

AO Streamlines Processes and Improves Operational Efficiencies with Cloud-Based Route Optimization Software



Challenges

- » Inefficient routes that often required manual adjustments
- » On-premise setup limited scalability
- » Outdated feature set from legacy solution

Benefits

- » Seamless upgrades and maintenance
- » Streamlined processes and automated workflows
- » Improved operational efficiency resulting in significant cost savings

AO stands tall as the UK's leading and most trusted online electrical retailer, offering customers an unparalleled selection of products. With a central base in Bolton, complemented by strategic distribution points in Crewe and 17 delivery outposts across the UK alongside a state-of-the-art electrical recycling plant in Telford, AO ensures that every customer enjoys a smooth shopping experience—from selecting their product to fast, on-time delivery.

The Challenges of an Unsupported and Outdated Solution

AO's group tech director, Carl Phillips, had been tasked with steering AO's technological advancements. His goal was simple: to ensure the company's tech stack aligned perfectly with the company's objectives of providing amazing customer service through digital transformation.

Finding the right partner that would support AO's initiatives and could grow with them required due diligence during the selection process. That process led them to Aptean.

A notable step in AO's journey was the implementation of Aptean Routing & Scheduling *Paragon Edition* – a top-tier cloud-based routing and execution solution.

"After careful evaluation, we chose Aptean as the best product to replace our existing system. It has enabled growth and future improvements for our company and much better outcomes for our customers," Phillips said.





Prior to the selection and implementation of Apteian's solution, AO's former routing system was plagued by inefficiency. Routes generated by the platform often required manual intervention, as they were suboptimal or at times even unfeasible. The legacy system didn't just strain resources –it was also a bottleneck for AO's next-day deliveries.

“The previous system was not optimized for our unique delivery processes, leading to inefficiencies. The switch to a cloud-based routing and scheduling solution has eliminated those challenges,” Phillips said.

In their pursuit of better operational excellence, AO found their answers in Apteian's cloud-based route planning software. The reasons were evident: their legacy, on-premise system had not received regular updates for years; support from their provider was lacking; and its migration to the cloud was laden with challenges.



“For anyone considering a cloud-based routing solution, thorough research is crucial. **Look beyond commercial aspects and consider security, governance and operational factors.**”

Carl Phillips, Group Tech Director

Taking Advantage of the Right Cloud-Based Solution

The introduction of Apteian Routing & Scheduling *Paragon Edition* was a game-changer for AO. The cloud-based platform not only alleviated maintenance woes with automated system updates but also introduced AO to a plethora of advanced features, allowing for continuous and scalable route optimization.

Apteian's cloud-based environment prioritizes security. The system is fortified by a secure online framework with advanced encryption, multi-factor authentication, geo-fencing and intrusion detection. Moreover, proactive security protocols include end-to-end penetration testing to ensure that the system remains safeguarded with the latest policies, while also promptly alerting AO to any potential vulnerabilities.

Another standout benefit of Aptean’s cloud-based solution is its scalability. As AO continues to grow, the system can easily scale up without the need for costly hardware purchases or managing data center upgrades and maintenance costs. The cloud-based environment offers the AO team superior flexibility, especially when changes to the number of users, system permissions and other backend settings are required when scaling up.

Phillips and the AO team experienced the true power of Aptean’s robust applications quickly after implementation. With fully automated route creation that no longer requires manual reworking, AO’s routing specialists can delve deep into strategic scenario modeling so that customer deliveries happen on time every day, seven days a week.

By running simulations to model the impact of “what-if” scenarios—such as the implications of adding three more vehicles to the fleet or introducing a new distribution center—they can make more informed decisions, shaping AO’s future strategy and maximizing the team’s potential.

“We’ve seen tremendous progress in our routing efficiency since implementing the cloud-based solution. Today, close to 100% of all our routes are produced without human intervention,” Phillips proudly confirms.





The Results

AO is leveraging automated route generation to great effect. With real-time insight into their deliveries, routes and resources across all outposts, they have been able to better manage their logistics operations, identify optimizations, improve customer experience and save money in the process.

"By strategically moving volume between our bases, we have been able to optimize routing and significantly reduce mileages, resulting in cost savings," Phillips noted.

With advanced route planning and optimization, AO is tracking delivery adherence to planned routes in real-time and better anticipate any unpredicted roadblocks. This means planning better and smarter without creating additional work for the team—a considerably smoother process.

Additionally, Aptean's route optimization software and its resource allocation features have revolutionized AO's operations.

"Allocating crews within Aptean for route execution and vehicle tracking has been a game-changer. We've achieved these improvements without adding extra staff," said Phillips.

With Aptean, AO Is Ready for What's Next, Now

The adoption of the Aptean Routing & Scheduling *Paragon Edition* is not just an evolution in technology but also a strategic step in the digital transformation journey for AO.

"With the new system, we can optimize the routes in the right place and in the right ways, ultimately lowering our delivery costs," said Phillips.

This is reflective of the broader strategy of leveraging the system to streamline internal processes, enhance employee experience and—as a fruitful consequence of those two changes—improve customer satisfaction.

Looking ahead, AO's team will be exploring dynamic pricing, with the aim of incentivizing customers to select delivery dates that align with optimal delivery density in their areas.

The decision to collaborate with Aptean came after extensive evaluations, reinforcing the future-forward approach. Aptean stood out due to its alignment with AO's organizational needs and the promise of the software's continued advancement.

"Aptean was by far the best product we reviewed and the best match for our organization," said Phillips.



The AO and Aptean Partnership

AO's journey from grappling with an outdated and unsupported routing system to harnessing the power of a comprehensive cloud-based routing and scheduling solution is a testament to the transformative power of digital transformation.

By partnering with Aptean, AO not only improved operational efficiency—they were also able to streamline processes, automate workflows and strategically plan, all of which empowered them to set new standards in the industry.

AO's story serves as an affirmation to the benefits of a migration to a cloud-based solution.

"While the transition may feel like a loss of control, the promised benefits of cloud-based solutions are well worth it if executed effectively," Phillips said.



Ready to learn more about what Aptean's cloud-based TMS solutions can do for your company?

Reach out to us today, or request a **personalized demo**.



About Aptean

Aptean is one of the world's leading providers of purpose-built, industry-specific software that helps manufacturers and distributors effectively run and grow their businesses. With both cloud and on-premise deployment options, Aptean's products, services and unmatched expertise help businesses of all sizes to be Ready for What's Next, Now®. Aptean is headquartered in Alpharetta, Georgia and has offices in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

To learn more about Aptean and the markets we serve, visit www.aptean.com.