



FULL SPEED AHEAD HASTUS™ SOFTWARE HELPS QBUZZ LAUNCH NEW BUS SERVICE IN RECORD TIME

The newest bus operator to emerge on the Dutch transit scene may be young but is showing early signs of success, thanks in part to a shrewd decision by Qbuzz co-founders to implement GIRO's HASTUS software solution.

Founded less than two years ago by Rob van Holten and Leon Struijk, Qbuzz has made significant progress in its mission to provide efficient bus service to Netherlands-based transit users. In the company's early days, while operating services in Friesland and Rotterdam, Qbuzz perceived a need for more sophisticated scheduling capabilities. By May 2009, within six months of its launch, Qbuzz had selected a new scheduling solution capable of providing the level of efficiency it required: HASTUS.

GIRO is a veteran supplier of software solutions, with more than 30 years' experience in the transit industry and hundreds of successful installations in major cities around the world. The company's HASTUS software is a comprehensive solution that integrates tools for planning, scheduling, operations and management, data analysis, passenger information, and web services.

GIRO entered the Netherlands market nearly twenty years ago and, as a result, has a deep understanding of the Dutch transit industry. Likewise, Qbuzz' familiarity with HASTUS preceded its relationship with GIRO: newly hired senior schedulers had used HASTUS extensively prior to joining Qbuzz and knew the scheduling software like the back of their hand. The companies' mutual understanding of HASTUS technology and Dutch transit practices positively influenced the scope and speed of the software installation project.

Project overview

In the first year of operations, senior schedulers encountered technology issues that were impeding efficiency and would begin to negatively impact customer satisfaction and ridership if unaddressed. They immediately presented a recommendation to Qbuzz management for the

acquisition of HASTUS scheduling software. Soon after, the company solicited a proposal from GIRO. The HASTUS offering highlighted major functional and performance advantages that indicated excellent return on investment.

In May 2009, Qbuzz inked a contract for HASTUS. With the company having won additional contracts to operate bus services in Drenthe and Groningen in December 2009, the timeframe to implement HASTUS was extremely tight, but not impossible. And so began one of GIRO's fastest installation projects.

An ambitious timeline

The HASTUS scheduling software – with the Vehicle, Crew, and CrewOpt modules – was initially purchased to manage Qbuzz' fleet of 140 buses and staff of 485 drivers. GIRO successfully delivered all three modules in just two months, which was unprecedented even for a fast-track installation. Immediately after, Qbuzz ordered the Roster scheduling module and the DailyCrew operations module to help improve the daily assignment and management of driver duties. The final version of DailyCrew was delivered in three months, respecting the

November 1 deadline. HASTOP was the last module to be added in 2009 and was delivered within a month. By December, all HASTUS modules purchased by Qbuzz had been fully implemented and were operating successfully.

The HASTUS installation was completed successfully and in record time thanks to the dedication and experience of both Qbuzz and GIRO. Qbuzz staff spent six weeks at GIRO's head office in Montreal between July and October to complete the specifications and software customisation simultaneously.

Qbuzz staff, already proficient with HASTUS scheduling modules, quickly assimilated the new concepts of the DailyCrew module. And, just one week after receiving the scheduling modules, Qbuzz was already using the CrewOpt module to optimise driver schedules and was able to deploy and fine-tune the module without assistance from GIRO. The level of HASTUS expertise demonstrated by Qbuzz schedulers enabled product training to be completed quickly and facilitated the configuration of statistics, payroll codes, and other validations required to ensure conformity with the company's collective agreement rules.





Leon Struijk, Rob van Holten

The HASTOP module was ordered in November 2009, during Qbuzz' last visit to Montreal to finalise the DailyCrew project. Qbuzz needed HASTOP in order to produce timetable posters in a specific format, and implementation was required in time for the December 13 launch of the new bus services in Drenthe and Groningen. GIRO had less than three months to prepare the specifications, produce Crystal Reports® templates, adjust the application to generate a route diagram meeting Qbuzz' requirements, and to train users. Teams worked diligently to complete the project on time, and the hard work paid off: Qbuzz schedulers delivered the timetables a day before deadline.

