CASE STUDY

Orange County Transportation Authority streamlines day-to-day operations with ABB Ability™ Ellipse on Microsoft® Azure®.
“We are excited about Ellipse 8.6. It's leaner, cleaner, functional, and more flexible and intuitive.”

Simkie Uppal
Lead Business Computing Solutions Specialist, OCTA
ABB Ability Ellipse on Microsoft Azure
streamlines day-to-day bus maintenance and maximizes asset utilization performance for OCTA.

The challenges
As the primary transportation provider for Orange County, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) provides reliable, affordable and high-quality transportation services and solutions to those who live and work in Orange County. OCTA recorded more than 41 million boardings in FY 2015-2016 on its countywide fixed-route bus service.

For almost two years, OCTA had been conducting a due diligence evaluation of operations and asset management solutions in an effort to reduce its overall operating expenses with emphasis on improving efficiency and effectiveness. It selected ABB’s cloud-optimized Ellipse enterprise asset management (EAM) solution to stay agile, provide excellent fleet reliability to riders, control costs, and update its asset management processes. The Azure-powered Ellipse EAM provides these benefits by leveraging the scalability and economy of the Microsoft cloud.

Moving past speedbumps
A transportation agency embracing continuous improvements through modernization, OCTA faced technical challenges while streamlining its IT infrastructure. The objectives were to promote interoperability, increase system availability and ensure security. OCTA wanted to use its resources more efficiently, and had a goal to extract more value out of its technology solution.

In short, OCTA wanted a technology solution that would improve performance and business-specific configurability while maximizing user adoption by being easy to learn and use. The ideal solution for OCTA would be one that helped it provide superior service, scaled easily, and helped gain efficiencies.

Selecting a solution
One of the most pressing factors for the selection committee was the cost-to-value ratio. OCTA wanted a solution that could offer the most functionality for the investment level it was making. Forming a selection committee, OCTA conducted a competitive bid procurement process, held interviews, and checked references, all while paying close attention to vendor support and responsiveness.

After a thorough two-year analysis for the most robust EAM solution, OCTA – already utilizing an on-premises version of Ellipse – partnered with ABB. OCTA decided to implement an upgraded, cloud-hosted version of Ellipse running on Microsoft Azure. Along with strong dedication to customer service, ABB proved to be the most qualified to meet OCTA’s specific needs with its extensive transit industry specialization. The upgraded version of Ellipse offered exactly what OCTA needed: a completely configurable, end-to-end EAM solution that enables significant infrastructure simplification by offloading it to the cloud.
ABB Ability Ellipse 8.6 for Cloud

OCTA is now in the process of implementing the cloud-based version of Ellipse to solve its most pressing challenges with cutting-edge, configurable functionality to meet business-specific requirements. With deep transportation industry experience built in, OCTA expects immediate ROI as soon as installation is complete through the following benefits:

**Improved disaster recovery**
Ellipse 8.6 means high availability and business continuity / disaster recovery functionality come standard right alongside hyper-scale cloud service. This seamless integration ensures OCTA's enterprise data is always available and secure, even in the event of an outage or natural disaster.

The solution eliminates the need for remote data centers and servers, since data resides in the Azure cloud. This deployment of ABB Ability Ellipse simplifies the disaster recovery process for OCTA, ensuring that its data is secure and always available when they need it most.

**Reduced overhead**
The Ellipse cloud solution promotes overhead (OPEX and CAPEX) reduction by removing the need for on-premises data centers, servers, and the associated maintenance costs. Additionally, ABB Ellipse 8.6 supports virtualization initiatives with the ability to house data in a hybrid deployment or on a public cloud, further reducing OCTA's IT footprint.

The real winner – besides OCTA's bottom line – will be its IT technical staff. Network administrators and system architects will all have reason to celebrate the simplification of their Ellipse environment as ABB's Cloud Services team takes over the technical administration duties. The upgraded version of Ellipse will also reduce the complexity of OCTA's IT environment by removing the need for Citrix middleware and the online transaction processor (Tuxedo), and seamlessly integrating a state-of-the-art, user-friendly GUI to provide one streamlined EAM solution.

**Simplified management**
OCTA plans to take advantage of the automation capabilities that Ellipse 8.6 delivers to simplify tedious and often inefficient “housekeeping” programs, updates and bug patching. A basic tenet is that automation breeds efficiency and business benefits, a fact that industries like transportation cannot ignore. This automation functionality will help reduce the number and scope of cumbersome user tasks, streamlining both maintenance and operations at OCTA.
Easy adoption

A common concern when implementing a new system is gaining user adoption and minimizing the learning curve. Complete with an attractive user interface and experience, the updated version of Ellipse offers a similar look and feel to Windows applications like Office 365, a staple in OCTA’s software bank. Moreover, while long-term users of Ellipse will be familiar with the solution’s functionality and interface, the simplicity of the upgraded release makes it easy and intuitive for new users to learn, helping to drive adoption quickly. It will also allow OCTA to personalize the system for various users and departments, based on specific needs and functions.

Enterprise forward

For any business, implementing a new solution of this magnitude can require serious time and investments. That is why OCTA decided to select an updated version of the proven Ellipse solution from a trusted vendor, helping it realize more business-specific benefits, sooner. ABB’s Ellipse 8.6 EAM powered by Microsoft Azure offers the most agile and flexible functionality for the investment, making it a great value for businesses looking for strong ROI. With this updated version of the Ellipse EAM solution, OCTA hopes to optimize processes and streamline operations quickly.

“[ABB is] customer-focused, responsive, and supportive. We’re optimistic because we know ABB is listening to us and that makes us feel valued.”

Simkie Uppal
Lead Business Computing Solutions Specialist, OCTA