



Driving forward a mobile workforce

How Personal Group are helping Oxford Bus Company with their mobile-first offering

Oxford Bus Company is a subsidiary of the **Go-Ahead Group**, a FTSE-listed public transport provider. Operating a fleet of **280 buses and coaches**, Oxford Bus Company and its sister companies - Thames Travel, Carousel Buses and City Sightseeing Oxford - offer a range of services in and around the city and beyond.

The company employs **950 people** in the UK, including part-time staff, and is heavily male dominated. In fact, **85 percent of the company's workforce are men**, most of whom are constantly on the move and behind a wheel. Having a large proportion of its workforce out on the road created a significant employee communication challenge for Oxford Bus Company. As a result, in 2015, take up of the company's benefits programme amongst workers was just 20 percent.

Luke Marion, Finance and Commercial Director, at Oxford Bus Company explained, *"For a long time, our biggest challenge was employee communication. Our workforce is 85 percent male, and most spend long, unsociable hours driving buses. They don't spend their days sitting at desks or using technology. We wanted to make our workers' jobs about more than just a salary, but despite offering a benefits programme, many of our employees didn't even realise they had access to anything. So, we needed to find a way to connect them to the company. That was going to be the key to get them the support they were entitled to."*

First step: Connecting the unconnected

Through our existing insurance and benefits partnership with Go North East, a subsidiary of the Go-Ahead Group, we were introduced to Luke and his team. We sat down to discuss the challenges they were facing.

It became clear that we needed to implement an engagement strategy tailor-made for workers on the move, as well as an easy-to-use, digital platform that was accessible anywhere, anytime.

Oxford Bus Company was also in the early stages of developing an online tool called Das Web, to help connect its workforce and allow them to manage their work shifts digitally. Luke explained to us that the project had been a long time coming due to the number of resources required to build such a service.

We worked closely with Luke to personalise and tailor our existing Hapi platform for an on-the-go workforce. This included the cost-effective integration of Das Web into Hapi at the inception stage.

Getting from A to B requires easy-to-follow directions

However, creating a bespoke, mobile-first intranet and benefit offering does not necessarily mean employees are going to start using it. Not without encouragement and support to show them how. To help with this, we placed Hapi at the heart of the company's functionality. From handbooks and rotas, to payslips and accident forms, everything became solely accessible in one place; Hapi. We worked closely with the business to make sure the layout and structure of the Hapi site was exactly how they wanted it.

We worked with Oxford Bus Company to promote Hapi across the depot. Using a lot of visual aids to showcase the benefits on offer, we were able to engage with people early on. For example, we showcased bikes and set up home technology stands to help explain our salary sacrifice schemes. As well as banners and posters that we put up around the depot to promote, we went in and met with employees and hosted roadshows together with Oxford Bus Company to demonstrate the app first-hand. The employees really gravitated towards us and it helped to generate meaningful conversations.

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With awareness of Hapi growing, the Oxford Bus Company placed ten iPads and printers around its depots to provide access to Hapi and training on how to use them. Providing the technology ensured everyone could be included, access their benefits, and print documents if they needed. Rotas, payslips and messages are now the biggest use areas across Hapi. In October alone, there were 123,000 logins. This tells you how much the 950-strong workforce has come to rely on it.

Benefits that support the whole person, on and off the road

Financial: Over 750 of Oxford Bus Company's employees are now active users of Hapi – that's **81 percent**.

Over the last 12 months, discounts from our rewards programme have been used on around **£66,000** worth of everyday spending. Every October, the company offers our salary sacrifice scheme on technology; which saves money on anything from games consoles to smartphones. This year, **438 employees** signed up to the scheme, with **157 smartphones** among the orders placed in time for Christmas.

Mental: Oxford Bus Company employees have made **78 calls** to Personal Group's dedicated EAP service in the last year. Anonymous calls covered a variety of topics from mental health and relationships to legal and financial advice.

Physical: The company also incorporates **gym discounts** into its benefits offering to encourage people to get active.

Social: "Since we started working with Personal Group, we've launched a number of award programmes via Hapi, including 'Star of the Month'," added Luke. "Winners get their award in the form of a branded £100 e-card of their choice, which comes directly from their line manager. This level of personalisation is key for employee engagement." Luke concluded: "Hapi has helped us to show our employees we have different values to other bus companies in the area. It differentiates us. Our benefits and engagement offering has helped us attract and retain staff. It has been a huge support over the last few years when we've acquired other companies. The first things we were able to offer our new recruits were free bus passes and immediate access to Hapi. Working for other small businesses, they'd had never had that before. It helped get everyone onside quickly and really break the ice."

"As soon as we moved to Personal Group, the number of people engaging with the benefits offering went up from 20% to 35%, which was a step forward. After we launched the Hapi app, this went up even further. Now, over 80% of our workforce engages with Hapi."

Luke Marion, Finance & Commercial Director