ToolWatch

How ToolWatch Powers Gastier's Lean Construction Operations

The Challenges

Gastier sought to address inefficiencies and waste across a number of operational areas through the application of lean construction principles to improve overall productivity as the company grew.

1. Accurately Reporting Job Costing and Billing

When Usama joined Gastier's team in 2014, his primary role was to support the operational needs of Gastier's many simultaneous projects. The company's field teams were involved in many fast-moving projects across a wide range of divisions. As a result, tool and equipment requests and returns were submitted as needed, and it was common for tool entries, project numbers, departments or divisions to have difficulties due to the use of paper requisitions that had to be handled manually. This operational challenge demanded immediate attention, which Usama prioritized and addressed with ToolWatch job cost and billing module.

2. Streamlining Equipment Service and Calibration

Gastier manages inventory across multiple warehouses and job sites. Ensuring proper care of tools and machinery to prevent breakdowns is a challenge most construction companies face, in order to minimize production downtime while projects wait for critical equipment to be repaired or replaced. Equipment breakdowns also create additional logistical problems around managing labor and productivity, leading to significant lost time and process waste for personnel and transportation resources.

3. Aligning Teams and Inventory Management

Gastier's equipment is often transferred to multiple sites within a short period of time, depending on how long each project needs a specific piece of equipment. Before ToolWatch, Gastier maintained paper-based records of equipment and their locations, which created significant overhead around storing, tracking, accessing, and updating paperwork. By moving to a digital system that connects warehouse, field, and back office teams, inventory data would become available in real time to every department across the enterprise, improving accuracy and efficiency. The digital system would also reduce the volume of data needed to be entered, reducing opportunities for human error.

"There's a lot to ToolWatch that I don't know yet," he said. "I needed the essentials to start, specifically the billing service, calibration features and training. I'm excited to learn more about additional features."

1. Job Costing & Billing

Using ToolWatch's Job Cost & Billing module. Gastier streamlined its operational workflows and improved the accuracy and efficiency of its data in the process. This allowed the company to save significant time by eliminating the need to audit each invoice prior to sending it out to clients.

By using ToolWatch's financial management reports, Usama reviews each report prior to uploading it into Gastier's billing system. The company also added an extra approval step to the client requisition process to ensure only the right tools and equipment are requested, picked, and sent to the job site. This additional step reduced wasted time and transportation resources.

Usama reported that this new process, incorporating ToolWatch's management services, substantially decreased the number of issues with both billing and job costing.

2. Streamlining Equipment Service and Calibration

Gastier utilizes ToolWatch's equipment management capabilities to track and schedule equipment oversight and inspections. Now, monthly service reporting enables Gastier's team to identify service needs prior to equipment breaking down or becoming non-compliant, minimizing potential project delays and safety issues as well as extending the lifespan of the company's assets. The result is less frequent equipment and tool breakdowns, minimizing production waste with increased efficiencies of the system and allowing productivity to remain consistent and profitable.

Usama now has the ability to be proactive; for example, he uses the monthly reports to monitor expiration dates for heavy equipment and large trailers to plan service ahead of time. Approaching equipment maintenance and service from a proactive perspective also gives Usama more control over the environment, instead of having to wait for something to break before identifying it as a problem.

3. Aligning Teams and Inventory Management

The ToolWatch cloud platform allows for requisitions and returns. Having the right people completing reqs and returns is valuable for Usama, which allows them to move away from manual processes, e.g., pen-and-paper, and redundant emails, and phone calls. Gastier improved accuracy of their inventory management and better aligned teams across the company. It's critical for the team to have the right people doing the right steps; it keeps them following the correct protocol. For example, by having accurate data on tool and material inventory levels, Gastier was able to both better service projects in the field and reduce the amount of overstock they carry in their warehouses.

ToolWatch provides end-to-end operational workflows that are completely digital. As a result, field requisitions trigger pick tickets in the warehouse, items get delivered on site, and then returned back to the warehouse — all done via ToolWatch workflows.

Nothing has to be done by paper anymore. Usama provides a service calibration report to his Project Managers to identify tools and equipment that require maintenance within two days up to two weeks out, including equipment that gets the green light also so the Project Manager knows these tools are safe to disperse to job sites.Usama appreciates that he can use data from ToolWatch to assist him with building the most effective reports for his team to utilize. This is critical for the safety of their clients' projects and team members.

Gastier moved its internal paper-based tool catalog to ToolWatch's digital platform and most recently started using ToolWatch Cloud to expand access and ease-of-use for all team members with a mobile device. This was especially important in the effort to separate tool and equipment requests from transfers and billing. ToolWatch and Gastier added a step to ensure transfers are approved by management prior to making the physical transfer.

4. Reporting

Gastier is working toward complete transparency, and with assistance from ToolWatch's reporting services, the company is well on its way to accomplishing that goal. ToolWatch reports are sent to Gastier's clients so they can see all history related to their projects, which they appreciate.

The Future

Today, Gastier keeps projects running efficiently and accurately thanks to the operational improvements ToolWatch supports. "ToolWatch is always adding new innovations and new features that help me save time," Usama shared.

"Thanks to a strong support team, ToolWatch listens to our ideas, relays feedback to the development team, and teaches us how to use new features that are built with our needs in mind."

Now, Usama has more time to commit to other functions of his job, which includes driving even more of the company's operations using ToolWatch.

Through ToolWatch, Usama plans to create users on each job site who will have the ability to issue a request for tools and/or equipment and send it to the Gastier warehouse by use of their ToolWatch app on their cell phones. When the request reaches the warehouse, Gastier staff will be able to assign the requested item by job role instead of a team member's name and require an approval step prior to making the physical transfer.

Usama also wants to add purchase price of consumables and the rental cost of equipment in the internal catalog, enabling Gastier staff to easily provide more accurate quotes to clients. This update will reduce a significant amount of wasted time and productivity by reducing the number of times a quote is reviewed by both parties.

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

**800.676.4034
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Conclusion

Identifying new opportunities for continuous improvement is another lean construction principle Gastier practices, which will allow the company to further streamline operations while driving more efficiency, safety, and profitability over time. Better operational and data analytics will also help identify areas where action is needed to follow the practice of lean construction and improve the safety of all parties, tools, and equipment.

The impact of ToolWatch on Usama's job and the organization gives him the ability to provide any data needed with a few clicks. Needing instant access to analyze data and sort and filter to thread the needle through projects is a critical part of his role. When COVID-19 hit, they had additional supplies they needed to provide for their team members, and as a result it increased costs and they needed to pass that off to their clients. Without ToolWatch, instant access to all of this data would be lost. He has a bird's eye view to the history of all tools and equipment purchases, costs, consumables for each client they served. ToolWatch gives him the ability to quote pricing easily for their clients as well. He counts on the data to serve the security and safety of their staff.