ZEBRA

Pittsburgh Parking Authority Enforcement Department Increases Revenue by Millions

ACCURATE, ELECTRONIC TICKETING ELIMINATES MOST ERRORS

The thriving city of Pittsburgh, home to about 300,000 people, is accustomed to accolades. It's been named America's most livable city by Forbes, Yahoo! and The Economist. The Public Parking Authority of Pittsburgh (PPAP) owns and operates all its garages and metered and surface public parking lots, just one aspect of what makes day-to-day living in Pittsburgh easy for residents and visitors alike.

Challenge

In 2008, PPAP logged 5.5 million parking transactions. Last year, the department's 34 officers issued more than 280,000 tickets for violations such as parking in a no-parking zone, parking in front of fire hydrants, expired meters and not moving for street cleaning.

The PPAP operates like a well-oiled machine, but that wasn't always the case. Over the years, the department has tried various methods of issuing tickets, from handwriting to electronic handheld devices tethered to mobile printers.

"We got a lot of complaints about errors on handwritten tickets," said Tom Vennero, MIS coordinator at PPAP. "The officer could make an error and then the data clerk could make an error, so easily 15 percent had errors."

Beyond the need for accuracy, when the pressure's on — during fast-paced street cleaning, for example — enforcement officers must be able to print rapidly and deliver tickets that drivers can easily read.

SUMMARY

Pittsburgh PARKING Authority
The Value Parking Network

Customer
Public Parking Authority of Pittsburgh

Partner
Gtechna Inc.

Industry
Government

Challenge
Reduce the number of errors and enhance legibility on parking tickets to increase revenue.

Solution
- Zebra QL320Plus Mobile Printer
- Mobile Enforcement Solutions (MESTM) ticketing software by Gtechna
- Zebra handheld devices

Results
- Officers print 300 tickets — about one each minute — in a 5 to 6-hour street cleaning shift.
- Fewer errors — due to retyping or weather — means as much as $5 million additional revenue.

Solution

PPAP implemented an electronic ticketing system and has continued to upgrade its technology over the past decade.

According to Anthony Boule, Director of Administration and Pittsburgh Parking Court, PPAP has relied on Zebra® printers for more than a decade, and currently equips all officers with the Zebra QL 320™ model.

Durable and lightweight, the Zebra QL™ series printers are well-suited to PPAP's demands. Enforcement officers easily carry the two-pound printers on their belts. With a wireless Bluetooth® connection, the officers use their handhelds freely without being tethered.

KEEPING UP WITH STREET CLEANING

PPAP loads printers with rolls of blank, seven-inch tickets preprinted with a header and footer with standard information. For the location, enforcement officers simply scan barcodes on parking meters and the software auto-fills the street address, along with the date and time.

Enforcement officers then select from drop-down menus the make and model of the car, the license plate number and one of more than 70 different violation codes. When they enter a code, the software automatically fills in the amount of the fine, without requiring officers to remember the various amounts.

One of the most compelling aspects of Gtechna's MES™ software is its ability to automate the end-to-end process. The intuitive interface, combined with customer-defined drop-down lists and automatic repetition of recurring data, allows for easy screen navigation and data entry. To issue a ticket, an officer simply adds an electronic signature, a ticket is printed, and data is sent wirelessly to a central server at the end of the shift where it can be easily accessed through ticket management software.

In five to six hours, officers might issue as many as 300 tickets. Each one takes less than a minute to produce.

Each roll contains 200 tickets, so officers dispense tickets without interruption. At no time is that more critical than during street cleaning. Officers must work behind the street-cleaners to ticket cars still parked during posted cleaning times.

"Street cleaning is a pretty good load on the printer and handheld. It puts the printer to the test," said Judi DeVito, Director of Enforcement and Meter Services at PPAP. "The printer never seems to have a problem keeping up; it's more the enforcement officer keeping up with street-cleaning equipment."

MORE ACCURATE TICKETS

With Zebra printers, PPAP also produces more legible tickets than before. Not only can citizens can read them easily, but the tickets stand up to the Pittsburgh weather — reducing the number of questions and objections about tickets.

"It rains and tickets are left on cars. It's a pretty durable ticket," Vennero said. "We have very few complaints about readability."

Twice every day, tickets upload to the server for citation management and processing. Electronic entry at the street level, and then no duplicate entry, reduces errors dramatically.

Results

With a combination of speed, accuracy and legibility, PPAP's electronic ticket system brings greater efficiency — and revenue — to the department.

Previously as much as 15 percent of tickets had errors or legibility problems, now only about 1 percent have such problems. By taking back revenue on these questionable tickets, the department reclaims millions of dollars in annual revenue.

"We've seen an increase in the tickets we're able to write and a reduction in errors," DeVito said.

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>
> **Judi DeVito, Director of Enforcement and Meter Services**

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NA and Corporate Headquarters | +1 800 423 0442 | inquiry4@zebra.com