



Swiftly

# CARTA Jump-Starts Customer Delight with Swiftly

CARTA provides service to one of the Southeast's largest metropolitan areas, including some of South Carolina's most diverse communities. In the past, their customer service team was bogged down by high call volumes and OTP issues that kept creeping up. With Swiftly, they've seen a dramatic dip in calls, a steep drop-off in a call length, and a sharp decrease in time spent conducting retrospective analysis.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- // Call volume has decreased 20% due to their accurate "Track a Bus" and Transit App feeds
- // Call lengths have decreased 50%, representing \$40,000 in gained productivity annually
- // Real-time maps are 60x more accurate with refresh intervals that are 10 seconds, down from 10 minutes

## When toolkits got in the way

Khadijah Shabazz is a transit customer service warrior. As Customer Service Supervisor at CARTA in Charleston, South Carolina, she works on the front line of the agency's constant fight to improve the customer experience.

"Every complaint that comes in – whether it's on the phone, on social media, or even on the street – it all comes to me," Shabazz says.

And though she's always prided herself on her patience, Shabazz admits it's not always the easiest to communicate when her toolkit gets in the way.

For years, CARTA's real-time system obscured accurate readings of the agency's bus fleet, leading to confusion for employees and riders alike. With their legacy system, call volumes were high, the calls themselves were long, and underlying issues were persistent.

Now with Swiftly, Shabazz has a simple, visual representation of CARTA's entire fleet. Thus armed, she's become a customer service superstar.



## 10-minute delays and 5-minute “where’s the bus” calls

In the past, CARTA’s customer service team struggled with real-time software that was neither real nor timely.

For one, it was nearly impossible to answer customer inquiries with the level of accuracy CARTA needed to keep riders satisfied. Their legacy system had a 10-minute delay, so the customer service team had only a general idea of the whereabouts of a given bus. As a result, it took an average of 3-5 minutes to resolve even the simplest questions. “You don’t know how many times we’d be talking to a customer, and we’d tell them the bus would arrive in a few minutes,” Shabazz explains, “but as soon as we hung up, the screen would refresh, and we’d see the bus had just passed them. Imagine how frustrating that would be!”

Beyond just the phone line, CARTA’s social media accounts were inundated with questions and complaints as well. Their real-time software was susceptible to downtime due to constant bugs, so rider-facing apps could go down without warning.

“On Twitter, we’d often have to rely on our printed schedules because we couldn’t track the bus through our software,” Shabazz says. “We were answering online, but we were flipping through paper schedules to answer questions!”

## Weeks to investigate late buses

But most damaging to the rider experience was the excruciating nature of retrospective analysis. If a problem persistently came up — maybe a bus habitually arriving late at a given stop — the team would spin their wheels trying to understand what was at the heart of the problem. “Sometimes, I’d have to go to 3 or 4 applications to get a solution or to close out a case,” Shabazz says. “And sometimes I’d have to pull camera images from the bus to see why it was late. That takes a long time!”

Every question or complaint that came in had the potential to drag on for days. And with thousands of calls coming in per month, CARTA’s bottom line began to feel the effects. The state of affairs at CARTA customer service was untenable, and the team knew they had to make a change.





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# A 50% decrease in call length with Swiftly

That's why the team at CARTA has enlisted the help of Swiftly. Swiftly has transformed the way CARTA handles customer service by giving the team control of their own data and delivering the most accurate real-time information possible.

With Swiftly, now the customer service team has an up-to-date understanding of every vehicle's location in their fleet. Instead of location information refreshing every 10 minutes, their dynamic maps now fetch data every 5 to 10 seconds. The length of calls has plummeted with vehicle locations at CARTA's fingertips.

"Calls are about two-thirds shorter now," Shabazz says. "The average call used to take about 10 minutes, but now it's somewhere between three and four minutes. I haven't seen as many requests on social media either. That's a lot of time we get back."

## Call volume falls by 20%

CARTA has seen a 20% dip in call volume as well since implementing Swiftly. Swiftly powers their "Track a Bus" feature on the CARTA website, in addition to their Transit App feed, which helps people answer their own questions before they need customer service.

This 20% decrease in call volume, together with the 50% decrease in call length, represents \$40,000 in gained productivity per year. "With the Swiftly real-time, it helps customers know exactly where that bus is. It helps us greatly," Shabazz says.



## Simplified retrospective analysis

Perhaps most beneficial of all, CARTA can now quickly analyze why performance issues keep coming up. Swiftly's GPS playback feature allows the team to do retrospective analysis and understand exactly when and where performance issues arise. Where it used to take weeks to understand an underlying issue, it now can take as little as a few minutes.

"The GPS playback, which I love love love, allows me to see the speed and whether a bus got to a stop ahead of schedule," say Shabazz. "It provides me all of the information I need to see. I don't need to search the backend or anything." Swiftly's detailed archive of their real-time information has allowed the CARTA team to proactively manage headways, even tweaking their schedules to be more realistic about travel times between timepoints.

## 10,000x improvement in personal happiness

With these improvements, Shabazz is confident she can continue to improve on the customer experience, as well as CARTA's bottom line. "The fact that I can pull all of the information off of one screen, it's a godsend," she says.

With Swiftly at her disposal, Shabazz knows that Charleson's riders aren't the only ones benefiting.

"You know who else is happy about it? WE ARE!" she says. "Swiftly has truly been an upgrade 10,000 times compared to what we were using before, and I'm 10,000 times happier because of it."

