



## CASE STUDY

# Jones Fuel Company

Based in Columbus, Ohio, Jones Fuel Company specializes in selling and hauling sand, gravel, topsoil, and asphalt for residential and commercial customers in central Ohio. The 84-year-old company originally sold and hauled coal and other fuel substances, but switched to its current business model in 1957 to make better use of its truck fleet.

Jones Fuel Company has annual revenues of \$12 million and has approximately 70 employees, including 45 drivers, and a fleet of 56 Class 8 dump trucks. In addition, the company brokers hauling services for nearly 80 owner-operator subcontractors in the Columbus area.

### Challenges.

Jones Fuel Company needed a way to communicate quickly and efficiently with its drivers—to send and receive status reports for current jobs, and assign new ones as needed. Initially, the company used a combination of two-way radios and a dash-mounted, wireless data system to fill this need. The system had its limitations, though: The radios offered only voice communications and had no data or location-based capabilities. GPS functionality was also limited, which meant drivers had to consult maps to find locations, causing delays in arrival times.

“We always knew that there were potential savings and better productivity for us if we had GPS capabilities,” said Jack Fink, vice president, Jones Fuel Company. “If we know where our drivers are, we can dispatch them to new locations without them having to come back to the office first.”

System maintenance and repair costs were also a concern for Jones Fuel Company. The handsets were expensive, and at any given time, 10% of the company’s dash-mounted wireless units were out of service, due to broken antennas or disconnected wiring. Each service call cost the company \$100, which represented a significant expense just to keep the whole system operational.

### Solution.

Jones Fuel Company needed a system that integrated voice communications with data-centric applications, to help the company more easily manage its job dispatching functions. In addition, the new system needed the ability to easily integrate into the company’s existing ordering and dispatching system, helping to increase its efficiency and responsiveness. During its peak season, Jones Fuel Company receives nearly 1,000 calls per day, 80% of which are order placements, so the company needed a system that could take and process an order while dispatching drivers to fill the order at the same time. The company decided to deploy Verizon Wireless Field Force Manager and VZ Navigator<sup>SM</sup> solutions.

Field Force Manager and VZ Navigator were downloaded to each driver’s phone. As an added safety measure, drivers were given a Bluetooth<sup>®</sup>-enabled earpiece for hands-free operations, so that drivers could focus on the road and not on what was happening on their phones.

**JONES FUEL COMPANY**  
[WWW.JONESFUEL.COM](http://WWW.JONESFUEL.COM)

#### Company description:

Family owned and operated, Jones Fuel Company sells and hauls sand, gravel, topsoil, mulch, and asphalt to customers in the central Ohio region.

#### Challenges:

- Needed a system to communicate quickly and easily with a team of 45 drivers.
- Wanted to reduce maintenance and service costs incurred through communications equipment downtime.

#### Solution:

- Verizon Wireless Field Force Manager and VZ Navigator were installed on drivers’ cell phones, giving all of the company’s drivers access to both applications.
- Field Force Manager was integrated into the company’s dispatching system, helping the company take orders and dispatch drivers at the



With the help of a third-party software vendor, Verizon Wireless integrated Jones Fuel Company's dispatch system and Field Force Manager in less than a day to streamline the company's dispatching process. Orders were only taken once, saving time in reduced paperwork, and drivers were immediately dispatched to deliver the order.

## Results.

Jones Fuel Company's decision to implement Field Force Manager and VZ Navigator provided immediate benefits. Maintenance and repair costs have reduced, because the new cell phones need less servicing than the dash-mounted units they replaced.

Productivity and efficiency have also increased for Jones Fuel Company, as voice and data communications are now available through a single, integrated system. Drivers can now take advantage of GPS functionality and other location-based services directly from their phones, enabling them to respond more quickly to job orders. Drivers receive work orders and turn-by-turn directions to new job sites, without having to waste time looking up directions. Company executives estimate that this feature alone saves the company at least \$30 per driver, per week, in hard costs, resulting in an annual savings of \$135,000.

Field Force Manager has also helped Jones Fuel Company improve its ability to track trucks in the field. Using the old wireless system, the company could only track vehicles in 20-minute intervals, which lessened its ability to properly manage workflow. Now, with Field Force Manager in place, company managers can view a truck's location approximately every two minutes and generate activity reports for each truck as needed. This feature has also enabled the company to improve its customer service and complaint resolution as well. Whenever customers call about their orders, company managers can check online to determine a truck's progress and give the customer an expected delivery time. If a discrepancy arises over billing and delivery times, the company can generate reports that show a truck's activity over a given time frame, helping to resolve the problem.

Jones Fuel Company executives believe that having the capabilities of Field Force Manager allows the company to land new business and increase its revenue opportunities. Executives use features such as real-time tracking and extended reporting in pitching for new business.

"Not only does Verizon Wireless Field Force Manager help us save \$135,000 per year in hard costs, it also helps add to our top-line revenue," Fink said. "Giving our customers the ability to track deliveries to their job sites over the Internet—even while offsite—becomes a value-add for us, as it helps them to better manage their projects. Once they've had a taste of this service, it helps us to win more of their bids in the future."

same time.

### Results:

- Maintenance and service costs decreased.
- Company productivity improved as voice and data communications were available through a single system, enabling the company to better manage drivers and work orders.
- Fleet management improved as the company now has the ability to track trucks in the field, and to generate minute-by-minute activity reports.
- Customer satisfaction increased as the company has improved its reporting capabilities, which helped resolve disputes.
- Integrated order taking and job dispatch functions helped streamline the company's workflow process.

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**JACK FINK,  
VICE PRESIDENT,  
JONES FUEL COMPANY**