



Managing and Monitoring a Wide-ranging Service Fleet

About Custom Bandag

Custom Bandag is a 35-year-old family-owned company that specializes in providing trucking and construction firms with commercial tire services, including re-treading, maintenance and inspection, emergency road service and new tire sales. In addition to 12 drive-in service centers, the company operates a fleet of 80 service vehicles to support customers at their own locations, and on the road. Custom Bandag's service area extends for nearly 200 miles centered on the ultra-busy freight and transportation hub of metropolitan New York City.

Situation

Custom Bandag's success depends on maintaining its enviable reputation for dependable and expert service, both for keeping customer's vehicles moving, and helping them comply with strict Department of Transportation regulations. The company needs to deploy its service fleet as efficiently as possible, to contain costs as well as to deliver the fastest possible response to customer emergencies.

Solution

To monitor and track its service vehicles across its service territory, Custom Bandag deployed TeleNav Track™ from AT&T, running on Motorola Tundra™ devices that are carried by its drivers. Dispatchers and managers use the system to more efficiently route trucks to emergency calls, plan more cost-effective delivery routes and manage overall performance of their drivers. The firm notes that overtime and fuel consumption has improved, along with response times for road service.

If it's Black, Round and Rolls, They Handle it

It may not seem like a glamorous business, but for trucking and freight companies, delivery firms and construction companies, tires are literally the foundation of their business. A single failed tire can shut down a huge earth-moving machine, stop a tractor trailer or delay 80,000 pounds of freight for hours.

Keeping those vehicles moving on safe, efficient tires is the business of Custom Bandag. Since 1975, the family-run firm has been tending to the surprisingly complex tire needs of trucking, construction and transport companies. A typical freight-hauler could have thousands of tires on the road at any time, which all must be continually inspected, serviced, repaired and replaced. Poorly maintained tires can cost a company dearly, both in lost time as well as in stiff DOT fines.

"As a full-service dealer, we handle everything from wheel alignments and balancing, to DOT inspections, tire maintenance and replacement, as well as road-side service for vehicles stranded with tire problems," said Fred De Jesus, Jr., General Manager and son of the firm's founder. "We also do re-treading in our own shops, using the Bandag process."

The company supplies and services a surprising variety of tires, ranging from 10-foot high behemoths for earth movers – and costing up to \$50,000 each – to fork lift tires no bigger than a dinner plate, and of course everything in between. When the airliner that made a crash landing in the Hudson River was recovered, it was moved from the site on a specialized rig with over 120 tires – serviced by Custom Bandag.

"For us, reputation is everything," said De Jesus. "Our family has been in business since the 1960's. We have a reputation for being dependable and for doing what we promise. Customers trust us and rely on us so we are not about to compromise that reputation. Customers we have lost because we didn't service them are few and far between."

Custom Bandag Facts

- **Business Needs**
Provide efficient tire maintenance service to trucking and construction customers, respond quickly to stranded customer vehicles, contain overall operational costs
- **Networking Solution**
TeleNav Track from AT&T deployed on Motorola Tundra devices and utilizing wireless services from AT&T
- **Business Value**
Faster dispatch to emergency road calls, more efficient service routes, reduced overtime and fuel consumption, improved driver safety and performance
- **Industry**
Commercial tire service
- **Size**
12 locations with 340 total employees



Faster Dispatch for 80 Vehicles

In support of clients, Custom Bandag deploys 80 service trucks that are dispatched out of twelve service centers across the New York metropolitan area. The teams cover an area that extends from the southernmost tip of the New Jersey Turnpike northward to Poughkeepsie, New York and as far east as Hartford, Connecticut. At any given time, these service teams may be conducting regularly scheduled visits to clients' sites for routine inspections and maintenance – and also responding to customers whose trucks are stranded on the road due to a tire failure.

For Custom Bandag, the key is to orchestrate the movements of the service fleet so as to efficiently handle the everyday visits, yet still make them available for emergency road calls that arise unpredictably at all hours of the day or night. "For a trucker or construction crew, every minute you're stopped because of a blown tire or other problem costs money," said De Jesus. "Truckers are allowed only 14 hours a day on the road. They don't want to waste two or three of those hours sitting there waiting for a tire."

To keep close tabs on his service fleet, De Jesus employs TeleNav Track from AT&T for all his drivers. This allows Custom Bandag dispatchers to identify the location of each truck in real time. They simply log onto a web page, and can see a map showing where each truck is, along with information on its speed and direction.

"When a call comes into one of our locations for emergency road service, a dispatcher can quickly tell which of his trucks to send based on how close they are to the breakdown call, what they're doing at the time and what supplies they're carrying," said De Jesus. "We can also give the stranded driver a good estimate of when we'll reach him."

With TeleNav Track from AT&T in place, De Jesus notes that customers are saying they are seeing much faster response times; they are usually rolling again in 60 to 120 minutes. "I'm already seeing at least a five percent drop in overtime because we make better dispatch decisions."

Improving Safety and Productivity

In addition to dispatch tasks, De Jesus and his location managers rely on TeleNav Track from AT&T to monitor and manage their overall field activity – both to find ways to boost efficiency, and to help ensure that all drivers are abiding by company safety policies.

Each day, De Jesus receives a report showing which vehicles were speeding during the previous day, which is all based on the dynamic GPS capabilities of the solution. "We are very strict about speeding," said De Jesus. "Speeders are too much of a liability for us." Besides

being a danger to themselves and others, unsafe drivers are risking a truck that costs an average of \$70,000, and could adversely affect the company's insurance rates.

The reporting and monitoring also help operations managers spot drivers who might be running their routes inefficiently or taking too long for service visits – with an eye to keeping the teams as productive as possible. Since drivers know that the TeleNav Track from AT&T solution is in place, they are less likely to abuse lunch hours and other company policies.

"By helping drivers tighten up their routes, we have already noticed a three to four-percent reduction in fuel consumption. With 80 trucks on the road all day long, that adds up to significant savings."

"We know where our trucks are. We're responding faster to road calls, saving on overtime and cutting fuel consumption. I'd call that a success."

– Fred De Jesus, Jr., General Manager, Custom Bandag

A Dependable, Easy-to-use Solution

Before moving to wireless services and TeleNav Track from AT&T, Custom Bandag had experimented with other tracking-type technologies that either fell short on functionality or coverage. "Since moving to AT&T, we don't have issues with dropped calls like we used to," said De Jesus.

The minimal training requirements were also a plus for the company, in that there was virtually nothing for the drivers to learn, except for some basic text messaging. And the simplicity of the web interface made it easy for Custom Bandag dispatchers to start using its capabilities very quickly.

"The bottom line is we know where our trucks are," said De Jesus. "We're responding faster to road calls, saving on overtime and cutting fuel consumption. I'd call that a success."

What's next? In addition to continuing to improve operations with TeleNav Track from AT&T, De Jesus sees further potential in wireless-based tracking and management, depending on how technology evolves in the trucking industry. "I'd like to see us be able to integrate wireless with our accounting system, to allow drivers to simply log services and jobs while on site, and have the system generate bills automatically. But that is down the road still.

"For now, we're getting full benefit from our tracking and monitoring."

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Actual results may vary depending on AT&T solution selected by customer. Coverage not available in all areas. Availability, security, speed, timeliness and uninterrupted use of service are not guaranteed. Additional hardware, software, services and/or network connection may be required and may be subject to additional third party terms and conditions. Additional restrictions apply. Offers subject to change.

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