

CASE STUDY

Cillessen & Sons Drives Efficient Workforce and Asset Operations With Align

The Challenges

Time Tracking and Payroll

Managing Spare Parts Inventory

Tracking Equipment & Consumables



Overview

Founded in 2000, Cillessen & Sons is a Kansas-based provider of traffic control systems and pavement marking services to highway construction contractors, airfields, government projects, and events. The company completes about 150 projects annually throughout Kansas, as well as parts of Oklahoma and Missouri. Since 2021, Cillessen has grown 25% to 30% annually. The number of employees has nearly doubled during that time, with a correlated growth in vehicles and equipment.

Cillessen & Sons CFO Mark Ayres joined the company in 2021 after more than two decades in mergers and acquisitions. During his career, he has helped start 50 new facilities, many located outside the U.S. In addition to typical CFO responsibilities, Mark is leveraging previous systems experience in his role with Cillessen to improve and build the company's capabilities. According to Mark, his goals in this area are to "make the business more efficient, and make better decisions on scheduling and allocating employees, [as well as] when we need to buy materials and assets and when we don't, because the way we were doing things before was not effective."

CHALLENGE #1

Simplifying Time Tracking and Payroll

When Mark started at Cillessen & Sons, the company was using paper to track time and attendance, and payroll was being processed manually. As a transportation contractor, Cillessen must process payroll weekly. Additionally, it is subject to complex Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations about paying employees prevailing wage rates that differ from county to county and from state to state.

With the old paper method, it took multiple finance employees 80% of their week to collect employee time cards, track down missing data, calculate wages, and



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process payroll. Explained Mark: “I was just starting the job and was somewhat in panic mode – I realized that I had three or four really talented people wasting away that could be doing other, more productive things.”

CHALLENGE #2

Managing Spare Parts and Inventory

When Mark arrived at Cillessen, equipment, spare parts, and consumable items were tracked manually, and paper purchase orders were used to acquire additional stock. This system was extremely inefficient when dealing with thousands of different part numbers, and accurate, real-time data on tool and material inventories was impossible to obtain. Furthermore, because accurate inventory data was needed to complete the company’s income statement, the team was forced to conduct time-consuming manual inventory counts monthly.

CHALLENGE #3

Tracking High-Value Equipment and Consumables

At any given time, Cillessen & Sons has crews and equipment spread across dozens of projects and hundreds of miles. It operates a fleet of nearly 100 diesel pickup trucks and high-value equipment ranging from machines that paint road stripes to grinding machines that trench grooves in pavement and water blasting machines that remove old paint from highways or airport runways.

The Cillessen team soon realized that the company had no way to know exactly what equipment was assigned to a job and how long it had been on site, or the quantities of consumables like paint, glass beads, and marking tape on hand. Complicating the task was the fact that some equipment Cillessen uses is large and expensive, while its consumable items are small with massive quantities.

Solution

Align Facilitates CFO’s Goals of Improving Efficiency, Building Capabilities and Improved Decision-Making

After a thorough search process, Cillessen & Sons selected busybusy by Align for workforce time tracking and Align’s Asset Management solution for equipment and inventory tracking. Workforce management was launched in 2022 with asset tracking debuting the following year.

