

Winner of Go-Ahead London's 500 Challenge competition announced

The winner of the MiX Telematics-sponsored 500 Challenge, a competition organised by Go-Ahead London to encourage, recognise and reward improved driving standards, has been announced. Following a close and hard-fought 'eco-driving' final at the Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire, Docklands Buses Tariq Mahmood emerged as overall victor to secure the contest's top prize of a brand new Fiat 500.

Commenting on his victory Tariq Mahmood said: "I am absolutely delighted to have won, I couldn't believe it. I was so pleased and so proud to come out on top as I was competing against our very best drivers in a really hard fought contest where everyone was really going for it! Professionally speaking, it is great to know that I am driving really efficiently, which means I am helping to reduce emissions and save fuel. My tactics, which I use on a daily basis, are a gentle touch on the accelerator and making sure I get the timing right on gearchanges to give my passengers the smoothest possible ride."

Conceived as means to enhance operating performance by engaging and capturing the imagination of the company's 4,500 drivers, the 500 Challenge formed part of the Go Green Drivers' Club initiative launched in conjunction with the introduction of MiX Telematics fleet management solutions to the 1,500-strong Go Ahead London fleet earlier this year.

"The Go Green Drivers' Club is all about promoting and maintaining the highest levels of fuel economy, environmental efficiency and safety in operation," explains Go Ahead London Managing Director John Trayner.

"The introduction of fleet management technology, backed by comprehensive training, has been an integral part of the programme as it has enabled our drivers to optimise their own individual driving style and thereby make a real difference.

"Each of our drivers' now receives a regular report generated by the MiX Telematics system which grades their performance as Red, Amber or Green. Achieving Green gains entry to the Go Green Drivers' Club which, if accomplished within a set timeframe, also qualified the individual concerned for the 500 Challenge. In total, 3,060 of our drivers made the required standard this year, which represents a great result all-round."

Of these 3,060 drivers, the final shortlist of 20 was determined by measurement of five key criteria;

- Performance related to TfL's Quality Incentive Contracts (QIC)
- Driving by FM Communicator's RIBAS display (see Editor's note)
- DSA assessment (mystery traveller report)
- Accidents
- Attendance

With each of Go Ahead's operating companies of London General, London Central, Blue Triangle and Docklands Buses represented, the finalists came together at Millbrook where the Proving Ground's experts evaluated the performance of each in a specially designed Eco Challenge. Finishing just behind Tariq Mahmood and taking the runners-up prize of £500 was Bexley-based London Central driver Brian McDonald, while Sutton-based Donal Bradley of London General scooped the third place award of £250.

Editor's note: FM Communicator and RIBAS display

As MiX Telematic's premium on-board computer, the FM Communicator offers vehicle tracking, communications and the ability to interface with satellite navigation systems.

The RIBAS display, which operates in conjunction with FM Communicator and is offered as an optional extra, is a dashboard-mounted array of five LEDs which illuminate whenever the driver exceeds a pre-programmed vehicle parameter. Each LED is positioned alongside its corresponding letter, where:

R = over **R**evving
I = excessive **I**dling
B = harsh **B**raking
A = harsh **A**cceleration
S = over **S**peeding

Accompanying the FM Communicator is a choice of reporting software; FM Pro for PC-based analysis, or FM-Web for internet-based access.

Go Ahead London

The London Central, London General, Docklands Buses and Blue Triangle operations of Go Ahead London employ nearly 4,500 staff, utilising approximately 1,400 buses which operate on nearly 100 routes in the Capital, the majority of which are part of Transport for London's network.

MiX Telematics

Founded in 1996, MiX Telematics is a global provider of vehicle tracking and fleet management products and services to consumers and companies of all sizes in over 75 countries on six continents. The company's commercial product range – formerly marketed under the VDO brand and sold by Siemens VDO for 10 years – helps fleet owners ensure driver and passenger safety, reduce fleet running and fuel costs, comply with selected industry regulations, and track and protect vehicles and drivers. Commercial customers include Parmalat, Schlumberger, Chevron, Greyhound, Spar, and Scania. MiX Telematics has offices in South Africa, Germany and the United Kingdom and an extensive global distribution network.

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