



T'S YOUR MONEY - DO YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS ?

It's an important question to ask yourself in these current market conditions. Unfortunately, many timber companies lack the systems and tools needed to answer that question effectively. "Fuel prices are killing us" is a common refrain echoing amongst the logging community in recent months. Yet most loggers would be hard pressed to know exactly what each truck or equipment unit cost them last month in fuel bills, much less what a 10 cent per gallon increase in the price at the pump means in terms of their cost per ton of wood production.

With margins in the logging business tighter than many contractors can remember in their entire careers, it is more crucial than ever to understand how your revenues and your expenditures are matching up from one job to the next and from one crew to the next. Thanks to their investment in The Logger's Edge, a software system designed specifically to help loggers track such data, Glenda and Dewayne Shepard from Circle S Timber Harvesting, Inc. watch their revenues and costs from one job to the next like a hawk. Circle S is a one-crew contractor in South Georgia that works primarily for one timber dealer.

Often, small contractors like Circle S think they have no need to track their data with a computerized system because they can keep track of all of it in their heads or with rudimentary hand calculations. But can they really? Now that Glenda has all her data in her computer system, she can pull up a tract report showing how many dollars she spent on fuel to harvest a particular job, and she can easily see what those dollar figures represent on a per ton basis because her tract tonnage is right there on the same report.

Not only that, she can tell her husband exactly how much they have spent on parts and repairs on a particular machine over a given date range, or how much they have spent on fuel from one equipment unit or truck to the next. If she runs a report showing that a particular set of trucks are making the same trips from a given job to the same set of mills, yet one truck is consistently burning more fuel, they can begin to ask the right questions to get to the bottom of the problem. Maybe one truck needs some additional maintenance performed to improve its fuel efficiency, or maybe one driver needs to be coached about his driving habits to help improve the fuel efficiency of the vehicle.

Having the right software tools in place to allow yourself to spot such discrepancies and ask the right questions before a problem persists for too long is an important key to running a successful operation. It also allows you to identify potential areas for cost savings, both large and small. Just recently,

Glenda noticed that they were spending about \$500 per week in un-necessary crew cab fuel expenses on a particular job that was a substantial distance from town. Because she is so diligent about tracking her data each week, she and Duane were able to spot the problem immediately and get the guys to ride-share in order to eliminate the one unnecessary crew cab. Although small in the grand scheme of things, it's often the small leakages that can add up quickly and make the difference between operating at a profit or a loss when margins are so tight.

Before she had the Logger's Edge, Glenda attempted to maintain her production, revenue, and expenditure data in Excel. But she found that it took too much time and leg-work to make all the numbers come together in the way she needed. According to Glenda, it involved too much "criss-crossing" of data from one spreadsheet to another for it to be manageable.

"The software has made my life so much easier," says Glenda. "I handle my load tickets and my bills one time, and that's it. Then I have all my information sitting in the computer and not in piles all over my office. I can select my date range and my equipment units or trucks or tracts, and pull up the data I want to see immediately."

Even before they invested in Caribou's Logger's Edge software, Glenda and Duane were meticulous about the records they kept on their business. That's a big part of why they have a successful operation that has survived the current industry downturn. They stay accountable to their business to ensure they can stay in business! The Logger's Edge just made it easier, more efficient, and much less time consuming to maintain that accountability to themselves, their customers, and their own employees who rely on them for a livelihood.

Drowning in Paperwork? Get The Logger's Edge Software!

- ÷ Track Load Tickets & Monitor Production
- ÷ Automate Contractor/Landowner Pay
- ÷ Monitor Machine Repair & Fuel Bills
- ÷ Stay a Step Ahead of the Competition!



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