



TUFF SHED Builds Productivity with Tracking Solution

About TUFF SHED

TUFF SHED is a leading provider of installed storage buildings and garages. Innovative engineering, proven construction techniques and expert consultative services have contributed to the company's success. TUFF SHED buildings are manufactured and installed locally, with domestically produced materials. Local professionals guide customers through the design and construction process, with installation included in the purchase price. With headquarters in Denver, TUFF SHED operates in 36 states across the Pacific Northwest, Southwest, Mountain, Midwest, South Central and Southeastern states. The company has over 780 employees and more than 50,000 customers.

Situation

As the U.S. economy stalled, TUFF SHED saw a significant decrease in sales. Executives searching for ways to streamline processes and increase productivity saw the potential of enhancing its fleet management capabilities to increase the company's operational efficiency.

Solution

At the recommendation of AT&T, TUFF SHED implemented TeleNav Vehicle Tracker™ from AT&T running over the AT&T wireless network to help the company improve the productivity of its workforce and better monitor its fleet. The solution transmits vehicles' arrival and departure from job sites, enabling more precise scheduling and providing the ability to redirect workers with last-minute changes. TeleNav Vehicle Tracker solution helps TUFF SHED employees make the most of each workday.

Industry Leader Creates Products of Lasting Value

TUFF SHED's commitment to quality, use of domestic materials and local construction led to steady growth since its founding in 1981. Consistently strong sales have drawn industry praise: *Inc. Magazine* recognized TUFF SHED in 2007 as one of the 5,000 fastest growing private companies in the U.S., and Home Depot named the company a 2008 Service Partner of the Year Award winner for outstanding commitment to sales and quality.

The company has dozens of locations across the Western U.S., including 46 manufacturing centers and 17 retail locations. A fleet of more than 300 trucks delivers necessary materials to each jobsite, where employees construct each shed according to customers' specifications. As the industry leader, TUFF SHED delivers key advantages like product innovation, exclusive building features and raw material purchasing power that offer customers products of lasting value.

TUFF SHED Fleet Coordinator Christina Bartelme said the company often hears from customers who are amazed by their sheds' durability. One Florida customer sent photos of her TUFF SHED after a devastating hurricane. "The roof blew off her house and her trees were toppled over, but her shed was absolutely fine," she said.

Most TUFF SHED customers need storage space for lawn and gardening equipment, but others use the sheds as workshops, greenhouses, gazebos or garages. TUFF SHED also has a number of commercial and agricultural customers that use sheds to store equipment and supplies or shelter livestock. "We really do have a superior product," Bartelme said. "The building's strength, durability and longevity make us stand out."

Changing with the Times

After years of soaring sales, the global recession had a negative impact on TUFF SHED's growth. "It's a wonderful product, but when people are losing their jobs and their homes, buying storage buildings is not a priority," Bartelme said. Business decreased by nearly half during the worst of the downturn, which led TUFF SHED to search for ways to operate more efficiently.

TUFF SHED Facts

- **Business Needs**
Increased efficiency and streamlined fleet management operations
- **Networking Solution**
Mobility-based vehicle tracking solution improves asset and workforce management
- **Business Value**
Near real-time vehicle tracking facilitates precise scheduling and enhanced worker productivity
- **Industry Focus**
Manufacturing
- **Size**
\$110 million in 2010 sales



"We have definitely had to look our business from a 360 degree view to determine where we could streamline, where we could be more efficient and what programs just weren't working," Bartelmey said. "We made adjustments where needed and attempted to realign ourselves with our current customer base."

The company decreased the size of its fleet and reassigned its staff to position itself for continued success. Officials believed that they could also save money by enhancing the scheduling and tracking of its fleet. TUFF SHED had used a GPS tracking system in its vehicles, but the aging units could not provide information in near real-time. "We wanted to be able to track our costs and our vehicles' footprints day in and day out," she said.

TUFF SHED researched numerous GPS application providers before choosing the TeleNav Vehicle Tracker™ from AT&T solution. "The choice really came down to the relationship we already had with AT&T, with whom we have a host of other services, and their very high recommendation of TeleNav," Bartelmey said. "

The solution relies on GPS and the AT&T wireless network to locate mobile assets and workers in near real-time to increase TUFF SHED's efficiency. "We run reports on parameters such as speeding, idle time, and time on the job," she said. By tracking its vehicles across a given time frame, managers can see how efficiently or inefficiently drivers are operating.

Visibility, Control, Efficiency

The TeleNav Vehicle Tracker solution is advanced and very user-friendly, Bartelmey said, enabling TUFF SHED to change a vehicle's reporting parameters if it moved a truck to a different company location. With its old GPS system, TUFF SHED had to wait for an account rep to make any changes. "If our managers could not see all of the vehicles within their particular fleet, the system really was not doing us any good," she said. "The vehicles were not visible where they needed to be."

Managing GPS bills was also a constant headache, as the former provider failed to take into account any vehicles that had been sold or moved to a new location. "Every single month it was a constant struggle, going through the bill page by page and making corrections so each of our locations was being billed accurately for their vehicles," Bartelmey said. "The time I've saved on reviewing billing each month for these services alone could have been the reason for the move to AT&T and the TeleNav solution."

Monthly reoccurring charges have increased slightly per unit, but this was offset by the solution's increased capabilities and many advantages, Bartelmey said. "It has made us more effective, cutting hours and hours of time each month that I was spending dealing with the inefficiencies of the old company. For what we are gaining, the cost is negligible."

The solution has already assisted several drivers, including one who ran out of gas in unfamiliar surroundings. "They were able to locate him right away and get a tow truck out to help him," she said. As some drivers cover a wide expanse of territory, the added peace of mind that the solution provides is appreciated.

Making the Most of a Workday

Thanks to its TeleNav Vehicle Tracker, TUFF SHED can better predict trends, she said. "Tracking the vehicles' arrival and departure from the job site accurately tells how long our jobs are taking to complete. We are now able to schedule builds more precisely and really get the most out of our workday." If a warranty services call crops up, the nearest truck can be identified to serve the customer more quickly. Fleet idling time can be monitored and corrected so that excess fuel costs can be eliminated and wear and tear on batteries can be reduced resulting in cost savings. Detailed reporting on driver performance helps monitor driver compliance with company policies, ensuring driver and public safety.

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– Christina Bartelmey, Fleet Coordinator, TUFF SHED

Bartelmey said TUFF SHED considers its move to the TeleNav Vehicle Tracker™ from AT&T to be a positive step for the business. "Customer service is not an issue now. Each and every time I need assistance, my account team has been very responsive and they have worked until they solved the problem." Billing has also become a non-issue. "I simply make sure that I have all of our vehicles in the correct locations on the website," she said, "so unless I have made an error, there aren't any mistakes on our bill."

As fleet manager, Bartelmey appreciates the easily customizable TeleNav portal. "I don't have to wait for someone else to make a change for me," she said. "If a vehicle moves from one of our stores to another, I simply log in to the TeleNav Track website and make the change."

TUFF SHED employees say AT&T did not exaggerate the benefits of its tracking solution. "Our AT&T account team set the bar high in their recommendation of TeleNav Vehicle Tracker, and so far, they were right. It's good to have a provider that you can rely on."

Overall, the solution helps TUFF SHED realize its vision of creating an environment that encourages teamwork, a commitment to excellence and a sense of individual achievement. "Everything has worked as it should. The rollout of the product went as planned, and the website itself has provided us with far greater oversight capabilities," Bartelmey said. "The move was absolutely a step in the right direction for us."

For more information contact your AT&T Representative or visit us at www.att.com/business.

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