



GlobalTRACS® Cuts Excavator Breakdowns at Cowin Equipment

“QUALCOMM’s willingness to work with our vendors to adapt GlobalTRACS to our needs, resolved a problem that had plagued us for years. As a result, we’re saving time, money, and customer goodwill while improving our profit picture.”

— Curtis Jackson, General Manager of Rentals
Cowin Equipment Company, Inc.

Cowin Equipment Company, Inc. of Birmingham, Alabama had been studying the use of wireless mobile communications technology to help manage its fleet of heavy equipment. Although Cowin realized that the automatic collection of GPS-based location and hours-of-use data could improve equipment utilization, maintenance scheduling, and security, it was unsure which company could help implement the right solution for their needs. But, when QUALCOMM identified a unique and creative solution to one of Cowin’s most urgent equipment rental challenges, Cowin quickly became enthusiastic about the GlobalTRACS system.



Situation

- ▶ Heavy equipment sales and rental company has a chronic maintenance problem

Solution

- ▶ GlobalTRACS equipment management system from QUALCOMM

Results

- ▶ Dramatically reduced down time, resulting in positive impact on revenue generation
- ▶ Estimated savings in excess of \$100,000 in repair costs within the first year
- ▶ Improved profitability as a result of better equipment utilization and accurate billings
- ▶ Improved customer satisfaction with fewer construction delays

Cowin Equipment Company, Inc.

Stephen Searcy, Cowin's vice president and general manager of product support, explains that Cowin was experiencing chronic, expensive breakdowns of its hydraulic-hammer-equipped excavators used to pulverize rock and concrete. As a result of the physical impact and heat generated during normal use, the grease reservoirs that supplied the hammers quickly became depleted. If the grease was not replenished shortly after a warning light alerted the operator, the equipment suffered from catastrophic breakdowns and required repairs that cost between \$12,000 and \$30,000 per incident. Even worse, operators often felt pressured to finish the workday before replacing the grease—yielding the expected bad results. With this in mind, Searcy issued a challenge to QUALCOMM: “If GlobalTRACS can economically solve this problem, I’ll install it on our entire hydraulic hammer fleet.”

QUALCOMM Develops Added-Value Solution with Sensor Manufacturer

Bud Sims, Director of Product Development at QUALCOMM, worked closely with the sensor manufacturer, Lincoln Lubrication, to develop a solution that included three elements: the GlobalTRACS system; a sonar-based sensor that monitored grease levels and automatically shut down the equipment when levels were low; and installation of a larger, five-gallon reservoir. The new process was straightforward:

- ▶ When a sensor detected dangerously low grease levels, it automatically shut down the hammer, and GlobalTRACS issued a “sensor breach” alert to the operator, QUALCOMM, and Cowin.
- ▶ If the grease was not replenished within five minutes by the user, GlobalTRACS issued a “sensor critical” alert. This prompted Cowin to contact the user to offer assistance in replenishing the reservoir.
- ▶ Once the grease was replenished, the system issued a “system return to normal” signal, and the hammer excavator resumed operation.

Cowin tested the new system from September through December, and by the end of 2005, it was ready for installation on all of Cowin's hydraulic hammer excavators.

Now that GlobalTRACS has been deployed successfully on Cowin's hammer-equipped excavators, the company is installing the system on all of its high-value equipment, where the emphasis will be placed on maintenance and increased customer satisfaction.



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