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Media Contacts: Andrew Vincent on +44 (0)1869 353800 or Andy Achimu on +44 (0)207 457 2020, at College Hill

Isotrak boosts Debenhams' drive towards first-class fleet efficiency

Leading department store Debenhams has selected Isotrak's Active Transport Management System (ATMS), in preference to a number of competitors, to provide HGV tracking and telematics functionality throughout its UK mainland delivery fleet.

With roll-out now complete, Debenhams is already saving money and reducing its carbon emissions, plus its additional fleet efficiencies helped achieve an excellent delivery service throughout peak trading at the end of 2009.

Isotrak emerged as the superior provider in a competitive tender, undertaken through a Request for Quotation (RfQ) process, in the final quarter of 2008. ATMS is now running successfully in all 84 core tractors and more than 20 spot-hire tractors, which are operated by DHL Supply Chain from the Debenhams Distribution Centres (DCs) in Northampton and Peterborough.

Paul Leggett, Head of Logistics for Debenhams, comments: "Isotrak's ATMS is already bedded in and doing exactly what it was supposed to do. We can see that the project will pay back in only two years, and any future additions to the fleet will provide an even swifter return, because all of the initial implementation costs have been covered already. Additional benefits will accrue from decreasing CO₂ emissions, as we reduce the number of miles run and improve fuel consumption."

Craig Sears-Black, Sales & Marketing Director of Isotrak, adds: "We're honoured to be working with such a major name in retail, and glad that Debenhams recognised the merit of our objective approach, which is driven by customer business strategy. We look forward to sharing in Debenhams' future successes, as we help to support their ambitious business growth plans."

Meeting the need

Debenhams' RfQ contained specific requirements for the provision of vehicle tracking, monitoring and alerts, plus vehicle and driver performance reporting, that Isotrak had to address. Debenhams' goal was to reduce operating costs by (i) deploying its fleet vehicles more efficiently and (ii) reducing fuel consumption and maintenance costs by monitoring the way vehicles were being driven.

Thanks to its strong transport heritage, and experience with some of the UK's biggest transport operators (household names such as Asda, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Eddie Stobart), Isotrak was able to meet all of the RfQ's identified needs with four of the specialised modules that comprise ATMS: Vehicle Tracking, Driver Style Management, Resource Management and Route Planning & Scheduling.

Each module has been developed in conjunction with the UK's leading retailers to meet specific transport systems needs. The modular approach provides flexible scope to add functionality in future.

Proving its worth

Additionally, Isotrak was able to show Debenhams upfront what return on investment they should achieve, by undertaking a Transport Efficiency Analysis (TEA). The TEA is a unique pre-sales service that observes normal operations in a representative sample of fleet vehicles, to indicate the scale of benefits that should be available in a whole-fleet deployment.

Isotrak's Vehicle Tracking module indicated significant potential for Debenhams to reduce the amount of unproductive time on the road, speed up turnaround time at stores and lose less downtime by avoiding prolonged spells in repair. Isotrak's Driving Style Module, meanwhile, which uses engine telematics data to measure whether a vehicle is being driven fuel-efficiently, showed there was scope to improve fuel consumption across the fleet by 4%.

Overall the investment is due to pay for itself within two years.

Reaping the benefits

Debenhams is now using Isotrak's real time data to track and monitor its fleet for unauthorised stops and delays at stores or suppliers. Built-in reporting systems have increased the quality of debriefs so that drivers are kept continually updated on their performance against set criteria, such as Delivery on Time performance and fuel-efficient driving styles, as soon as they return to base.

Significant additional savings have been identified through the integration of Debenhams' local transport planning function with ATMS for fleet and driver work assignment. By more effectively matching the availability of fleet and available drivers, dwell times in depots are being reduced. This high level of integration was a key factor in Debenhams' final choice of Isotrak as their supplier.

Another important benefit is the extension of Isotrak's functionality into Debenhams' spot-hire vehicles, all of which are now specified with the appropriate CANBus interface. Plus Debenhams is also beginning to use ATMS to generate 'geofence' alerts for arrivals at stores. "We see this, plus real time monitoring of dwell times at stores, depots and suppliers, as being the key to more effective use of the fleet," comments Paul Leggett.

A longer-term goal is investigating opportunities to provide visibility of jobs across the whole transport network, delivering continually updated ETAs to destinations via the Isotrak job management module. Isotrak's 3iS solution, for example, allows the automatic collection, display and reporting on 3PL, partner and carrier fleets into the Debenhams ATMS system. Live data is collected via an Isotrak-developed link from any designated telematics provider.

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Notes to Editors

For more information or to request photography or an interview, please contact:

Andrew Vincent	+44 (0)1869 353 800	(andrew.vincent@collegehill.com)
Andy Achimu	+44 (0)20 7457 2020	(andy.achimu@collegehill.com)

About Isotrak

Isotrak customers save over £100,000,000 per year by using their mobile assets more efficiently.

Isotrak helps companies save money, improve customer service, reduce their environmental impact and win new business, all by using mobile assets more efficiently. Isotrak provides best-in-class software products and professional service solutions, driven by a combination of real-time visibility and performance measurement, interpreted from GPS satellite tracking and vehicle telematics data. To help customers focus on the job of managing transport, rather than managing technology, Isotrak delivers its products on a proven 'managed service' platform, backed by a high-availability Service Level Agreement (SLA), and accessible through any modern web browser.

Established in 1996 as a division of NFC, Isotrak became a separate company in July 1999 and today supports over 21,000 vehicle connections for customers including Asda, Eddie Stobart, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Skanska Utilities, Tesco, and the Royal Mail and many more. For more information, see www.isotrak.com

Corporate enquiries to Craig Sears-Black, telephone +44 (0) 1908 540 777 or email sales@isotrak.com

About Debenhams

Debenhams is a leading department stores group with a strong presence in key product categories including womenswear, menswear, childrenswear, health and beauty, accessories, lingerie and home. Debenhams is the second largest department store chain in the UK. Debenhams has a total of 145 department stores in the UK and the Republic of Ireland and 12 Desire by Debenhams stores, which is a small store concept featuring a mix of womenswear, health and beauty, accessories, lingerie and childrenswear. Debenhams has 52 international franchise stores in 17 countries and an online store, www.debenhams.com, through which much of the Debenhams range is available.