The collaboration between GIRO and Qbuzz did not end in 2009. In January 2010, Qbuzz ordered the HASTUS Geo and Minbus modules (rounding out the full scheduling suite), as well as the NetPlan module for improved network planning, and PlanOpt for the automatic assignment of daily uncovered work to drivers.

Results

Qbuzz has tripled the size of its operations, going from a staff of 485 to 1300 and increasing its fleet from 140 peak vehicles to 500. Throughout the company's growth, HASTUS has played an integral role in helping Qbuzz improve efficiency and optimise vehicle resources.

Despite being the youngest bus operator in the Netherlands, Qbuzz received the highest customer satisfaction rating in 2009 according to the OV Klantenbarometer, a national survey of the views of passengers on urban and regional public transit. This recognition reflects, in part,

the quality of HASTUS software and the successful collaboration of GIRO and Qbuzz throughout the installation.

The cooperation was a true blending of expertise and commitment to success. No other HASTUS client had devoted as much time to working directly with GIRO in Montreal to expedite product configuration and customisation. The installation at Qbuzz was one of GIRO's fastest projects and marked a series of firsts for the company:

- **Most modules added consecutively in a year**

While the majority of GIRO clients are repeat buyers of HASTUS software, never before had a client ordered and installed as many new modules back-to-back in one year. This spoke volumes about the overall quality of HASTUS software and GIRO's level of product support.

- **Fastest installation of scheduling modules**

Delivery of the HASTUS scheduling modules and associated optimisers within two months was a company record for GIRO. In addition to full-time dedication to this project by GIRO's various teams, the company's past experience with Netherlands-based clients helped GIRO to quickly grasp the needs of Qbuzz and adapt its software accordingly. The experience of Qbuzz staff with HASTUS and with transit operations in general greatly accelerated product training, customisation, and the overall installation process.

- **Most advanced use of configuration tools**

Configuring software for a newly established company tends to be a rare situation and, as such, provides greater freedom in implementing business rules. The Qbuzz project team – with its excellent preexisting knowledge of HASTUS applications and configuration tools – was able to maximise the solution's configuration capabilities. This enabled GIRO to quickly configure statistics, pay codes, and validations while minimising modelisation compromises that are inevitable in fast-track projects.

HASTUS: an intelligent investment

HASTUS is a comprehensive and flexible solution designed to help transit authorities optimise planning, scheduling, and operations, as well as improve cost efficiency and deliver high-quality service to passengers. The software's underlying database is open and

"The quality and efficacy of the work done by GIRO's staff was impressive. They clearly understood our needs and treated our mandate of improving service and efficiency as if it were their own. We were confident in GIRO's ability to deliver a high-quality HASTUS solution in a very short period of time, and they did not disappoint."

Leon Struijk
Director, Qbuzz

easily accessible to other systems (such as payroll) via comprehensive integration tools to ensure a reliable and complete source of transit operations data.

HASTUS is renowned for powerful analysis tools such as the NetPlan module. Designed to help ensure improved connections and reduce travel time, this module is the ultimate tool for performance analysis and developing planning studies aimed at creating efficient transit networks and schedules. The accuracy and efficiency provided by NetPlan gives operators a competitive advantage in the bid tendering process.

The new PlanOpt module optimises the assignment of daily driver work using an advanced algorithm that automatically assigns daily uncovered work to available drivers while ensuring compliance with company-specific requirements and constraints, and taking into account employee preferences and satisfaction counters.

HASTUS solutions are developed and supported by experienced and professional staff. GIRO's renowned customer support includes product training sessions and annual HASTUS User Groups that provide customers with the latest updates, hands-on workshops, and opportunities to share their experiences with other HASTUS users from around the world ●

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