AT&T Business

IoT optimizes data plans for changing locations

- **Business needs** – LHP Telematics needed global coverage—and more. The company wanted SIM cards for their IoT that lets them know the data rate, no matter the location, automatically switches to optimize data plans based on changing locations.

- **Networking solution** – AT&T Global SIMs provide international end-to-end connectivity with simplified, seamless provisioning and management through the AT&T Control Center.

- **Business value** – The manufacturer optimizes cost, quality, and process—while transforming the customer experience and increasing product and services revenue.

- **Industry focus** – Telematics solutions provider

- **Size** – Serving 20+ manufacturers and more than 250 dealer networks worldwide

About LHP Telematics

LHP Telematics's platform supports custom-branded telematics solutions for equipment manufacturers worldwide. Telematics describes using various technologies to remotely monitor the movements and performance of vehicles, equipment, and assets. LHP's background, skills, and insights make custom-branded telematics solutions easy to integrate into customers' business processes.

The situation

The worldwide nature of LHP Telematics operations required a telecommunications provider that could deliver reliable connectivity in the 90+ countries in which customers use the company's solutions.

Solution

LHP Telematics chose AT&T Global SIM cards to connect custom telematics systems that serve equipment managers, dealers, and transit customers. AT&T IoT LTE International Data Plans enable provisioning in 200+ countries through a flexible, easy-to-use platform.

Delivering valuable insights

LHP Telematics (LHP) is an industry leader in creating custom solutions for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and their distribution partners, including dealers and rental companies. The company understands that all manufacturers are unique. Each company has a different set of machine data points that are required to deliver product and customer value. With this in mind, LHP designed its platform so that manufacturers can personalize it based on their needs and the type of customer experience they want to deliver.

Travis Jones founded the company to help equipment owners optimize their time and resources through powerful asset tracking solutions. His early customers were heavy equipment manufacturers. As the business grew, others discovered the benefits that LHP Telematics could deliver.

"The big difference between us and the competition is personalization. Most suppliers of telematics solutions promote a standardized package developed for over-the-road fleets and expect construction equipment customers to adapt their business processes to leverage the solution. We take the opposite approach and provide a flexible user interface that adapts to the unique challenges found with off-road construction equipment."

Most large heavy equipment manufacturers make the investment to build their own telematics solutions. Mid-size and small manufacturers, however, typically recognize this isn't their core competency. "If a company is not big enough to hire 50 engineers and build it themselves, they have to come to somebody who has a platform that can handle the specific needs of the original equipment manufacturer, or OEM," Jones said. "And that somebody is us."

LHP continues to grow at a minimum of 20% year over year. It now serves customers in more than 90 countries. "We are built specifically around a platform and set of features designed for OEMs and their dealer networks."

Everyone benefits from machine information

Michael Jakab, LHP Telematics Marketing Director, said LHP's multi-tenant Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform is designed to support customization at each level in a customer hierarchy. OEMs and their distribution partners continue to demonstrate they want personalization and control over who sees what, and when, and how it's displayed. LHP gives them total control over this experience, at every level.

Customers have very different uses for the data LHP Telematics delivers, Jones said. "The only thing a construction company really cares about is a dot on a map, engine hours, and engine faults. They want to know where the equipment is, when to service it, and whether it has any problems."

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Travis Jones
Founder and CEO
LHP Telematics

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Manufacturers are usually interested in more complex data. For instance, many warranty claims involving a certain part may require a manufacturer to reengineer the component or source it elsewhere. Telematics and machine connectivity gives the OEM the benefit of having a large set of data points at their fingertips to drive their product decisions.

In addition to product roadmap decisions, interested parties can measure and leverage productivity information. For example, one customer that builds spreaders, throwers, and hydro-seeders needed a way to measure actual productivity. However, the only thing two or three other vendors could tell the customer was where the machine was located and if the ignition switch had been turned on.

LHP collaborated with the company and determined the best measure of productivity was tracking when the clutch was engaged and disengaged. The state of the clutch position would indicate when material is being spread. "We were able to customize a solution that detected multiple conditions, including the exact start time when the clutch was engaged," Jones said. "We then deliver that data on a user interface screen so the company can measure productivity. Now they know how long the equipment was run and the exact productivity of each piece of equipment."

Jones notes that many OEM customers have multiple lines of equipment with vastly different machine information needs. Yet, the OEM supports all these lines from a single customer service group and needs visibility across any asset, at any time. "One of our customers, for example, manufactures seed corn, berry, grape, and pea harvesters," Jones said. "The measure of productivity is different on each line of equipment."

LHP collaborated with the customer to solve the problem. It used a sensor to measure throughput and displayed pounds per acre harvested in a clean graphical format. "Now that is completely different than a trenching machine or underground drill that measures feet trenched or the amount of rods pushed to drill out a borehole," Jones said. "We have the unique ability in the industry to cater to any data point you want to display in any way you want without really changing the code."

The company also enables customers to brand its telematics devices. "We basically disappear behind the scenes," Jones said. "The OEM offers a service that is their brand only."

A worldwide customer base

Customers have been extremely loyal to LHP Telematics. "We've never really had one leave," Jones said.

Jakab believes this commitment from customers stems from the effectiveness of LHP Telematics's solutions. "Customers are loyal when they find something that works," he said. "Our multi-tenant SaaS application keeps the solution affordable for many customers to enjoy and benefit from it."

The company's size is another advantage. "We're not a large company," Jakab said. "We're big enough to have solid infrastructure and support mechanisms in place. Yet we're still nimble and entrepreneurial. It's a great combination with an industry proven technology stack."

