



Wyoming Machinery Company Relies on Toughbook to Provide Heavy Equipment Service In Harsh Winter Conditions

CHALLENGE

Wyoming Machinery Company needed to eliminate mobile device hardware failure and improve field worker and technician efficiency in extreme conditions.

SOLUTION

WMC replaced its consumer-grade laptops with rugged Panasonic 31 Toughbook® computers to protect against moisture, dirt, shock and extreme temperatures while offering reliable mobile wireless access from any location in the field.

RESULTS

Since deploying the Toughbook 31 companywide, Wyoming Machinery Company was able to eliminate hardware failures due to temperature and rough use, and have increased efficiency by eliminating technician downtime due to device unreliability or limited mobile connectivity.



“A big factor in the decision was the Toughbook’s protection from dirt, debris, water and snow. The main thing our guys expect is to use it in a rough environment. They don’t want to get in trouble. It’s encouraging to know that they have the ability to set it on the fender of a running machine in the snow and rain and not have to worry about the device failing.”

Wyoming Machinery Company is a Caterpillar® dealer serving 16 counties in Wyoming. The company has been supporting three of the state’s major industries—mining, construction, and oil and gas—since 1969, when they opened their first location in Casper.

Through the years, Wyoming Machinery Company has grown to become the premier Caterpillar dealer and servicer in Wyoming. The company boasts a staff of highly-trained field service technicians that can be deployed across the entire state to meet the technical demands of their customers. In order to diagnose and repair equipment in the field, Wyoming Machinery Company’s field service technicians are outfitted with mobile computers while on the job.

At first, Wyoming Machinery Company issued consumer-grade laptops to its technicians in the field. In 2008, Greg Beecher, Information Systems Manager at Wyoming Machinery Company, noticed a high failure rate among company-issued laptops. “We began experiencing hardware failures up to 7 times each winter,” says Beecher.

Winter temperatures in Wyoming regularly fall below freezing, and the technicians would often need to operate in the field during heavy snowfall, freezing rain and other harsh weather conditions. Furthermore, the service requests usually take place on heavy-duty job sites in construction, mining and oil and gas. Employees needed to rely on their computers to withstand drops, knocks, spills and vibration from regular use in service vehicles and in heavy-duty environments.

“In the winter months, our service technicians would often leave their laptop in the truck when they were performing a service call,” says Beecher. “Then they would go to boot up, and the cold temperatures had destroyed the hard drive. This would happen several times a year.”

In 2008, Wyoming Machinery Company partnered with Bizco, a Panasonic value added reseller, to evaluate and determine a suitable replacement for the failing consumer laptops. Together with Bizco, Wyoming Machinery’s service department evaluated a number of competing mobile devices for business deployment. The evaluation period included head-to-head comparisons of a number of key elements that were critical to their business, including performance, durability, TCO, ROI and overall operational benefit.

After careful evaluation, Wyoming Machinery Company selected the Panasonic Toughbook® as the clear favorite. “A big factor in the decision was the Toughbook’s protection from dirt, debris, water and snow. The main thing our guys expect is to use it in a rough environment. They don’t want to get in trouble. It’s encouraging to know that they have the ability to set it on the fender of a running machine in the snow and rain and not have to worry about the device failing.”

SOLUTIONS FOR ENTERPRISE

Wyoming Machinery Company deployed the Toughbook 31, which features a sealed all-weather design, moisture and dust-resistant screen and keyboard, and MIL-STD-810G and IP65 certification for resistance against shock, vibration, rain, dust, sand, altitude, freeze/thaw, high/low temperature, temperature shock, humidity and explosive atmosphere. It can withstand a 6-foot drop, and has a full magnesium alloy case with handle and shock-mounted flex-connect hard drive with quick-release to deliver maximum durability, portability and uptime in any environment.

The Toughbook 31 also impressed Beecher with the ability to swap out Gobi mobile broadband modems. Wyoming is a large state, and certain wireless network providers offer more reliable service in different parts of the state. With the ability to customize mobile connectivity options for Toughbook, field technicians could be sure that they would experience the most reliable wireless connection anywhere in the state.

Another advantage of the Toughbook 31? The higher processing speeds compared to similar rugged devices. “Our service information system uses a lot of 3D graphics,” says Beecher. “We needed a device that offered the computing power to run the applications we need to do the job right and on time.”

Since deploying the Toughbook 31 to its entire fleet, hardware failures due to temperature and rough use have been eliminated completely. Wyoming Machinery has been able to increase efficiency by eliminating technician downtime due to device unreliability or limited mobile connectivity. Customer satisfaction has never been higher. “The bottom line,” says Beecher, “is you can rely on this device.”

In fact, the Toughbook 31 has proven so durable, one even survived a drop to concrete at highway speeds. “One of our customers saw a shiny metal thing in the middle of Interstate 80 with the Wyoming Machinery logo and apparently recognized it as one of our Toughbooks,” says Beecher. “Our technician must have left it on the back of his truck at 75 miles an hour and it fell off. When the customer returned it to our shop, you know that case was beat up, but the PC worked! If that was one of our previous devices, someone would have to go out there and sweep up the plastic parts.”

Since the introduction of the Toughbook 31, Wyoming Machinery Company has begun upgrading its line of Toughbooks to continue offering superior mobile connectivity and rugged reliability to its field technicians.



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