

CREW PRODUCTIVITY: WHAT MAKES A GOOD GPS TRACKING SYSTEM?

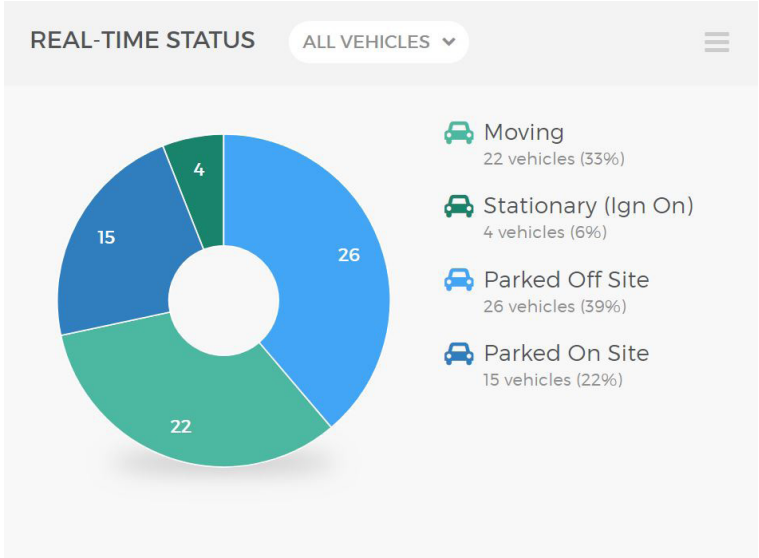
“If a GPS system helped you take on one extra job per week, and if overtime payments could be reduced by a couple of hours per week, what would your return be per employee?”

Landscape contracting is labor intensive. With many vehicles, drivers and sites to manage, and customers spanning a wide radius, a popular tool for improving workforce productivity is GPS tracking. A good tracking system doesn't just tell you where your vehicles are, it provides information that is directly relevant to your business operations. The following points will help you choose a system with the strongest reporting capabilities:

1. WHICH REPORTS WILL I NEED TO IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND OPERATING COSTS?

Accurate timesheets teamed with late arrival and early departure alerts will reduce undue overtime claims and ensure your customers get the hours of service that they pay for. Tina Kaiser of Meadow Services in New Jersey explains, “I saw a lot of unnecessary overtime being saved for my company. I can compare the actual time that the job took with what our crews say.” “Knowing where time is lost helps us improve our service and capacity immensely,”

explains Jack Armstrong of SS Landscaping, who often has 20 jobs running concurrently and several dump trucks attending to different sites. After seeing that a lot of time was being spent fuelling the trucks on a morning, he was able to allot different fuelling times to the drivers and avoid a back-up at the gas station, for example. “You’re looking at around an hour per day that you can be more productive with,” says Jack, “The system also highlights situations to us. Crews might be leaving early because there isn’t enough work to fill the day, for example. With that



knowledge we can address that”. For park supervisions, tracking reports provide proof of attendance and the data is useful when handling customer queries. Quartix vehicle tracking APIs allow you to feed all these valuable reports into your own business systems, including payroll. The data should be accessible by any team, with the ability to drill down into individuals or groups of drivers and create custom reports. In landscaping, managers are often out of the office, so it’s also useful if reports can be accessed via email and a mobile device.

2. WHICH REPORTS CAN IDENTIFY ACTIONS NEEDED TO LOWER FUEL COSTS?

To help your crew become more fuel efficient, you must know how your vehicles are being driven. Reports that include daily route logs, driving style reports with acceleration and braking

metrics and geofencing alerts to flag unauthorized journeys and unwarranted use of company fuel can help. “Our trucks leave our main facility on Monday morning and are away for the rest of the week,” says Tom Benoit, Manager of Rocky Branch Contractors, who uses the Quartix system to ensure all vehicle usage is efficient and legitimate.

Helping a driver to improve their driving style can lower fuel costs significantly. “We tell drivers if they’re braking too hard or going too fast. Usually once they’re aware and they know we’re paying attention to it, it stops,” explains Jack Armstrong, Maintenance Manager at SS Landscaping.

3. WHAT OTHER FLEET INSIGHTS CAN HELP REDUCE COSTLY OVERHEADS?

Real-time vehicle utilization reports ensure fewer vehicles are

out of action, reducing unnecessary costs. Keeping all your fleet on the road will help to increase your capacity to service and charge customers. Some tracking systems also have the ability to set up vehicle maintenance reminders. These can be based on miles or fixed dates according to your company policy, keeping your cost of ownership low.

A good tracking system will help you plan, react and validate. “If anything goes wrong with scheduling, invoicing, or theft, we have the data right there,” Misty Absher, Office Manager of Illinois-based Greenridge Landscaping. Another feature to look out for is the ability to identify your nearest vehicle to a postcode, so that you can best deal with requests in real-time.

4. HOW WILL A GPS TRACKING SYSTEM SUPPORT AND HELP MY DRIVERS?

Landscape contracting is competitive, and it’s critical to keep operational costs low and ensure quotes are competitive to help the business grow. Share these motivations with your crew and encourage them to embrace GPS tracking by introducing incentives for exemplary driving behavior, e.g. most improved driving style or most jobs completed on time. With the safeguarding of

a tracking system, your crew are also well covered when it comes to false claims about their driving or punctuality. “If a customer calls to say the crew hasn’t turned up, we can quickly confirm that using the system. It resolves any conflicts. It also emphasizes to the guys that they have to be on time,” says Jack Armstrong of SS Landscaping.

5. HOW CAN I JUSTIFY THE INVESTMENT IN GPS TRACKING?

With Quartix, short-term and rolling contracts offer you optimum flexibility - should your number of vehicles change, you aren’t tied in for several years. If you have a fleet of 40+ vehicles, special rates and longer-term contracts are optional. To put the potential savings into perspective, ask yourself this: “If a GPS system helped me take on one extra job per week, and if overtime payments could be reduced by a couple of hours per week, what would the return be per employee?” It’s not hard to see how a small monthly payment can lead to a large return per driver. If you then focused on their driving style and eliminated private usage to reduce fuel consumption by, say, 20 gallons per month... We’ll leave you to do the math.



“Knowing where time is lost helps us improve our service and capacity immensely.”

Jack Armstrong, SS Landscaping



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