ZEBRA

SUMMARY

TPAINOE

Customer
TrainOSE

Partner
Novatron

Industry
Train Operator

Challenge
Implement a robust and reliable digital ticketing solution across passenger train services, combined with a central device management system, to enable operational efficiencies at the point of ticket issue and validation, plus effective ongoing solution monitoring and management

Solution
- Zebra TC5x Series Mobile Computers
- Zebra ZQ320 Mobile Printers
- Zebra VisibilityIQ™ Foresight

Results
- Improved operational efficiencies
- Faster ticket issue and validation
- Enhanced revenue
- Easy audit trail of ticket sales
- Full device visibility and proactive data-driven analytics capabilities across the passenger train fleet

Greek Train Operator Tracks Efficiencies to New Digital Ticketing System

TrainOSE Deploys Zebra Mobile Technology for Ticketing Along with VisibilityIQ™ to Enhance All-Around Efficiencies

TrainOSE is responsible for the smooth running of 342 passenger and commercial train routes every day across Greece. It's a demanding operation, with services criss-crossing the country and connecting rural communities, tourist destinations and urban centres via a network of local, regional and national routes.

The transfer of ownership of TrainOSE from the Greek State to a private company, FS Italiane, in September 2017 signalled the start of an ambitious project. It set out to define and adopt innovative working practices that would help transform the service experience for travellers and drive major efficiencies across operations.

A key focus area was ticketing. Previously, train conductors used pen and paper to check tickets in a time-consuming process. For example, if 100 passengers on a train were travelling 10 minutes to the next station, the conductor would only be able to work their way through a small number before the next stop. As a result, revenue was potentially being lost.

To help conductors work more effectively, TrainOSE reached out to Novatron, an Athens-based retail technology specialist, to explore how it could roll out a state-of-the-art digital ticketing system. As this was uncharted territory for TrainOSE, it worked closely with Novatron to look at technology options and progressively test and validate new solutions.

An Engine for Digital Transformation
"We started by offering just a couple of mobile devices and printers on selected routes to test the concept," explains Nikos Mastorakos, Zebra Technologies' Senior Sales Engineer. "Over time, we worked closely with Novatron to deploy more devices and printers."

Today, TrainOSE uses almost 250 Zebra TC5x Series Mobile Computers, each paired with Zebra ZQ320 indoor mobile receipt printers, supplied by Novatron. In addition, Novatron assisted TrainOSE with the deployment of Zebra VisibilityIQ™ Foresight. VisibilityIQ Foresight provides a web-accessible dashboard and management toolset which enable TrainOSE to remotely oversee the status and location of its mobile devices. Panagiotis Tsiakas, TrainOSE's Director of IT, says, "Ours was the first deployment of VisibilityIQ Foresight in Greece by a transportation provider."

Operational Efficiencies and Improved Revenue

The solution means each collector on a train can digitally validate and issue tickets – something previously only possible at the counter in a railway station or travel centre. The switch by conductors from pen and paper to a fully digital solution has transformed the way in which they work. It is also delivering wider operational benefits.

"It is not just a streamlined solution for train staff and passengers," explains Mastorakos. "There are the obvious benefits of being able to print a digital ticket faster, rather than writing the ticket on paper and handing it to the customer. And, with a digital solution, everything is much clearer and more transparent. For example, colleagues no longer have to try to interpret what a conductor was trying to write on a particular ticket. Everything on the operations side is much smoother too, including the overall control function, financial components, audit trails and more."

In addition to driving operational efficiencies, the digital ticketing project has also helped boost revenue. TrainOSE now has immediate visibility of issued tickets from a financial perspective. All sales are added to the revenue of the company and can be viewed by anyone in the financial department or senior management team.

"Sometimes people with unchecked tickets would be lost to us, so it was a revenue loss for the company," admits Tsiakas. "With a digital solution, it is much faster to issue or check tickets, so our conductors can do their job quicker and more efficiently. This is why we are looking to invest more in this solution."

With VisibilityIQ Foresight, TrainOSE can view near real-time reports on the status and usage of devices across its fleet as well as proactive recommendations to optimise device health. For instance, if a device is not being properly charged, is experiencing wireless hiccups, or applications are not performing as expected, these issues will be highlighted so steps can be taken to address potential problems before they impact device performance. It is anticipated the data from VisibilityIQ Foresight will be used to inform any future projects.

"Zebra is not just the vendor, Novatron the consultant and TrainOSE the client – we are all collaborators and we are taking things forward together. If their solutions don't work for clients, then they won't go anywhere. If we don't have them, we cannot do our business. So, it's a win-win-win situation for everyone. And when your experience is totally positive, and your technology partners have proved the capabilities and the capacity of the solution they are recommending and delivering, you're not afraid to rely on what they are proposing for future projects."

Panagiotis Tsiakas, Director of IT, TrainOSE

Impressive Quality, Performance and Ongoing Support

Clearly happy with the continued rollout of the ticketing project, TrainOSE was initially convinced by a combination of Zebra product quality and performance levels. But what is really helping the company now is the continuing consultancy expertise provided by Zebra and Novatron.

Tsiakas stresses that the ongoing level of business support TrainOSE receives is very important. "For us, it's vital to have a solution we know is working and that we have immediate support if something doesn't work. It's essential in terms of business continuity."

Based on the positive results and clear benefits it has experienced with digital ticketing, TrainOSE expects to extend the rollout of mobile ticketing terminals and printers to new services.
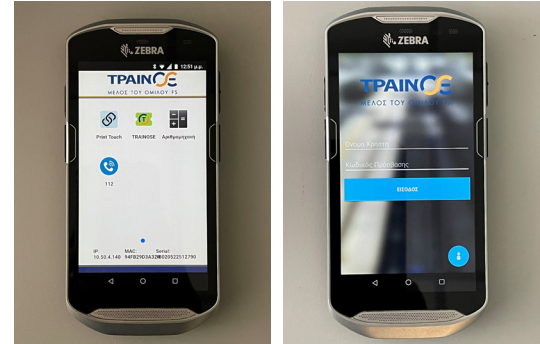
*Since July 1, 2022, TrainOSE is now known as Hellenic Train

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