



Panorama Coaches: [Case Study](#)

Panorama Coaches has a fleet of about 70 modern buses, a team of capable and experienced drivers, and a strong presence in the schools, corporate charter and tours' markets. For the past thirty-plus years, the company has grown steadily.

Panorama recently teamed up with training consultants elevate2 to devise a customised training program for its drivers. The program sought to meet two business objectives. First, to enhance Panorama's reputation, so that current clients could be retained and new business won. Second, to equip its drivers to provide exceptional customer service, especially in difficult and stressful situations.

Elevate2 identified and, where necessary, modified two training packages to meet these objectives; it also sourced and managed the trainers who delivered them. The first package was a driver accreditation program that equipped Panorama's drivers to be consistently aware, adept and safe in their driving. The second was a world-leading course to increase drivers' ability to serve clients in an exceptional manner - particularly in difficult situations.



1. Safety: the cornerstone

“When you are driving down the freeway at 100 km/hr, carrying fifty kids and seven adults, your duty of care is second only to that of an airline pilot.” This is how Panorama’s operations manager John Griffiths puts it. To fulfill this duty of care and to further secure its clients’ safety, the driver training focused on:

Road awareness, i.e. avoiding accidents before they happen. Perhaps unexpectedly, the focus of this training was avoiding minor accidents at low speeds. Such accidents may not make the headlines, but preventing them saves Panorama and its clients time, hassles and money.

Attitude: As well as road awareness and driving skills that are second-to-none, the attitudes of Panorama’s drivers are crucial to their passengers’ safety. One way a safety-first attitude is built in to drivers’ routines is a daily 30-point checklist certifying the condition of their busses. Every morning the checklist is completed and each driver must answer the question: “Is this vehicle fit for me to drive out the front gate?” Measures such as these are instilling into Panorama’s drivers individual responsibility for the welfare of their passengers.

Personal management: diet, hydration and rest are widely recognised contributors to performance - and this applies to bus drivers too. Panorama has been working with its drivers to ensure they eat well, rest and stay hydrated throughout each day. The result has been fresher, happier drivers, who provide their passengers safe and enjoyable rides.

2. Exceptional service

To most people, service from a bus company means a clean, well-running bus and a competent, smart-looking and friendly driver. Recent training has, however, enabled Panorama’s service to surpass this.

Clear communications are critical at every stage of Panorama’s service: from initial planning, through to passenger pick-up and on-time arrival. Yet introduce factors such as peak hour traffic and bus loads of kids, and misunderstandings can easily arise! Equipping drivers to respond to misunderstandings in a self-aware, self-controlled and courteous manner was a key part of the recent training. And the feedback of Panorama’s clients suggests such driver communication has improved their experience markedly.

Curtailing conflict: The ability to ‘step back’, calm down and take a collaborative approach when situations become heated was another focus of the training. As one driver recently reported: “When faced with a client who was getting heated, I said to them, ‘Can we fix this problem together? If we do, we’ll both have a great day.’” And together they overcame the problem. The client later rang Panorama to commend the driver for the way he handled the situation.

3. Results

By working with elevate2, Panorama has bolstered its drivers’ skills and attitudes. The results? Safe clients who consistently receive exceptional service. What’s more, the results for Panorama’s business have been impressive:



Greater client satisfaction and enhanced relationships with clients.



Increased sales and market share. For example, the referral of a new \$100,000 client, as a direct result of Panorama’s drivers’ improved skills.



Improved risk-mitigation, due to drivers being more responsible for their work, more skillful in carrying it out and more committed to managing themselves well.