

**Product:** ToolHound OnSite

**Client:** Bechtel is a world-wide engineering and construction organization serving customers in a variety of industries from power, petroleum and chemical plants, to aviation services and the hotel industry. The equipment leasing arm of the company, Bechtel Equipment Operations Inc. (BEO), supplies all the tools and equipment needed to keep their global construction projects operating efficiently.

**Challenge:** To maintain the massive tool inventory necessary for them to operate on such a large scale, the company had experimented with a number of different inventory control systems. None of these, however, were flexible enough to meet Bechtel's particular needs. Bechtel needed an adaptable tool control system that could function on two different levels. BEO needed to track items shipped to work sites on mobile tool cribs, while individual Bechtel Construction projects tracked tool usage at the job site.

**Solution:** Bechtel had evaluated and rejected five or six different systems before they found a tool tracker up to doing the job: ToolHound. An inventory control system designed for use in industrial tool cribs, ToolHound tracks tool inventory via bar code labels applied individually to each tool of significant value. Small items and consumables are bar coded by bin. Once the inventory data is entered into the main computer, operators issue items using a handheld laser scanner to scan the employee's bar coded ID, followed by the bar code labels on the tools being issued. This information is sent to the computer in "real time" via radio frequency scanners, and when craftspeople return their tools, the procedure is reversed. "With the punch of a few keys we can find out where our tools are and get them into the hands of our people," says Bechtel's Steve Njos.

The service BEO provides for the company's construction projects is what Njos calls "a turnkey tool and small tool and consumable program." All the tools needed at the site are bar coded, placed in modularized tool cribs, and shipped out to the construction site. Except for very small jobs, the package comes complete with the inventory tracking system and radio frequency scanners. Once the mobile crib is in place, representatives from both BEO and ToolHound travel down to set up the system - importing the inventory information from disk to the site's PC, downloading the employee data from the existing payroll system, and training the crib operators on how to use the program. "We don't leave until the personnel feel comfortable with it," Njos says.

**Results:** One of the benefits that BEO has found with the implementation of ToolHound is the accountability the system introduces into its tool cribs. Now management has a reliable record of who last had a tool, and who is responsible for its return. Since each site is responsible for their own inventory losses, this accountability is another important factor in the system's use. And as personnel become more familiar with the system, its value in this regard becomes more and more apparent with each new project. "From project to project we're getting better at managing our tool control process," Njos says.

He also adds that no matter what situation arises, ToolHound's support staff come up with a solution. "The support experience is really nice," Njos says. "They've already been there, and they provide a product that fits our business. It's a really big benefit."

After experimenting with a number of different inventory control systems, BEO is now satisfied that they have found the one that fits the way they do business. "It's a well thought-out system," Njos relates. "Everywhere it's been installed we've had better control!"



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