

CLUB CARS IN MANCHESTER: WELCOME TO THE CLUB!



In case anybody out there doesn't know it, Manchester is a big place. Yes, really, a huge metropolis! Greater Manchester is made up of ten local authorities for a start; the city centre is a booming commercial, entertainment and property development hub for all walks of life.

This area of the North West has enjoyed some of the most dramatic growth rates in the UK over the last quarter century... and so has one of its premier transport providers, Club Cars. They opened their doors in 1992 with just one car. From the very first day they opened they have been a family run business, starting off by purchasing a set of old disused public toilets on a council estate called Wythenshawe.

In those days they were known as Wythenshawe Private Hire; since then Club Cars has grown to be the largest private hire and taxi company in Manchester, with a fleet of over 650 cars – with uniformed drivers – covering the whole of Greater Manchester and Cheshire. Over two-thirds of the fleet are owner/driver; the rest are company owned, and together they cover between 30,000 and 35,000 jobs per week. Their accounts portfolio makes up over a third of their business.

They offer the full range of saloons, estates, MPVs and minibuses, plus executive cars; their sister company Executive Cars Manchester has 15 prestige vehicles. Headed by Managing Director Peter Georgiou and General Manager Gary Bregan, Club Cars has a staff of over 60 operators, telephonists and admin/secretarial staff, plus six managers.

Interestingly, Club Cars now have six booking offices: in addition to their head office in Wythenshawe, they also have offices in Manchester city centre in the Gay Village, Chorlton, Didsbury, Levenshulme and Stretford.

BUSY PLACE!

If you're wondering how this forward looking company copes with such a workload,



shared amongst six offices, you'd better look up in the clouds. Yes, really. Club Cars has gone with iCabbi, the premier up and coming cloud-based dispatch system in the industry.

And just why would they want to do that? Where do you start! The pure simplicity of the system tops the list; being cloud-based, there was no hardware installation as access is via a browser. Customers love the app, text back and web Booker options. The company loves the live driver tracking, better control over the system, and the sheer flexibility iCabbi offers for their multiple office setup.

Managing Director Peter Georgiou states: *"We needed a system that offered flexibility, more control in our hands, ease of use and ultimately, a system that would allow us to grow and operate from multiple sites. We were restricted from doing this with our previous provider. We searched the market and since switching to iCabbi, we have got all of this and more. What surprised us was how quickly we began to experience and benefit from increasing levels of automation. We regularly hit 50 per cent automation now and the app is fantastic – better than Uber."*

"We're making it easier to book a cab in Manchester and giving a better user experience to our base staff, our drivers and our passengers. Above all, by seeking out and embracing the right technology, we're growing – supporting local jobs and the local community in a challenging market. We couldn't have done this without iCabbi."

Another reason Club Cars is glad they've hooked up with iCabbi is the appeal of their app amongst younger customers, which make up a large proportion of their customer base especially around the universities. This is why Club Cars has offered their very own Student Safety Scheme for some considerable time: It's late, the buses and trains have stopped running, and a student is stuck with no money. They can 'pay' their fair by giving the Club Cars driver their student card in lieu of payment; they are then asked to sign a docket and leave their student card with the driver. They can then collect their card back by repaying their fare at Club Cars' city centre office.

Club Cars maintain that students should never walk home alone after a night out; they put their safety first – and further, offer students the biggest discount in town when they show



their university card to the driver. Can't be bad! This is undoubtedly one of the reasons that Club Cars' relationship with the licensing department at their councils is a good one; *"both Manchester and Trafford Councils have been a pleasure to work with."*

In this day and age, where everyone has to work harder for a customer's business, being the biggest isn't good enough. The winning taxi company needs to have the best technology, as well as competing on price and of course offering the best and most professional service that meets the customer's needs.

CLUB CARS	
Address:	Oatlands House Oatlands Road Manchester M22 1BE
Telephone:	0161 436 4000
Website:	clubcarsmanchester.co.uk
Year firm started:	1992
No. of vehicles:	650
Types of vehicle:	Private hire and hackney carriage: Saloon/estate, MPV minibus, executive
Licensing Authority:	Manchester City Council, Trafford Council
Cost of –	
Operator licence	£575 to £2,755
Driver's licence	£248 to £432
Vehicle licence	£193 to £312
Standard Fares:	Range from £2.80 for first mile
Booking system:	iCabbi
Phone system:	DiSC