

## Case study



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CEO, Roadchef*



## Roadchef

### Improved footfall data leads to better business performance

Founded in 1973, Roadchef Motorways Ltd is one of the UK's leading motorway service area operators with 28 sites covering the length and breadth of the motorway network. It operates a portfolio of leading catering, retail and accommodation brands from Costa and McDonald's to WH Smith and Days Inn as well as having its own in-house catering brands, featuring The Burger company and Hot Food Co. Roadchef is the owner and operator of Watford Gap, the first and most iconic Motorway service area in the UK. Roadchef employs over 2,000 people and cares for over 60 million customer visits each year.

#### The Challenge

As part of an ongoing growth plan of expansion and modernisation to improve profits and the customer experience, Roadchef wanted to replicate the model used by the airport business at its service stations. The problem was that it was unable to estimate the footfall of customers passing through the service stations in its estate. As part of the

modernisation plans, Roadchef wanted to use high street brands as part of its customer offering. Being able to measure the success of the initiative and consequent conversion rates, as well as using the analytical information from the data to feedback into the ongoing expansion plans, was absolutely crucial. Without accurate, relevant and timely data, Roadchef was unable to measure the return on its investment and therefore this was not an option.

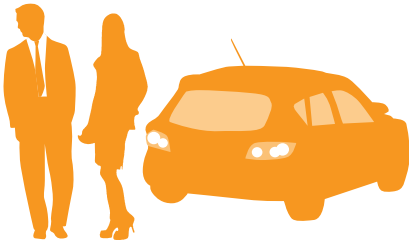
#### The Solution

Roadchef partnered with Synovate Retail Performance and began using its Shopper Count solution. By installing the footfall counting solution into service stations up and down the UK, the company was able to accurately see what was happening in the service station areas across the estate. It was also able to drill down into the information to learn what actions would directly affect the business and enhance performance and profitability. Not driven purely by marketing campaigns and brand



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Retail Performance

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**Synovate Retail Performance** provides footfall monitoring solutions, shopper tracking systems and in-store behavioural research to retailers worldwide. Its core products Shopper Count, Shopper Interact and Shopper Engage scientifically measure all aspects of a shopper experience from store entry to exit. It supplies national and international retailers with essential business metrics to drive accountability and performance improvement.

Synovate Retail Performance  
34 Walker Avenue, Wolverton Mill,  
Milton Keynes, MK12 5TW

Tel +44 1908 682 700  
Fax +44 (0)1908 682739  
Email [info.rp@synovate.com](mailto:info.rp@synovate.com)

[www.synovate.com/retailperformance](http://www.synovate.com/retailperformance)

awareness, converting sales from the 60 million people passing through its doors was the biggest challenge. Using the precise detail from the Synovate data solution this was turned into the greatest opportunity.

## What we did

Counters were installed in the Roadchef sites to measure footfall in the entranceways to the main thoroughfares and male and female toilets. Roadchef was interested in seeing if the data backed up the knowledge they had acquired from the airport industry, particularly in regards to whether customers were happier using newly designed areas with better seating and a more ambient atmosphere as well as trusted high street brands. The findings backed up the business initiative showing a 20% increase in catering volume and increased conversions.

On a weekly basis, the Synovate footfall report is analysed by an in-house data expert at Roadchef and from it underperformance and areas for improvement across the estate are identified. This information is then shared on a weekly call with all of the 20 service station directors, who are responsible for each of the sites. Additionally, a whole host of business metrics are reviewed, which are fed into the company's Business Intelligence (BI) solution. These include quality performance, finance and labour.

Roadchef now has the ability to look at footfall and conversion across the estate on a comparative basis, as well as looking in depth at particular sites. The company has learnt from the analytics and is now using the information to identify peak hours and seasonal trends. It also determines the number of staff serving, ensuring the best person for the job is available at these high footfall times, for example, having the right number of faster till operators. As well as increasing conversions, this has also had an impact on the customer experience at the service station, meaning happier customers.

Roadchef has also used the information to review the order of which sites in its estate to develop and regenerate first. By reviewing the conversion data from the Synovate solution and matching it with information from The Highways

Agency, it has given the business a much clearer picture of where the opportunities are and which sites need investment as a priority.

## The Outcome

Simon Turl, chief executive of Roadchef, says: “Analysing information from the data captured by the Synovate solution has been absolutely fundamental to the success of this business initiative. By looking back historically at data to improve business performance, we have been able to capitalise on opportunities, particularly with regards to customer service and the speed of transactions. Our footfall data is now used as part of our management incentive programme for site directors who are rewarded if they increase conversion rates along with other metrics. The most crucial consideration for us was the accuracy of the data and we are extremely impressed with the Synovate solution.”



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