



## Custom stonework contractor achieves rock solid customer service.

With 30-40 jobs for discerning customers open at any given time, project management is essential to Pro Design's success. With more than half of its 75 employees working at job sites or delivering materials and supplies, the company needed a better way to manage its workers in the field.



### At a Glance.

Xora helped Pro Design save \$200,000 a year by turning cell phones into productivity tools.

- Electronic timecards enabled Pro Design to reduce its \$1.5 million payroll by 10%, saving \$150,000.
- Savings in worker's compensation and liability insurance amounted to another \$40,000 for a total of about \$200,000 a year.
- Pro Design also finds it easier to ensure optimal customer service – when a customer calls to find out the status of a job, managers can give an update in minutes.
- Xora helps ensure that Pro Design can focus on its business and not on the paperwork.

Xora helps Pro Design save on payroll and optimize customer service.

When customers are paying top dollar for unique custom stonework in their homes, service must match the quality of the product. That's not always easy to do, if nearly half of your workers are in the field across a large metropolitan area and difficult to locate when questions come up.

Pro Design, Inc. a New York City-based supplier, fabricator and installation contractor for the natural stone and tile industries, has anywhere from 30 to 40 open jobs at a time for a discerning clientele. The company designs, manufactures and installs stone panels, flooring, walls, countertops, fireplaces, decks, tubs and staircases in some of Manhattan's finest homes and also in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Of the company's 75 employees, roughly 35 to 40 work at job sites completing installations, including three drivers who deliver materials and supplies. In 2007, Pro Design realized that it needed a better way to manage projects. If a worker was not at a job, managers couldn't quickly figure out whether he was stuck in traffic or simply taking a break. As well, workers didn't always keep close tabs on their time and projects, sometimes forgetting the hours they worked and at which job sites, says Lisa Ferguson, director of business operations for Pro Design. "It was really difficult to go back and reconcile that."

If workers arrived early to a job site, or stayed late, there was no way to precisely verify the actual hours worked, since supervisors aren't with the workers much of the time. Workers had cell phones and they also used a radio to communicate with



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**Lisa Ferguson**

Director of Business Operations, Pro Design

drivers. Pro Design realized that turning the cell phone into a productivity tool that could track location and record hours could be powerful. Ferguson did some online research and also consulted with her partners, who recommended Xora for its location-based workforce management capabilities.

### **Taking the guesswork out of hours**

Pro Design originally purchased Motorola 1576 GPS-enabled phones to run Xora's mobile enterprise software, a solution consisting of an app accessible on workers' mobile devices and a web-based reporting console for managers. Today, some employees are now using a newer Android phone. Workers use the phone to punch in at the start of their shift at the job site and then to punch out when they leave for the day.

Drivers use the phones in the same way. Almost immediately, Pro Design was able to determine that employees were not clocking hours correctly. Reports from Xora indicated that some workers were clocking in for the day at home, instead of at the job site. Others arrived at the job site early or left late and recorded longer hours than they should have, which was verified later if the supervisor did not approve overtime for that day.

### **Working as a team**

While some workers weren't happy with the

automated time tracking system at first, Pro Design worked hard to be flexible and fair. For instance, employees don't have to use the phones to clock in and out for breaks or lunches, and Pro Design doesn't check up on workers throughout the day. Still, it took workers some time to get used to the fact that, some weeks, they were not going to make 40 hours of payroll, Ferguson says. Pro Design allows field workers to record some extra time for diligence (for instance, arriving early to a job site) and guarantees six hours of pay per day regardless of actual hours worked.

After a few months of adjustment back in 2007, Pro Design's mobile employees have accepted the technology. Today, says Ferguson, there are seldom any discrepancies around hours: "Xora ensures that workers are getting paid for all of the time that they work, and in the end it really does work in their favor."

### **Boosting the bottom line**

Xora is also working in favor of the company's financials. Through electronic timecards, Pro Design has been able to shave 10% from its field force payroll of \$1.5 million per year, amounting to \$150,000 in savings per year. On top of that, a related savings on Worker's Compensation and liability insurance, and payroll taxes, amounts to an additional 40% of the \$150,000 in savings. Total savings from Xora from payroll and the associated

insurance and taxes is \$200,000 annually, according to Ferguson. "That is really significant for us, as payroll is our greatest cost."

### **Pleasing customers**

Beyond cost savings, Pro Design can also ensure optimal customer service. If a customer calls to find out the status of a delivery, managers can find the location of the vehicle and give an update in minutes.

Managers back at the office also use the daily "discrepancy reports" to see whether employees arrived at the job site on time. "People are now more efficient about getting to a site on time and making deliveries on time," she says. More detailed reporting also provides accurate data on ongoing labor costs, so that managers can update clients every week on progress and budget, Ferguson adds.

Transparency in hours, job costing and employee locations means that Pro Design can focus on its business – designing and installing gorgeous tubs and staircases – and not on the paperwork.