

CASE STUDY I: JOHN'S JETTA

PROBLEM

John Guercio, Manager of Vessel Electronics for Vane Line Bunkering in Baltimore, Maryland drives a fuel efficient Volkswagen Jetta. For John, logging thousands of miles a month is just part of the job.

John was used to receiving an occasional \$2,000 expense check for his mileage. But when his company put him on a strict \$750 a month expense plan, John knew it was time to take control of his MPGs and start paying better attention to the pain he would soon be feeling at the pump.

To do this, he turned to FuelClinic.com, the Web's premiere online fuel efficiency tracking and driver improvement resource. His main interest was in tracking his Jetta's miles per gallon for work-related trips to determine whether or not the new stipend was helping him make money, or causing him to lose it.

CHALLENGE

In March 2008, John registered his 2000 Volkswagen 4-cylinder Jetta with a free account at FuelClinic.com, and began diligently keeping receipts every time he filled up, with the number of gallons, the price per gallon, and writing in his odometer reading. Because his company reimburses him for his gas expenditures, he had kept receipts dating all the way back to January 2008. After inputting that information into his FuelClinic.com account, John was immediately given his first at-a-glance view of his own driving habits.

RESULTS

Between January 2, 2008 and June 22, 2009 John logged exactly 63 gas receipts in which he filled up his Jetta's tank almost a full 13 gallons each time. In 18 months he has spent \$2,756.43 on 796.27 gallons of fuel.

John learned that for the month of January his Jetta was averaging a total of 557.75 miles per tank of fuel. For the Jetta which holds about 13.5 gallons to its tank, that means he was averaging about 41 MPG – not bad for the car which boasts average highway mileage of anywhere between 28 MPG - 49 MPG.

(more)

John also used the site to make notes of oil changes and air filter replacements to quantify the difference in MPG resulting from these maintenance items.

In April, John notes in his FuelClinic.com diary that he changed his air filter on the 16th of the month. Looking at information logged during the next month of May, John's Jetta now averaged 565 total miles per tank, gaining him seven miles more per tank than before the air filter was changed.

While John's daily driving habits vary considerably, having a tool that allows him to track those habits gives him the ability to test the efficacy of fuel efficient driving tips regularly touted by automotive experts that recommend such things as: consolidating trips, accelerating smoothly and maintaining momentum, driving 55 – 60 mph instead of 70+, not hurrying to the next stop light, and carefully timing your merge into traffic when entering a highway.

Following these tips, and many more, conveniently made available in the Driving Tips section at FuelClinic.com, John has slowed down on the road and found that maintaining speed in the center lane without aggressive lane changes gets him to his destination in the same amount of time with increased MPG.

Now a more fuel efficient driver, John has been able to squeeze an average 581 miles out of each tank, nearly 30 miles more than when he first started inputting his data into the calculator.

John also learned that work-related road trips, not covered by his expenses checks, were setting him back an additional \$3,000 a year. Had he not used FuelClinic.com to track his miles MPG, this would have been money lost. Instead, he was able to write this expense off on his taxes and was reimbursed fully by the IRS.

As a bonus, John used the data he gathered with the help of FuelClinic.com to perform total cost of ownership calculations. He recently considered purchasing a new car but using the information gathered over the last year and a half decided against it...*for now.*

"Since being a member of FuelClinic.com, I am more conscious of the factors that influence my MPG and have adjusted my driving accordingly. It is nice to know exactly how much your car is costing you per day and per mile when budgeting household expenses."

– John Guercio, FuelClinic.com member