Swiftly

Oulu Public Transport Authority Eliminated the Need for Two Buses with Swiftly

The planning team at Oulu Public Transport Authority (PTA) was using anecdotal evidence to adjust run-times and create timetables, which was time consuming and led to inefficient schedules.

The team deployed Swiftly to analyse potential changes on a granular level, leading to shorter run-times, better relationships with operators, cost savings and improvements in on-time performance. Now the Oulu PTA takes an efficient, data-driven approach to planning and scheduling.

At a Glance

- OTP improved by an average of 10–20% on routes adjusted using Swiftly, with some routes achieving OTP improvements over 20%
- Run-times have been reduced by up to 15 minutes on routes modified using Swiftly

- Planners can adjust routes 63% faster with Swiftly
- Relationships with operators have improved as a result of more accurate, efficient schedules
- Optimised schedules reduced vehicle requirements, eliminating the need for two buses and expanding route service without increasing any costs

Plenty of Data, but No Way to Fully Utilise It

Oulu PTA needed a proactive approach to data. When the planning team adjusted run-times and put together new timetables, they relied primarily on anecdotal information, which made the planning process challenging and imprecise. *"The process for creating and adjusting timetables was difficult before Swiftly. It was quite time consuming,"* says Helena Väliaho, Head of Public Transportation at PTA.

The planning team was only able to implement changes a few times a year. Operators and passengers would have to wait months until a scheduling problem was fixed. The planning team deployed Swiftly to get a granular understanding of where to make changes. *"We have always had plenty of data, but because we didn't have any analytical tools as advanced as Swiftly we weren't able to fully utilise our data,"* explains Tomi Paananen, Public Transportation Planner at PTA.

Using Swiftly to Redesign the Planning Process

Using Swiftly has transformed how the team builds new timetables. *"I use the On-Time Performance and Run-Times modules on a daily basis,"* says Paananen. *"Before, we adjusted our timetables a few times a year. Now we adjust our timetables every month. Before even a simple line would take multiple hours to analyse. Difficult cases would take us a whole day. Now it takes us anywhere from 15 minutes to three hours."*

> *"Swiftly is a game-changer as it gives the public authority the perfect tools to be a proactive planner."*
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> **Tomi Paananen**
> **Public Transportation Planner at PTA**

Paananen and Väliaho gave an example of how they use Swiftly to make changes. *"We recently updated Line 20,"* says Väliaho. *"The operator was saying we needed to add one minute to the total run-time for the route. Tomi and the team looked at it in Swiftly and actually ended up taking one minute away."*

"The problem on that line was that it wasn't spaced out right. We needed to take some time out of one part of the route and put it elsewhere." says Paananen.

"If we'd done it the way we'd done it before, we would have automatically added one minute to the route, and eventually it might mean adding an additional bus. Those minutes are cost savings for us," says Väliaho.

"After we implemented that change on Line 20, on-time performance increased by 15% immediately," says Väliaho.

On-Time Performance Gains, Cost Savings and Eliminating the Need for a Bus

PTA is seeing big results for routes adjusted using Swiftly.

"In total we have adjusted a little under 20 routes with Swiftly. On those routes, on-time performance has consistently improved over 10% and, in best cases, well over 20%," says Paananen.

"All of the routes we adjusted work really well right now. It looks like we don't have to touch them at all anymore. Before, we'd change

routes every single year, and now with Swiftly we are able to find a really good solution quickly," says Paananen.

PTA has also used Swiftly to discover that they can cut two buses without impacting service, which will lead to significant cost savings when they tender a new contract with operators.

"One of the biggest ways that Swiftly has helped us with cost savings is by showing us that there is usually way too much overall run-time on a route. Minutes are often in the wrong places. With Swiftly, a trip that used to take one hour now takes 50 minutes, meaning that we use fewer cars to provide the same level of service. We've downsized cars from 12 to 10, and we save kilometres and work hours too," says Paananen. "We can redistribute those resources elsewhere to provide better service overall."

"I use the on-time performance and run-time modules on a daily basis,"

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With Swiftly, Oulu saved **2** buses

Oulun joukkoliikenne **+** Swiftly
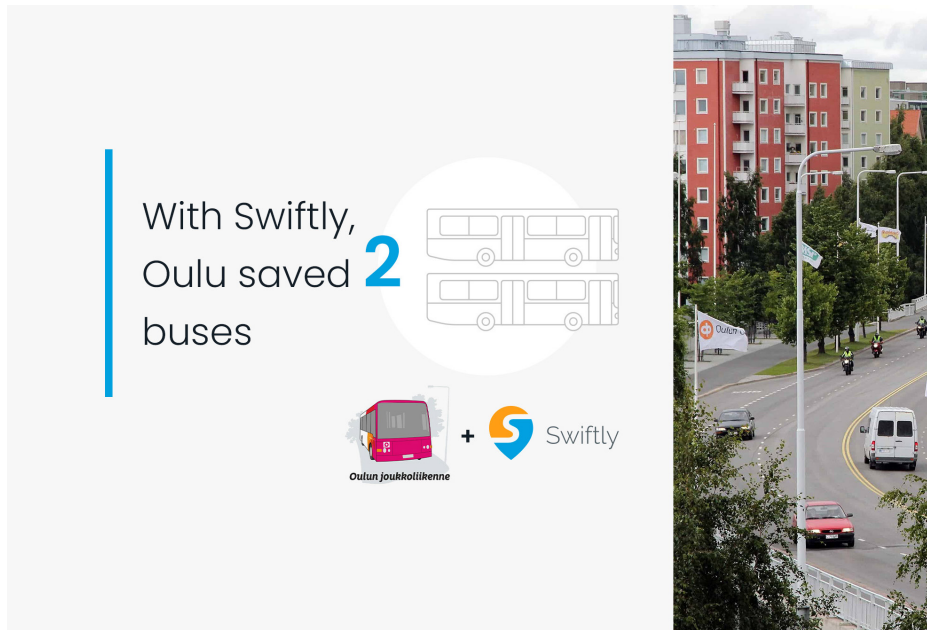
A Data Tool the Whole Agency Can Trust

"Now that we have this new process, I feel like the trust in our planning has improved," says Paananen. "Previously I felt like contractors had to be really careful with their driving and adjust the timing themselves during the routes. Now they can just drive as they go. They know that we can step in and change things after a few weeks if something is off, as opposed to waiting half a year until this gets adjusted. That increased operator trust has been one of the best things about working with Swiftly."

"Whenever I have to make a case for a tool, it's always about money. Swiftly makes it easier to make that case, because I can easily show how it's helped. And there are other teams here who are interested in using Swiftly as well, which makes it even more indispensable," says Väliaho.

"Swiftly has greatly improved the passenger experience: we are

able to detect problems before customers realise them.

Our customer service contacts regarding run-times have significantly dropped," says Paananen. "Customer service also uses GPS Playback and Live Operations to help passengers." "If you're an authority interested in a data-driven approach, Swiftly is the best. If I have to justify my decisions, it's a lot easier with Swiftly. I can confidently say what I need to say and back it up with data, instead of just sell a pitch."

He adds, "Swiftly is a game-changer as it gives the public authority the perfect tools to be a proactive planner."

Joaquín Pena
International Sales
+34673404827
joaquin@goswift.ly

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