



WORTHY SUCCESSOR

Frustrated with a poor-performing screener, a dealer finds a solution that offers customers a quicker setup time, better performance.

EDITED BY KEVIN YANIK

There's nothing like downtime to destroy productivity and profitability.

Whether you're a contractor or a rental dealer, downtime means increased maintenance costs, less utilization of your equipment assets and lost opportunity.

Western States Cat, a full-service Caterpillar dealer serving the Pacific Northwest, faced the effects of downtime firsthand with its fleet of portable screening plants. Western States had the machines in its rental fleet for five or six years, finding they were costing money and opportunity, rather than making the company money.

The fleet was also preventing Western States from serving the needs of its customer base.

"When both customers and sales people are frustrated, it's an indication that it's time to look at another solution," says Merv Lewis, rental program specialist at Western States. "Our salespeo-

ple didn't even want to rent the screeners out, because they knew they would have to spend a large amount of time addressing issues. Their time was better spent focusing on other sales."

But the problem wasn't the only hassle for the Western States team; it was the inconvenience for the customer. Often, within a day, customers would call Lewis and his team to have maintenance issues addressed or for assistance in setting up the screening unit.

"Our customers are working on tight timelines and they need a machine that is portable and efficient to get their job done on time," Lewis says. "The solutions we were offering limited the customer in application and efficiency and that's not the way we serve our customers."

Western States Cat bought 11 Pitbull 2300 portable screening plants. The Western States rental location in Boise, Idaho, typically rents out the Pitbull 2300.

Western States realized it needed to find another solution that would provide customers with a machine that could screen an array of materials; would be portable; easy to move and set up; and would eliminate the maintenance issues that were limiting customer productivity.

With rental locations in Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Wyoming, Western States had a variety of material – from topsoil, clay and dried manure to large river rock – that a screener needed to process efficiently. Lewis also set out to find a screening unit that offered a conveyor system to avoid the current issue of screened material dumping directly under the machine, leading to time wasted digging the material out.

Overall productivity was a significant factor, not only in terms of maintenance but also the performance and capabilities of the machine. The current model was easily overloaded, causing the unit to shut down.

SCREENING

“Our customers don’t need a large screening unit,” Lewis says, “but they definitely needed something more productive than the smaller screeners used for homeowner types of projects.”

Finding a better screener

It was an almost empty office on a late Friday afternoon in early 2015 when Lake Erie Portable Screeners factory representative Stuart Foradora answered the phone. An executive from Western States Cat was on the other end requesting a demo of the Pitbull 2300 screening plant as soon as possible. Foradora was happy to oblige.

“I was glad I picked up,” Foradora says. “I listened to what he said they needed the machine to be able to do and told him right away that we had a screener that could do all of that and more.”

The screening plant arrived in Idaho the next week, and Lake Erie Portable Screeners provided a demonstration. Western States quickly realized the screening plant was exactly what it had been looking for. Western States bought 11, one for each of its rental locations.

‘No comparison’

Western States Cat rental salesman Jay Hainline, based in Boise, Idaho, was the first from the dealer to try the Pitbull 2300. He ran the machine during the initial demonstration and was impressed with its mobility and easy setup.



The Pitbull 2300 features a Yanmar 47-hp diesel engine and an attached 20-ft.-long stacking conveyor.

He used the screener’s hydraulic system to convert it from transport to operating position in minutes.

“We had to use a loader to manually lift our old screener into place. It took about 30 minutes to get ready,” he says. “The Pitbull 2300 only takes about 15 minutes.”

Hainline loaded and screened about 15 yd. of a combination of soil, caliche and small rocks in 20 minutes with the Pitbull 2300 and its Yanmar 47-hp diesel engine, a feat that would have taken the old screener nearly twice as long to complete.

“It was almost a night-and-day difference from what we had been using,” Hainline says. “It could handle material pretty much as fast as I could load it.”