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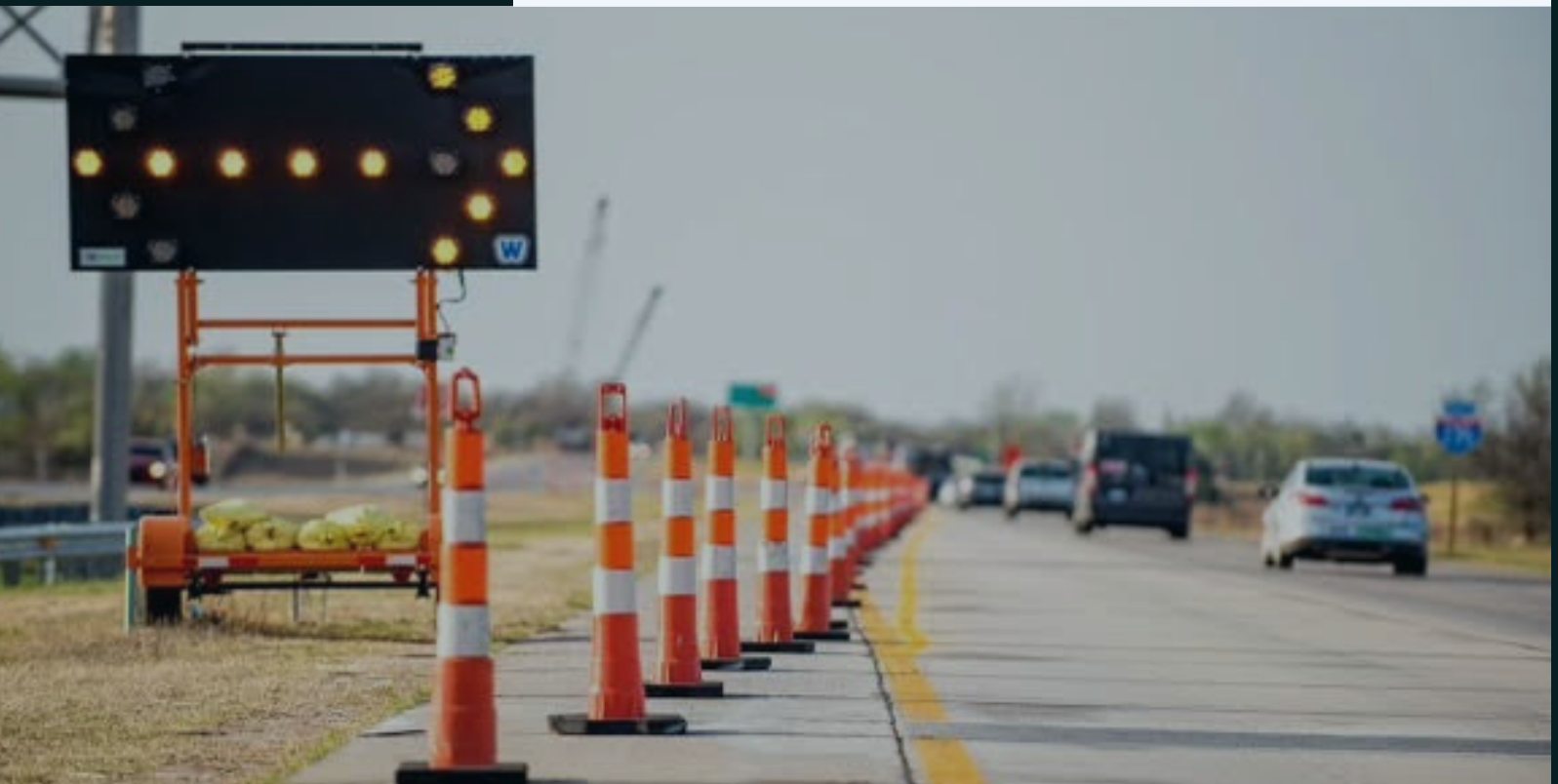
Partnering for Customer Success

Cillessen has been impressed with the level of support it received during the implementation process and beyond. For example, Mark worked closely with the busybusy team to build an interface into the company’s ERP software to make sure that paychecks were created and cut on time. “These guys will take your phone calls and work on something,” said Mark of the implementation process. “That doesn’t happen often in the world right now.”

Mark also found the Align team to be responsive and communicative about new enhancements and features that may be of interest. In his words, his experience with Align has been “totally opposite” that of dealing with other business software providers. He has even served as a reference for potential customers.

Easy-to-Use GPS Time Tracking

Cillessen’s selection criteria for an employee time-tracking solution included GPS functionality – allowing the company to confirm employees are clocking in from the correct job site – the ability to handle DOT wage rate tables, and integration with its ERP accounting system. In the end, busybusy prevailed based on the demo: “busybusy was by far the simplest program for our construction guys to use, and that was the overwhelming reason why we selected it,” explained Mark.





Streamlined Payroll Process

According to Mark, the man hours needed to process payroll have been cut in half with busybusy because it is simpler, faster, easier, and more accurate than their old way of doing things. The other benefit he has found is that he has a deeper bench of people on the finance team who can oversee payroll duties, giving him greater flexibility to manage short-term personnel challenges like team members being sick or on vacation.

