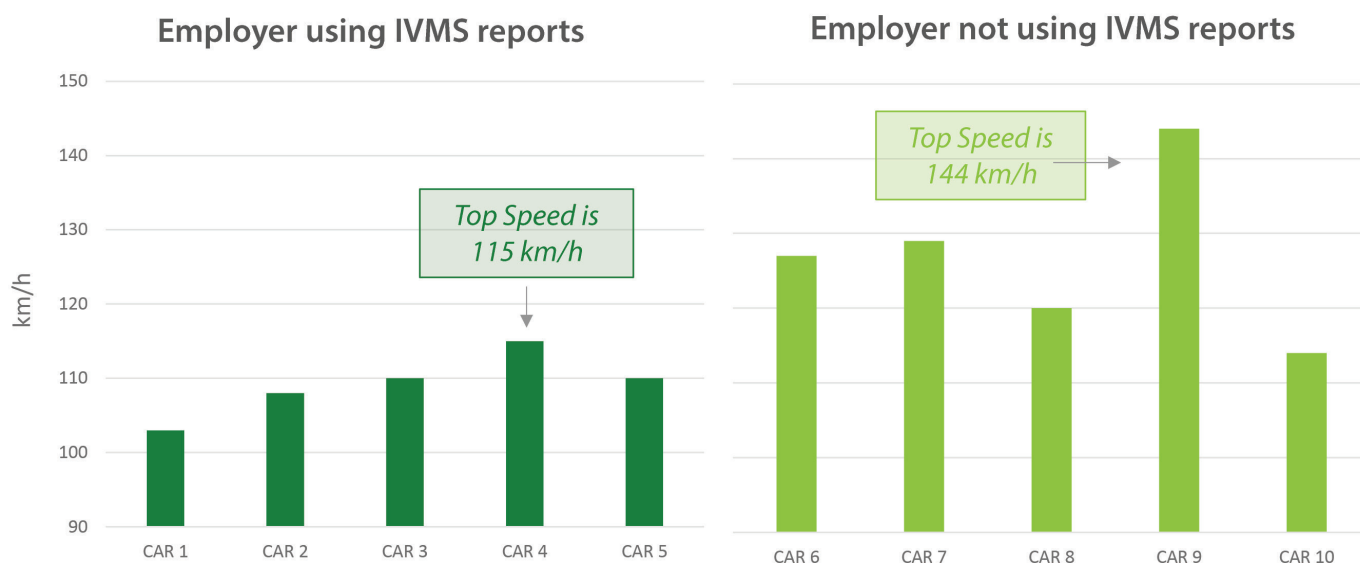
The trial parameters were:

- Compare 10 vehicles across the fleet:
 - 5 vehicles where the employer actively monitors and utilises IVMS reports.
 - 5 vehicles where the employer does not actively monitor IVMS reports.
- The comparison vehicles were driven a consistent number of days in the month of July 2015, and travelled an average 2,800 kms each.
- In all cases, the vehicle had a sticker advising that IVMS is installed.

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The trial results:

The data speaks for itself – the drivers of all vehicles where the data was not actively managed exceeded the 110 speed limit whereas those that were, only one vehicle marginally exceeded it.



The frequency of breaches also significantly increased.

Employer using IVMS reports			Employer not using IVMS reports				
Vehicle	Number of times > 110 km/h		Total times exceeded 110 km/h = 13	Vehicle	Number of times > 110 km/h		Total times exceeded 110 km/h = 734
CAR 1	0			CAR 6	332		
CAR 2	0			CAR 7	185		
CAR 3	3			CAR 8	55		
CAR 4	7			CAR 9	75		
CAR 5	3			CAR 10	87		

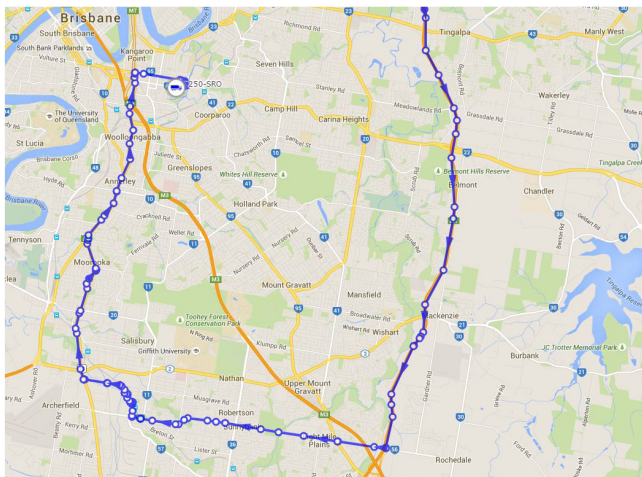
The change in behaviour was not restricted to just speeding but also seatbelt usage.

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	Employer using IVMS reports	Employer not using IVMS reports
Seat belt not worn > 5km/h	3	1563
Harsh braking event	12	15
Harsh acceleration event	3	16
Exceed 2 hours without a rest	2	5

Whilst the sample size is small there is no ambiguity in the data and trends. When employers actively monitor IVMS reports, their employees are less likely to speed and more likely to wear seatbelts. Fitting the technology alone is not sufficient to influence behaviour; an organisation that actively monitors the data and works with its employees can have an added impact on behaviour.

Since the business was founded there has been a shift within clients from just wanting a vehicle for the job that met contract parameters to now ensuring that the vehicle and the driver do it as safely as possible.



For more information and case studies please go to www.nrspp.org.au

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