



J.F. Kitching & Son Ltd. Transparency and Accuracy for Billing

The Challenge: Quantifiable Billing

J.F. Kitching & Son Ltd. of Queensville, Ontario is a third-generation family business providing safe, reliable, on-time aggregate transportation services. Before using telematics, the company had a fundamental business challenge that it needed to solve — how to accurately bill its customers for the services it provided.

When invoicing for delivery of aggregate material to its customers' large construction sites, J.F. Kitching bills customers by the time it takes to deliver the product instead of by weight. Another factor adding complexity to billing was toll road usage. To support timely delivery of materials, the company regularly uses a local toll highway — the 407 ETR Express Toll Route — which has tiered rates based on the time of usage, meaning that rates can change significantly based on the time of day.

"Certainly, on the billing end of things, in both respects, whether it be regarding the tolls or just in terms of the hourly tracking, we needed an ability to assess and measure it," explains Warren Paxton, Fleet Maintenance Coordinator. "It's one thing for someone to come in and start their timecard at whatever time they want to write down on it, but we couldn't verify when the truck started and when it left the depot in the morning and when it returned back in the evening and then all the details throughout the day."

Industry:

Aggregate Transportation

Based in:

Queensville, Ontario

Types of Vehicles:

Highway Tractors,
Dump Trucks, Boom
Trucks, Crane Trucks

Fleet Size

45

To solve these challenges, J.F. Kitching needed an accurate way to measure the hours it took to deliver its products and services to customers. The solution was Geotab.

The Solution: Geofencing and Plug-&-Play Flexibility

Since implementing the telematics solution for its heavy trucks about 18 months ago, billing has become much more transparent for everyone involved — J.F. Kitching and its customers.

“When it comes to billing individual customers, we now have quantifiable data,” says Paxton. “It gives us credibility in that we’re not just relying on the driver’s time card. We also have the tracked data off the GPS software — off the Geotab solution — to be able to put in front of the customer.”

Tracking and billing for tolling has become equally transparent and credible thanks to the Geotab solution. Paxton and his team set up a geofencing zone in the MyGeotab fleet management software over the entire operational area of the 407 tollway.

“Setting up the geofence was a little bit of a taxing endeavor, because of its length — it’s over 100 kilometers and with a number of interchanges,” explains Paxton. “But at least then it gives us all the details we could possibly need about what our usage is and not have to wait on that monthly invoice to come. What that means is it’s not holding back our paperwork.” The zone allows the team to verify trips and streamline the billing process.

Another reason that Geotab is the right fit for the company is the flexibility and convenience of the telematics hardware, the Geotab GO® Plug-&-Play GPS vehicle tracking device. J.F. Kitching cycles its vehicles regularly. So, when the company purchases a new vehicle, having a device that can be easily removed from the old vehicle and installed into its replacement. The new vehicle is easily integrated the fleet’s data stream.

“One of the things that we liked most about the Geotab system was the non-invasive nature of it. We didn’t have to cut into the wiring harness. That’s a real pain in the neck if you’ve got to take the GPS hardware out,” Paxton says. “The Geotab system just plugs right into the diagnostic connector on all of our trucks. Then we just tie it up behind the dashboard and it’s out of sight, out of mind. And the only time it ever really gets touched is when trucks are in for service if they’re plugging in the diagnostic equipment, and it’s as easy as pushing the connector back in, twist and turn, and it’s back up and online.”



The Results: Improvements in Fleet Visibility and Beyond

Another crucial improvement for J.F. Kitching is better visibility on operations to enhance service and strengthen customer relations. “With a few of our larger customers that we’re doing regular, consistent, day-to-day business with, we’ve actually given visibility on the Geotab software so that they can see where the trucks are,” says Paxton. “That way they know we’re not keeping anything from them. They can verify what we’re telling them. They can look at the trips history and all the related data.”

Paxton also uses the Geotab solution to automatically monitor the fleet’s driver behavior, setting up alerts if there’s been a change in the vehicle’s status — such as speeding or another event.

There was one instance that [accident reconstruction](#) with Geotab telematics data helped exonerate a J.F. Kitching driver of fault for a non-injury, bent metal accident. Paxton was able to look at the accident log data in MyGeotab, follow the breadcrumb trail around the time of the event, and verify what happened.

Alerts have been used to aid in customer service as well, by setting up a geofence around a customer’s property. The customer is alerted when a J.F. Kitching truck is on its way, so they are prepped and ready to accept the delivery of materials.

Routing and communication has become much more efficient because of the Geotab solution. “Previously, when the equipment wasn’t tracked, we’d kind of have a rough idea of where people were within their day,” Paxton recounts. “Now, there are three workstations that have a Geotab window open all day long so that if something happens, and something needs to change, we can at a glance see where the nearest three trucks are. Sending out a blanket “Where are you?” message to all drivers and getting 15 responses is a thing of the past. Now, J.F. Kitching can instantly find the nearest drivers and contact them to confirm their capacity.”

Maintenance is another area that is more efficient. If a driver calls in with a potential maintenance issue, Paxton has the ability to view the diagnostic trouble codes and diagnose whether it’s a minor or major issue.

Geotab Benefits for J.F. Kitching:



Accurate vehicle tracking



Nearest driver dispatching



Plug-&-Play device installation



Telematics data for accident reconstruction



Geofencing



Driver coaching alerts

The bottom line is that the Geotab solution provides true business intelligence to Paxton and the company leadership, allowing the operation to be more efficient from routing to billing and everything in between.

“The Geotab solution just puts more information at the forefront, right there available to you whenever you want to go looking for it,” Paxton says. “And you don’t even really necessarily have to go looking for it; a lot of it is just sitting right in front of you.”



From the Fleet Manager

“Geotab has helped improve the accuracy of our information for invoicing; it gives us more credibility with our customers, and improves our overall efficiencies. It has become an integral part of our operation.”

— Warren Paxton, Fleet Maintenance Coordinator, J.F. Kitching & Son, Ltd.

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