

“Thanks to the automated, exception-based handling of the software, I can take my dispatchers out of the room for 24 hours and there is no disruption to business,”

*Diana Clemente, President
BIG APPLE CAR*



Company: Big Apple Car / **HQ:** Manhattan, NY serving over **350 cities** and **68 countries** **180** franchise vehicles / **34 years** in the black car business



REDUCE THEIR OVERALL FIXED COSTS BY 10-20%



BE ROCK SOLID WITH 0 DOWNTIME



PROVIDE A BEST-IN-CLASS MOBILE EXPERIENCE FOR CUSTOMERS AND DRIVERS



DEAL WITH PEAK TIME SURGES WITHOUT DOUBLING STAFF

THE CHALLENGE

With TNC's like Uber and Lyft gaining market share each year, chauffeured transportation providers have been forced to play technology catch up and face a sobering reality. The majority of these operators are running their businesses on decades old dispatch systems. Trying to contend with an Uber or Lyft is like entering a boxing match with both hands tied behind your back. **“Our existing dispatch system was 30 years old. Programming changes in one area of our environment would cause something to break elsewhere,”** said Diana Clemente, President of Big Apple Car.

While Big Apple was on a proprietary system before moving to Whisk, many of their competitors use decades old systems as their back office. Ram Trichur, co-founder of Whisk, weighed in on the brittleness of these legacy systems. **“While working with operators who were on the legacy systems, I would regularly hear that their system would go down once a month and require a server restart,”** said Trichur. Diana said that while she stayed awake at night worrying about what she would do if something happened to her lead programmer, she would hear her competitors claim that it was impossible to do anything quickly or without significant cost.

Technology deficit aside, Big Apple began to lose ridership during peak hours since their drivers would go over to Uber and Lyft when prices were surging. This caused delays and their customers began to lose patience since they had become used to the on-demand world which meant confirmations in seconds and a driver at your location within 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, Big Apple's operating costs remained the same since their existing technology lacked smart automation. They struggled to cover rides and would have up to four people in the dispatch room during peak hours, three of which did little during the remaining 6 hours of their shift.

THE SOLUTION

Determined to keep her company alive and independent, Diana knew she had to find the right technology (back office, mobile, desktop, and affiliate network) to transform her business and move it into the 21st century. Enter the Whisk team whose collective backgrounds include MIT, Yale, Columbia, Caltech, and years in Silicon Valley. Unlike the rest of the tech world who had not gone near chauffeured ground transportation, the Whisk team saw an industry that was in desperate need of their technology.

After spending time with the team, Big Apple decided to move their dispatch and reservation management to the Whisk platform which moved them to a SaaS (software as a service) model and meant they could ditch their on-premise servers. The Whisk software keeps pace with the technology which means Big Apple gets at least 3 feature upgrades a month compared to one upgrade every 16 months which is common for the legacy providers in the industry. Since moving to Whisk, Big Apple has experienced 0 downtime.

Initially hesitant to change, the staff quickly realized the benefits of the new system. Whisk's Smart Search technology **(1 field vs. 15 fields)** allows Big Apple to know everything about a passenger before he/she asks them anything, including the location of the driver on a map. **Dispatchers let the system automate 80% or more of the dispatches**, only getting involved if something unexpected happens. The system even automates pre-assignment of rides for the next day conforming to established rules.

Big Apple Car drivers loved the companion driver app—features which include cross streets, maps, directions, and multi-lingual support. Whisk also created gamified dispatching (patent-pending) which keeps drivers loyal by setting and automating policies that reward drivers. **“The drivers recognize that it is so independent of human intervention and that there is a direct correlation between their performance and earnings,”** said Clemente.

Change management within the company was seamless thanks to the intuitiveness of the product which made training easy. **“The team behind Whisk has made a lot of investments to give the end user a great experience ...not just our customers, but also dispatchers/call takers/ drivers etc. that are users of the system. The whole system is designed to make people smile,”** said Clemente.



THE RESULTS

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

After moving their business over to the Whisk platform, Big Apple has already seen savings of \$130K per year



IT savings of \$100K a year
 Avoided upgrading IBM servers saving \$20K
 Replaced \$100K salaried IT resource with limited consulting (<\$20K/yr.)



Operational savings of \$85K a year
 Reduced dispatch room staffing by 1-2 headcount across all shifts

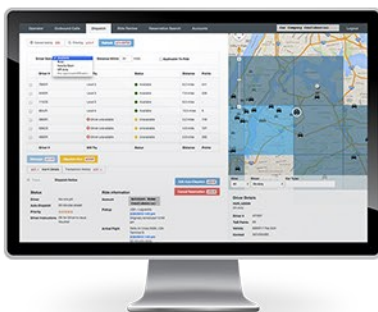


Whisk system costs \$4700 a month

Another benefit to modernizing her operating technology is that Diana can hire resources to help grow the business-- they recently added two more people to their team to do just that. **"We can now spend money growing as opposed to maintaining a legacy way of operating. I feel so liberated being on the Whisk platform... we haven't requested a single change to the platform because of how smartly it was designed. It goes above and beyond anything else that has been developed for this industry,"**

In addition to future-proofing the business, Big Apple is leveraging Deem's (Deem acquired Whisk in February 2016) relationships with Fortune 500 companies and will be participating in a pilot with two Fortune 500 companies in mid-July.

"Change is hard. It's not what you want. It's what the customer wants. Where we are going is where the customers' expectations are and if we don't go there, we won't have a business," said Clemente.



Experience the Whisk Platform Today