In addition, Hainline says the compact and mobile screener was easy to

transport and use, and it was versatile enough to effectively screen the range of material across the dealer’s five states. The extra performance that came with the Pitbull 2300 helped to expand Western State’s customer base by allowing contractors to use the screening plant for a broader variety of projects, including the production of topsoil to sell or use for landscaping site preparation; sorting rocks or mulch for landscapers; and screening material to create a better base for fills.

Hainline was also impressed by the new screener’s durability. While he took service calls on the former screener almost every time he rented it out, he hadn’t received any calls in the year the Pitbull 2300 had been in Boise. That meant money saved on maintenance costs and improved productivity and customer satisfaction.

The 20-ft. stacking conveyor on the Pitbull 2300 also improved productivity, according to Hainline. The operator can hydraulically adjust the height from as low as 7 ft., 6 in., to 13 ft. and drop sorted material away from the machine into a dump truck or tri-axle trailer instead of under the unit.

The quick-change screen tensioning system on the screener further improved efficiency by making it possible for two people to change out screens in just 30 minutes. The other screener would have taken up to two hours to do the same thing, he adds. The easy screen change-outs made the Pitbull 2300 more versa-



Gary Olson used the Pitbull 2300 to screen about 2,000 yd. of miscellaneous material left over from excavating jobs. Olson was left with two piles: one was made up of about 1,500 yd. of topsoil. The other included everything from large rocks, concrete and sprinkler pipes to sod and bushes.

tile by allowing convenient classification of different types and sizes of materials.

Making return customers happy

The true test of the equipment’s performance comes from customer feedback, according to Western States Cat. Gary Olson, owner of Olson and Sons Excavating, has been a longtime Western States customer.

Olson had experience with the old screening units. He goes through material leftover from jobs once a year, screening for topsoil and selling that product to boost revenue. His company does mostly residential excavation work around Boise, leaving him with hundreds of yards of everything – from soil, large rock and clay to sprinkler pipe, sod and bushes.

Olson says his experience with the old screeners was not very positive. The capacities of that unit were so low that the slightest surge of material would

cause it to plug and be shut down. Adding to the hassle was the fact that setup was slow and tricky, with the screener plugging if it was set level.

“Angling it slightly seemed to help, but then it wouldn’t screen as well,” Olson says. “We kept at it for almost two weeks but were only able to get through about 300 yd. of material before returning the screening plant. We had two people working with it trying to get the work done, but we had to unplug it so often we just couldn’t get anything done.”

A year later, Hainline called to tell Olson about the new Pitbull 2300. Olson’s son had used it before and vouched for it, so he decided to give it a try. He experienced none of the problems the last screener had. The Pitbull 2300 didn’t plug up, didn’t stop working and he was able to screen the pile of about 2,000 yd. of material in just a week of off-and-on work. The result was about 1,500 yd. of topsoil Olson says should pay for the cost

of renting the screener eight times over.

“We had one person running the operation with the Pitbull 2300,” Olson says. “I parked a dump truck beneath the conveyor, dumped whole buckets on the screener and sorted the material quickly and efficiently without any issues at all.”

Word of mouth

The Western States Cat rental location in Boise typically rents the Pitbull 2300 out once or twice a month during warm months for one to two weeks at a time. Hainline says the screener’s popularity is growing as contractors spread the word about the new addition to the dealer’s fleet.

“It means we can spend less time worrying about when the screener will break down again, and more time finding new customers and keeping our current customers happy,” Hainline says. **PP&E**

Information for this article provided by Ironclad Marketing.

TCI CUSTOM CHASSIS



PORTABLE JAW PLANT

- Quad-Axle Chassis with Heavy Duty Hopper
- Hydraulic run-on style lift legs
- Heavy-duty Under-crusher Conveyor with Impact Bed
- Electric Switchgear
- Customer supplied Vibrating Grizzly Feeder
- Customer supplied Jaw Crusher

VARIOUS OPTIONS FOR CUSTOMER TO CHOOSE FROM



FROM CONCEPTS TO REALITY

815-379-2090 – www.tcimfg.com