

Protecting a Company's Reputation through GPS Technology: The Alure Home Improvements Story



Company Name:

Alure Home Improvements, Inc.

Location:

Plainview, NY

Industry:

Home Remodeling/Construction

Fleet Size:

33

Customer Since:

2004

Even before they were thrust into the national spotlight via five appearances on the hit TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, Alure Home Improvements, Inc., a home remodeling firm based in Plainview, NY, was no stranger to success. Alure recently celebrated their 60th year in business and is experiencing 25-30% growth per year, according to John Doyle, Director of Technology and Communications for the Long Island-based contractor. They currently have a staff of 105 people that provide service to all of Long Island, all five boroughs of New York City, Westchester, Rockland and Putnam counties in New York state, as well as Ocean, Middlesex and Monmouth counties in New Jersey.

“At this point, we’ve become something of a brand,” said Doug Cornwell, Alure’s Vice President of Operations. “People see our trucks all over the New York metropolitan area, and when I travel to other places, they know our name from TV. We need to protect that name, and any tool that can help us do that is an asset to our company.”

One such tool they discovered while researching ways to increase organizational productivity is GPS-based fleet management. The senior managers at Alure recognized the need to track vehicle location and activity, in order to manage their increasing amount of assets and keep their drivers accountable. They tried a hand-held GPS tracking solution, but almost immediately realized its limitations (if the units were turned off, they couldn’t track anything). Next, they turned to on-board GPS systems.

Unfortunately, it didn’t take long for them to see that not all GPS-based fleet management providers are created equal. “We started using the technology about five years ago, but quickly became unhappy with the system we had purchased,” said Doyle. “We were given a simple software package, but had to store all the data we collected on our own servers. We had to maintain everything.” Cornwell adds, “We would go 2 or 3 days before we knew there was a problem in some cases... and then we’d never be able to retrieve the data we lost.” Vehicle activities during these times would be virtually unknown.

“It became clear that we needed a more powerful and more sophisticated GPS system,” Doyle said. That’s when they turned to Navtrak. “Navtrak offered us exactly what we were looking for: a system that they were hosting, with nothing on our end as far as weighing on our IT resources. Also, their solution wasn’t contingent on any side deals, like a separate three-year agreement with a wireless carrier. It was comprehensive.”

Business challenges Alure faced:

- **Inability to see the “big picture”** – As their business grew, Alure needed to stay on top of their entire operation, know the status of their vehicles at a glance, and be able to respond quickly to problems.
- **Lack of accountability for drivers** – Because of the large investment and liability represented by their vehicles and equipment on the road, Alure needed to make sure their drivers were being responsible. “If people see one Alure van driving recklessly, that’s a perception given to the whole company,” said Doyle.
- **Inability to keep drivers safe/assets secure** – Alure wanted to make sure that both their drivers and their assets were protected, and in the case of emergencies be able to send help quickly.
- **Drain on IT resources** – The company did not want their own internal IT resources – servers and personnel – bogged down with issues pertaining to data storage/recovery and tech support.
- **Unnecessary lapses in productivity** – Rather than waste time looking for the closest driver to an important site or calculating fuel and maintenance expenses, Alure needed to be able to find specific drivers immediately and run reports on all vehicle activities whenever necessary.

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-John Doyle

Director of Technology & Communications
Alure Home Improvements, Inc.



Driving Business Success

Benefits Navtrak has delivered:

- **Operational visibility** – With Navtrak, managers are able to see where all of their vehicles are at a glance on the desktop-based maps, or call up reports via the web while out of the office. “The fact that any of our managers can access your reports from anywhere is a huge benefit,” Doyle said.
- **Increased productivity/responsibility** – The system saves Alure a significant amount of time and money through more efficient routing, more responsible driver behavior, and its ability to keep accurate records of vehicle activities.
- **Employee accountability** – Cornwell states that while Alure makes sure their drivers know they’re not being watched at every minute, they also make clear that the company has expectations are in terms of performance, and that Navtrak helps them to measure that. “As soon as we start to get complaints on a job, the first place we go is to the Navtrak system. We find out what our guys have been up to for the past week or so, and address any issues that may come up. It’s an essential tool for our managers in terms of keeping their people accountable.”
- **Driver safety/security** – Alure was recently reminded of Navtrak’s value in terms of protecting their drivers’ safety. “One of our drivers got into a bad accident on the New England Thruway, and as it turned out, he was pretty banged up with internal injuries,” Doyle recalled. “We went right onto Navtrak and found out exactly where he was... help arrived within minutes. The system really played a role in saving his life.”
- **Improved customer service** – Because with Navtrak they know the location of their vehicles at any given moment, Alure is better able to respond to customer questions, Doyle said. “We’re able to give the customer instant feedback now.”
- **Efficient routing** – Alure often uses the Navtrak maps to help their drivers get to where they’re going more quickly – or, in some cases, if it’s an area they’re not familiar with. “Since we’re expanding into new areas, the guys making deliveries don’t always know where they are,” explained Doyle. “Our managers use Navtrak to let them know how to get to where they’re going.”

Doyle and Cornwell cited many other Navtrak features that impressed them as well especially their friendly, knowledgeable customer support staff. When Navtrak came in and conducted a two-hour web training presentation with several of their managers, “we were exposed to their excellent support team. Any time there’s a question or an issue, they’ve been available to us – whether it’s through the chat interface (NavChat™), e-mail or on the phone. Any request that we needed they handled flawlessly – nothing was too simple or too difficult, they got back to us really quickly on everything. They’ve always been very responsive,” Doyle said.

Doyle summed up the value Alure is experiencing with Navtrak in this way: “For us, Navtrak’s primary use is to protect the company image and our assets – though we definitely recognize the other service-related benefits from it as well. Would we want to run our business without Navtrak? Definitely not.”

Navtrak: The Proven Remedy for Mobile Workforce Headaches

All organizations with mobile workforces contend with “headaches” that limit productivity and reduce profits. If any of the following pain points is an issue for your business, be sure to read the corresponding case study (available at www.navtrak.net) to learn how Navtrak provides the cure!

- Excessive overtime costs:
The Bug Doctor story
- Insufficient knowledge of vehicle location/activity:
The Sunshine Paving story
- Inaccurate dispatching:
The Choptank Electric story
- Security and liability concerns:
The J.H. Peterson story
- Inaccurate tracking of vehicles:
The Boucher Real Estate story
- Inefficient delivery practices:
The Somerset Food Service story

For more information on how Navtrak can “heal” your mobile workforce headaches, contact your local Navtrak salesperson today, or email us at sales@navtrak.net.

GPS-Based Management Tools for Businesses with Mobile Workforces

