



"REALLY EASY TO USE...
OUR CUSTOMERS RELY ON IT"

Mark Wilson, Managing Director, Acorn Express Logistics



Acorn Express Logistics Ltd, established in 1999, provide traditional courier services along with specialist delivery services for hospitals and medical companies throughout the UK and Ireland. Acorn Express also provide unique 'deliver and build' services for high-end furniture manufacturers throughout Scotland. Operating a mixed fleet of vehicles ranging from Mercedes Sprinter vans, to 17 tonne MAN vehicles, their fleet includes customised vehicles for medical deliveries.

Starting in 1999, Acorn Express Logistics has grown steadily to the point where it currently runs a fleet of nine vehicles carrying a wide variety of loads for customers throughout the UK and Ireland. Over the years its growth has seen it move offices around different locations, before settling in its current base in Uddingston.

An important part of its workload remains standard courier work, but in a competitive market place with large numbers of individual operators active, founder Mark Wilson recognised that he needed to provide niche services to keep moving the firm forward. For example, he won a contract to run three of his, then, four vehicles to transport electric cable for manufacturers in Dundee who were supplying to South West Ireland on a daily basis.

Always an innovator, Mark wanted to position Acorn in market niches where the service required was much more than just 'standard'. This has seen the firm develop a strong reputation in several areas, including a couple of unusual ones.

"One service that we have been developing is 'deliver and build' for high-end furniture makers, where the retail customers want the furniture safely delivered and erected in their home.

"With this 'deliver and build' service, The PODFather has proved a real bonus for not only the buying customer but also the manufacturer. Our driver can confirm the items delivered as well as take a photograph of the furniture once it is built. The customer then signs to confirm the work is complete.

"An email is then sent simultaneously to the customer and manufacturer notifying them of job completion. This instant email report is in turn helping our customers improve their customer service because we can, for example, highlight any defective items which require a replacement part issued ASAP."



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The POD Father is a trading name of Valley Technology Ltd
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www.thepodfather.com

“Another niche service we operate is for companies who supply ultrasound medical scanners to hospitals and medical centres. We collect, transport and deliver some extremely expensive and very sensitive equipment for these customers, and have developed customised vehicles do so.

“To give an example of how The PODFather helps us, every ultrasound scanner has its own name and serial number. This information is sent via The PODFather to the handheld PDA used by the driver, who checks at the hospital that the machine being collected is the correct one. There can be two identical looking machines at the same location, but the driver receives all the information – including who to contact – via The PODFather. The driver can check each machine being collected against The PODFather, and confirm any items missing from the uplift before the hospital contact signs for what we collect. This ‘traceability’ is a really useful feature and very important when dealing with vital equipment.

“We require a reliable Proof Of Delivery system in both these niche markets to help us meet the particular requirements of our customers. I looked around the market to see what was available and some of the offerings are pretty costly - for example, one was £10,000 to buy the software, plus £2,000 per annum for IT support.



Then I found The PODFather software system, and where it really scores is not only that it is versatile and easy to use, but it is cost effective because it is Pay-As-You-Go – we only pay when we complete a job.”

“The PODFather has also helped us expand our service across the UK. For example, I have a subcontractor in London using it. He’s downloaded the software onto his mobile phone for free, we give him the username and password and he is up and running. No need to fax, no need to phone – we just give him the required details via The PODFather. He does the job, the customer signs and we get the Proof Of Delivery at the same time as the customer signs. We are operating a similar system with an Irish agent, and I now seek companies who have The PODFather system when I need to find a subcontractor in a city or town where we have no previous contacts.

“I would recommend the POD Father for both general and specialist courier services. We’ve found it easy to use and cost effective, and it provides rapid Proof of Delivery. We have one customer in Exeter who is delighted because he gets his POD before we do! Our customers have come to rely on it.”

To find out what The POD Father can do for your business call 0131 510 0141



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