



TRUSTED LEADER IN SPECIAL NEEDS & PARATRANSIT PUTS ITS TRUST IN TAPTCO

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Ride Right, a special needs paratransit and fixed route transportation provider, knows that passenger safety begins with qualified, well-trained drivers. In 2017, when the newly hired Director of Safety Administration noted gaps in the company's training program, Ride Right tapped the training expertise of the Transit & Paratransit Company (TAPTCO), the most trusted provider of bus operator training. This case study shares highlights of the growing partnership between TAPTCO, Ride Right and its parent company MTM, Inc.

THE CHALLENGE: Ensure Training Consistency and Quality in 21 Locations in 11 States

Ride Right and its parent company, MTM, Inc., have been helping disabled, elderly and other transportation disadvantaged Americans with their paratransit and fixed route transit needs for nearly 10 years. With 21 locations in 11 states, Ride Right drivers make more than 750,000 trips each year, primarily under Federal Transit Administration contracts. The company's success is based on controlling costs, improving quality and promoting uniform service delivery.

Uniform service delivery, however, requires uniform training, something Tom Greufe, Ride Right's Director of Safety Administration, found lacking in his initial audit of safety and training programs when he joined the company in March of 2017.

"At all locations and even at the corporate level, it was very evident that we needed to build a better mousetrap for new-hire operator training," said Greufe. "The inconsistency was across the board. I visited multiple locations, and each was doing its own version of what we called our company training program, but it differed dramatically by site."

Greufe immediately turned to TAPTCO, a company he had come to know and trust in his prior job, where he had replaced an in-house training program with TAPTCO's training at all of the company's fixed route and paratransit and fixed route locations.

"We had been pretty pleased with the training program we'd developed in-house," Greufe said. "But the more we used TAPTCO's program, the more we loved it."

Greufe's audit of Ride Right's training program uncovered three key operational challenges, which the existing training program lacked:

1. Training consistency and quality
2. High-quality training materials
3. Proper documentation and certification of required training

THE SOLUTION: Partner with TAPTCO to Reinforce a Culture of Safety

It was clear to Greufe that TAPTCO training was exactly what Ride Right needed. When MTM, Inc. and Ride Right management agreed, Gruefe contracted with TAPTCO in May of 2017 to begin the immediate roll out of the company's training program for new hires in all 21 Ride Right locations.

Greufe, a 25-year transit industry veteran and former chair of the American Public Transit Association's Bus Safety Committee, has reviewed many safety training programs and puts TAPTCO's material head and shoulders above the rest.

"TAPTCO really thinks through what they put together as a training product," he said. "The manuals and documentation have strong content that's reinforced and supported with great video. It really closes the loop to ensure that when you're finished training a new employee, they're ready to hit the road. If you follow the program and follow the script, you're going to end up with a well-trained, professional operator."

Video is a key component of TAPTCO training, which provides trainees with a visual reference of how to perform certain duties. The training program then outlines steps for the trainer to do a hands-on demonstration, and backs it up with classroom material that reinforces a culture of safety. This solidifies the learning and builds employee confidence.

"The videos do a great job of explaining the concepts and why they are important," Greufe explained. "The program addresses the whole idea of 'What's in it for me?', thereby increasing each trainee's commitment and retention of the material."

While the transit industry regulations and requirements vary by state, Greufe says TAPTCO more than meets the highest training standard of any state -- and goes well beyond the California requirements, which are among the strictest standards in the country.

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- TOM GREUFE, DIRECTOR OF SAFETY ADMINISTRATION, RIDE RIGHT AND MTM, INC.





THE RESULT: Improved Performance & Rave Reviews from Local Management

Since implementation of the TAPTCO program nearly a year ago, every new Ride Right employee has been trained using the new material. In addition, over the last six months, TAPTCO has conducted three days of on-site train-the-trainer sessions to certify all Ride Right trainers, which typically include the safety manager and a number of key supervisors.

After completing the introductory driver training, trainers at each location also are responsible for conducting ride-alongs with new drivers at 30, 60 and 90 days to make sure they've mastered the concepts of the TAPTCO program and are applying all aspects of the training on the job.

Greufe shared one story that illustrates the impact TAPTCO training is having on the company's local operations. Before launching the train-the-trainer program, Ride Right sent TAPTCO materials to all of their managers in advance. The general manager of the company's smallest location, with 8 employees and a dispatcher located in Perrysburg, Ohio, called Greufe to share her concerns over having to teach the program.

"She got this big book with all the materials and was basically intimidated," Greufe recalled. "I told her that when you follow the facilitator's guide, the program practically teaches itself. It tells you when to put in the DVD, what questions to ask after watching the video, what quiz to give and what to discuss before the quiz. Her first class went pretty well and by Day Two, she loved it and told me, 'Our old training program was just a hodgepodge of materials, and I was overwhelmed when I taught it. Now, I have something that is so detailed that every base is covered.'"

"She later stood up in a manager's leadership meeting and told that story to everyone. What could I say that would top that? There's no questioning the value of the program."

Greufe said that TAPTCO's program has exceeded his own high expectations and his company's top management is pleased with the positive feedback they are receiving from managers at all locations. All new drivers now have gone through the program and all ratings of TAPTCO materials by trainers and trainees have been positive.

"Our CEO and other top management visit our local sites frequently," said Greufe. "I don't have to talk up the program, because the locations do all the speaking for me."

WHAT'S NEXT?

Ride Right currently is preparing an annual recertification program using TAPTCO materials, which all 900 of its drivers will go through before the end of 2018. The program will cover 8 hours of review training, including classwork and behind the wheel driving assessment.

The company also is considering adding TAPTCO's OSHA certification course, as well as its Safety Leadership program.

"On top of very high-quality materials, well thought-out plans and great video presentations, TAPTCO and its training development team continue to evolve as things change in the industry," said Greufe. "I value the fact that they stay on top of that."