

# The digital transformation of roadside assistance

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*Satisfying customer demands in the digital age is a challenge for all sectors, not in the least roadside services. Consumers who've become accustomed to expedited services such as Uber now expect more from their roadside assistance provider than they did 10 years ago. ARC Europe Group, the largest supplier of B2B roadside assistance services in Europe with a network covering more than 40 European countries, understands this and has launched a package of Smart Roadside Assistance (RSA) services for its OEM and Leasing customers. This package should continue to evolve; ARC Europe is currently piloting taxi services in a partnership with HERE Mobility, a digital marketplace for mobility services. The partnership fits in with their wider strategic objective to become a fully-fledged mobility partner and make the most of digital tools, as Diana Dumois, Head of Corporate Communications and PR at ARC Europe, explains.*

ARC Europe was founded in 1991 by eight major automobile clubs in Europe. Over the past thirty years it has evolved to become the biggest roadside assistance provider for OEMs on the continent. Ms. Dumois, who joined the company in 2007, says that in recent years they've focused on becoming a fully-fledged mobility partner. "Roadside assistance is in the midst of digital transformation. We, as ARC Europe, aim to make the most of new generation technology to provide integrated and robust solutions to our OEM and Leasing partners; solutions that deliver real-time event visibility,

consistent reporting, and high-quality service in the event of a vehicle breakdown, in addition to predicting and preventing future vehicle breakdown

She goes on to explain that the primary purpose of roadside assistance is to assist people when their vehicle has a mechanical failure – like a flat tire or battery failure – to help them get back on the road and to their destination. In some instances, like with transmission failure, assistance might be about towing the vehicle to the nearest dealership or assigned repair shops to

repair the equipment. But roadside assistance is now evolving beyond incident support, with ARC Europe, specifically, developing what Ms. Dumois describes as 'concierge services' and "Positive Assistance Journey". The idea is that customers of ARC Europe's OEM and Leasing partners can select the services they need when they need them and prevent and predict the breakdown with ultimate algorithm patterns that will enable them to reach and offer mobility solutions to enhance their customer experience.

Digital technology, such as localisation software and connected car tech, will play a huge part in this. The need for digitalisation in roadside assistance is indeed a necessity borne out of consumer expectations, she points out. "End-Consumers are getting used to expedited services, like in the case of Uber, where they could have someone show up quickly and also be able to track the driver on the way to get them." In response to these developments, ARC Europe has successfully launched Smart Roadside Assistance (RSA) services to



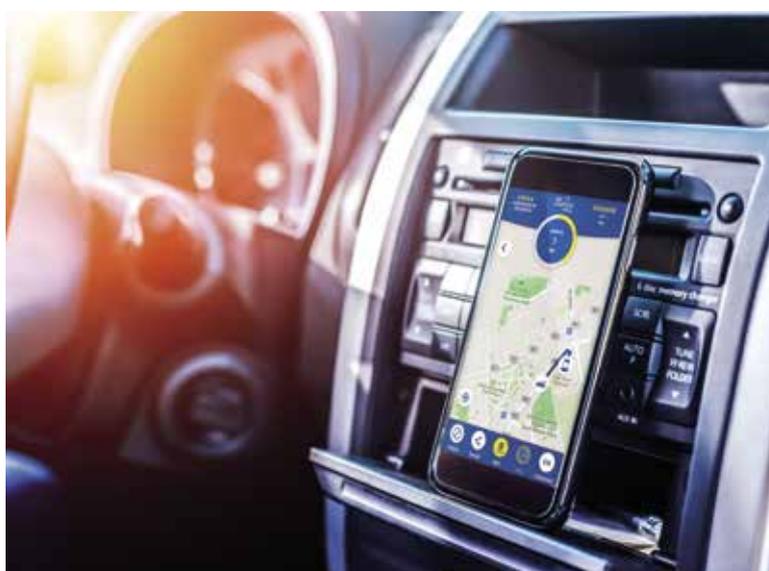
major OEMs in the European market, solidifying its leadership position in delivering digital assistance solutions “We’re currently testing Digital Taxi solutions; if successful we will add the service to our offering,” Ms. Dumois explains. “The aim is to keep drivers mobile after and before an incident occurs.”

The way it works in actual practise is that following an incident, the beneficiary will be able to not only request and track the assistance patrol vehicle from any digital interface (smartphone or car dashboard), but also to request, book and track a Taxi in real time. By testing new solutions with partners such as the HERE Mobility Marketplace, ARC Europe can provide smooth and reliable end-to-end transportation services to their customers, managing all customer requests via a single, streamlined dashboard.

“Our Executives identified the strategic similarities we both have in our fields. Our main B2B customers are car manufacturers in Europe facing digital transformation, moving from car ownership to car usage and looking for a convenient experience also in the assistance context.

The plan is to initially roll out the taxi services in urban environments, in select EU countries where ARC Europe has subsidiaries. In the longer term they could be rolled out across ARC Europe’s pan European network, complementing its Digital Roadside Assistance process. The pilot project will be evaluated after six months.

But this isn’t the only project ARC Europe is currently working on. The company has recently partnered with electric vehicle charging stations specialist, EVBox, to bring assistance services to EV drivers.



The partnership will provide 24/7 technical support to EVBox customers across Europe, initially in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, and later expanding into France, England, Germany, Italy and Spain in 2020. The partnership is initially targeted to deliver personalised digital MaaS solutions in order to keep drivers mobile after and before an incident occurs, but as Ms. Dumois points out, services could go well beyond incident support. “We envisage mobile charging units that can recharge vehicles on the spot, in any case charging them just enough to get to the next proper charging station or the driver’s destination. This should provide peace of mind to the EV driver.”

Ms. Dumois emphasises that ARC Europe is a great believer in the future of

electric vehicles and further ecosystem. On-going investment in this space should allow the company to realise its ambition to go well beyond roadside assistance and evolve into a fully-fledged mobility provider.

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