As a result, the company has customers in 90 countries around the world. "When a customer builds a crane, we don't know where they're going to ship it," Jones said. "It might be Brazil or Europe, or it might be North Dakota." Because of this, LHP needed to equip its telematics devices with connectivity that works anywhere.

"We needed global coverage," Jones said. "The key for us was having one SIM card that lets us know the data rate, no matter where it goes, and have it automatically switch and optimize data plans based on where it's going." A longtime customer, Jones turned to his AT&T Business account team for suggestions.

A one-stop shop

AT&T Business suggested its Global SIMs to provide worldwide, end-to-end connectivity. Through a single platform, AT&T Global SIMs dynamically adapt to LHP Telematics's changing business needs. Jones's team can easily deploy and control all its connected devices with the AT&T Global SIM management platform, AT&T Control Center, which makes it a simple matter to activate and deactivate SIMs, change data plans, monitor usage, troubleshoot, and set up rules and alerts.

Price was the principal factor that drew Jones to AT&T Business. However, he soon came to appreciate the solution's worldwide coverage. "When we first started using AT&T Business, we got the best price per megabyte," he said. "But when we started looking into other options for global plans, there wasn't anything else that came remotely close to being the one-stop shop we wanted."

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LHP's manufacturing plant installs AT&T Global SIMs in its telematics devices. Once the devices are delivered to LHP, it prepares them to be shipped to customers, updates the software and configuration, and tests each one.

"One of the great things about the system from AT&T Business is that we have the ability to run a test, send a small amount of data, make sure everything's working and not have the SIM go into an activated, full price state," Jones said.

Useful management tools

Jones also likes the usefulness of the rule sets that are built into the AT&T Control Center. "We have a large amount of very complex rules that allow us to keep tight control over runaway SIM cards. If we have one that's sending too much data, we know about it instantly."

This enables LHP to move the SIM to a different data plan, so it does not exceed data limits and incur overage charges. AT&T Control Center also enables the company to block data reporting for equipment sold in countries that have laws against exporting data.

The AT&T Control Center makes it a simple matter for LHP Telematics's staff to manage its SIMs. "We've done the deep dive into using the APIs (application programming interfaces) to directly link that debugging capability for our staff internally directly into our portal," Jones said.

Jones continued, "Instead of staff having to log in to AT&T Control Center on one screen and then have our portal up on another, we actually pull that diagnostic data down into our portal. That way we have one central spot for all the information we need. Very efficient."

Unmatched pricing and support

AT&T IoT LTE International Data Plans enable provisioning in multiple countries through a flexible, easy-to-use platform. Further, the automatic SIM card activation significantly simplifies the company's operations. "There are a lot of telematics companies that you have to call to get the SIM activated when you install it," Jones noted. "If we had to do that, I would have to hire a full-time employee that literally just did that. It would be a waste of time and money."

Jones believes AT&T Business has helped LHP Telematics grow. "I would have a lot higher prices on an international basis if I were to have chosen some of the other vendors that we were testing out," he said.
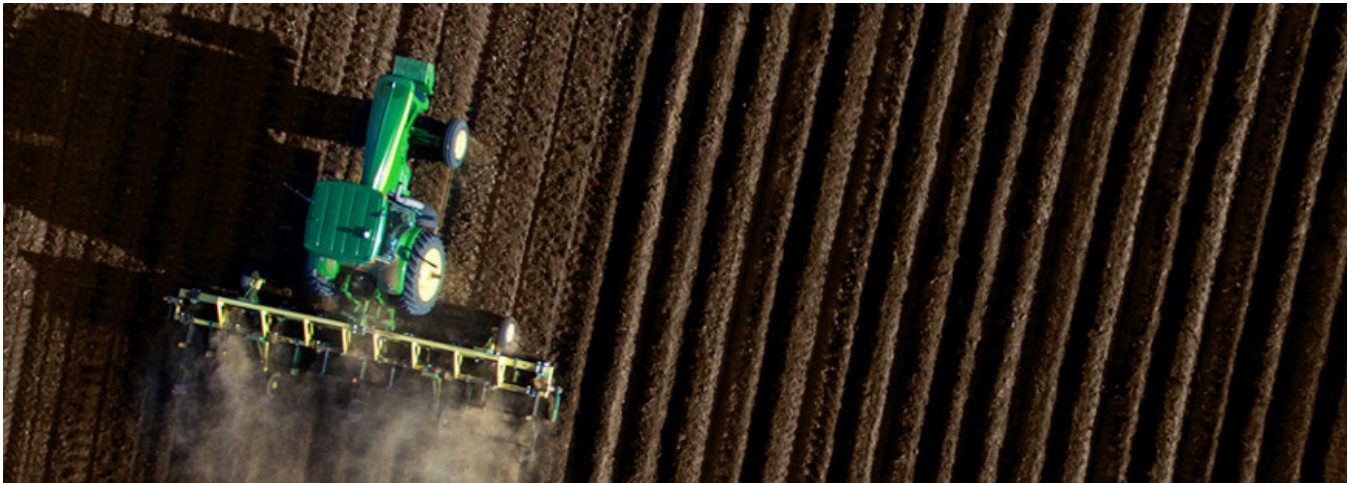
In addition, deployment is a simple matter. "AT&T Business was the only company of the four or five we tested that could do test data set-up and auto SIM activation," Jones said. "The features that you get for the price with AT&T Business—and the support they give—is unmatched by most other carriers."

The future is bright for LHP Telematics. Jones said the company plans to introduce a new version of its OEM-specific telematics box early next year and will begin to offer more solutions for the equipment rental industry.

While LHP Telematics has other choices, Jones said he plans to continue his decade-long association with AT&T Business. "I haven't seen any other provider that remotely comes close to AT&T Business for us."