Real-time Location of High-Dollar Equipment

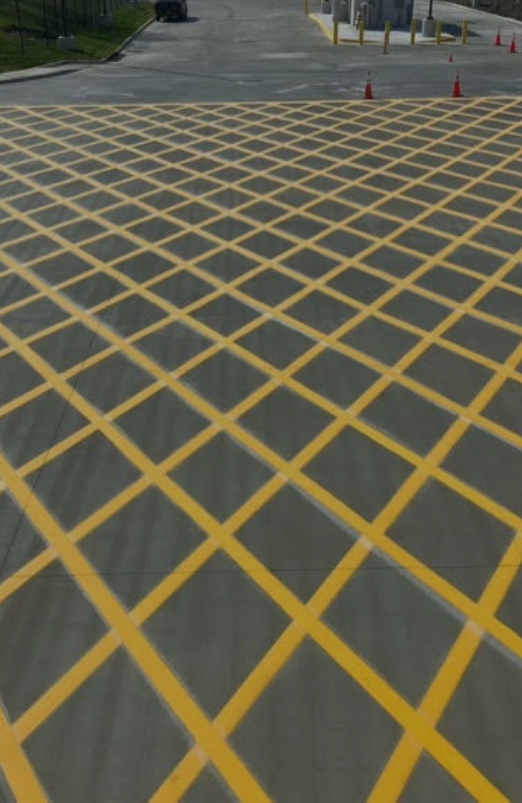
Cillessen has implemented GPS tracking of high-value equipment such as electronic message boards, electronic arrow boards, remote-controlled traffic signals, and trailers that transport large totes of materials like pavement marking paint to job sites. Previously, the company didn't know how many of these items were assigned to projects or exactly where they were. With Align's Wireless Tracking solution which includes GPS tags, they are moving towards doing a manual inventory of these items once a year as a verification process instead of monthly to close the books.

Driving Efficiency in Maintenance, Purchasing, and Warehouse Functions

The Align Asset Management implementation initially focused on manually ordered parts. Cillessen began the process by taking pictures and building a part-number matrix for spare parts into the system. Once that was complete, the Cillessen maintenance group started using work orders, which let them view priorities and the status of vehicles and machinery undergoing maintenance.

Additionally, the procurement team is eliminating paper purchase orders and has started ordering spare parts via purchase orders generated by the Align platform. They have further driven efficiency in the purchasing process by establishing minimum quantities on hand for about 1,600 spare parts in the Align system, which lets them know whether an item is a special order or frequently used. The team is also using Align's reporting features to track minimum and maximum quantities.

Adding warehouse inventory to the Align system is in progress. Already, warehouse staff have created booklets with barcodes of item categories to help track inventory status using Align. And recently warehouse employees have implemented pick sheets tied to Align to more easily prepare materials and equipment needed for large traffic-control projects as well as more accurately track those items to the job site and back.



The Future: Implementing Additional Features to Support Business Growth

On the workforce management front, Cillessen is preparing to implement busybusy for scheduling soon, which will replace another app they are currently using for that purpose. In addition, they plan to start leveraging busybusy's internal messaging feature to quickly and easily document and communicate issues from the job site.

Cillessen's near-term plans include expansion to multiple locations, which will make efficient asset management even more critical. Regarding asset inventory, Cillessen is in the process of developing a more extensive system for storing and cataloging spare and inventory parts that will tie into the Align platform and allow parts to be identified by more than just a part number.

Likewise, Cillessen plans to expand its GPS tracking capabilities to around 200 tags. The company just won its biggest project ever in Lawrence, Kansas, about 200 miles from its headquarters. It will set up a temporary facility to service the project and will add GPS tags to equipment moved to that location. Farther into the future, Cillessen hopes to use data gathered from GPS tags to go beyond loss protection to optimize asset utilization and more accurately invoice customers based on actual usage.

When asked what advice he would give another company considering Align, Mark values the high level of partnership he receives as a customer, commenting that, unlike other business software providers who are not interested in customer collaboration, "your teams are interested in communication and dialogue and accepting feedback." He added that markets change, business needs evolve, and software solutions should, too.

Conclusion

Cillessen & Sons CFO Mark Ayres has leveraged Align's suite of operational tools to streamline internal processes, increase operational visibility, and access real-time data on key business metrics. After implementing busybusy by Align, the company's time tracking and payroll process finishes a day earlier and requires fewer resources, while its user-friendly interface is simple for field workers to complete. Using Align's asset tracking capabilities Cillessen can more accurately manage inventory levels, control purchase expenditures, and protect high-value equipment from loss.

To learn more about Align, request a demo today and discover how you can upgrade your construction operations.

If you're interested in learning more about how Align could empower your business to run more efficiently, safely and profitably, please **contact us for a product tour today.**

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