

# Farber Corporation

Fast Growing Ohio-based Mechanical Contracting Firm Leverages Asset Management to Improve Operations



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Farber Mechanical Contractors, a rapidly growing mechanical contracting firm, had been tracking tools, vehicles, and other valuable assets manually with an Excel spreadsheet for years. However, as the team grew and asset management became exponentially more complex, they needed to graduate to a more effective solution.

After deploying the Trimble AllTrak asset management solution, Farber Mechanical experienced dramatic improvements in inventory visibility, employee accountability, service scheduling, and operational cost savings.

Since 1969 plumbing and HVAC contractor [Farber Corporation](#) has helped companies throughout central Ohio with their HVAC needs. The company offers full maintenance, repair and replacement services in the commercial, industrial,

institutional and retail markets. The family-owned and operated mechanical contracting and construction company was started in 1969 by Ed Farber, and is now owned by Tim Farber. While many of Farber's HVAC and plumbing projects are being contracted with general contractors and construction managers in standard plan and specification basis, they also maintain a significant role working directly with private facility owners in a design-build relationship.

Over the years, the contractor has relied on an manual-based asset management for tracking tools, vehicles and other equipment. Individuals manually updated Excel spreadsheets, when items were checked in and out. With a relatively small staff and a small number of assets, this process worked well for almost 60 years, with only minor inconveniences and the occasional error.

## Building on a family tradition

Then in 2012, the company went through a major growth spurt. Farber Mechanical Contractors began offering direct digital temperature control system integrations and services as well. With this change, Farber doubled the size of its staff and the company's inventory grew dramatically as well. The company's inventory needs also became far more complex because teams began handling numerous jobs at once. They also expanded their normal service area and began relying more heavily on rented and leased assets than in years' past.

With this growth, the company's homegrown asset management process started to unravel. What started as only "minor inconveniences" of years past were becoming costly issues: time was being wasted locating missing equipment or waiting for necessary items to be purchased and shipped; money was being wasted buying or renting tools and supplies unnecessarily because existing stock could not be located; and leadership began realizing how little visibility the manual, spreadsheet-based inventory management system afforded them when they started trying to pin down the root causes of these problems.

While Farber Corporation has enjoyed steady growth for most of its nearly 50 years in business, the last several years have seen very rapid growth with a doubling of the total staff and quadrupling of revenue. While this has been a very positive time for the company, it has also required some changes to the status quo in order to effectively manage such rapid growth.



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“ We knew there had to be a better way.”

— Jonathan Klingler, Construction Project Manager,  
Farber Corporation

## WHAT WAS THEIR SITUATION BEFORE CONTACTING TRIMBLE?

While a manual system is inherently vulnerable to human error and other widespread issues, the small size of the company’s staff and limited inventory meant that any errors or confusion they ran into while using the system amounted to a minor inconvenience and little more.

Farber’s Construction Project Manager, Jonathan Klingler, joined the team in 2015. He describes the situation this way:

“The bigger the company grew, the more inefficient our inventory system became. We were buying new tools we didn’t need and running other tools into the ground

because maintenance schedules were being overlooked. Workers at one jobsite would end up losing a day or more of work time waiting on a tool that was sitting unused at a different site. We knew there had to be a better way.”

## WHAT SOLUTION CHANGED THEIR SITUATION?

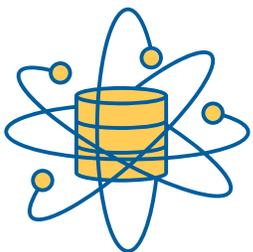
Farber Corporation was already using the Trimble Robotic Total Station, and were delighted with the quality of the technology and support they had received. So, while exploring the Trimble MEP website, Klingler noticed that Trimble also supplied a robust asset management software solution called [AllTrak Cloud](#).

“I reached out to my rep at Trimble and asked about AllTrak. The more I learned, the more I realized *this* was what we needed to get our inventory situation under control,” Klingler states.



The Trimble AllTrak Cloud system offers the following key features that really stood out to Jonathan and other key decision makers at Farber Corporation:

- ▶ Simple, easy to use, but powerful management of warehouse inventory
- ▶ Tool locator to save time on the jobsite
- ▶ Greater accountability and loss/theft prevention, as inventory items can be “assigned” to individuals
- ▶ Automated alerts on pending services, calibrations and rentals
- ▶ Ability to add certification requirements to assets
- ▶ Greater visibility into real-time inventory status reduces unnecessary tool purchases
- ▶ Powerful reporting, including usage, cost, and availability, all viewable by the individual, the item, the job, or any other parameter
- ▶ Prevent tool and equipment hoarding
- ▶ Dedicated mobile app for Android & iPhone



The system centers around placing small adhesive barcode tags (stickers) on each tool or item being tracked. Then, as the items are moved within the

warehouse or removed for use at a jobsite, they are scanned and reassigned to the responsible person and the location they’re moving it to.

That data is constantly fed into a robust inventory management database that resides in the cloud, so the location and status of each item is available — in real time — on any internet-connected device.

An associated mobile app connects everyone on the jobsite to the database for fast and efficient locating and assigning of tools.

Implementation was quick and easy, taking less than six weeks, and the team at Farber experienced a very brief ramp-up and learning curve before they started seeing results.

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*“The results have been really impressive.”*

— Jonathan Klingler, Construction Project Manager,  
Farber Corporation

## WHAT RESULTS HAVE THEY SEEN?

“The results have been really impressive,” Klingler confirms, “we’re still fairly early in the process, but we’ve already seen dramatic improvements across the board.”

These “dramatic improvements” include:



### Far greater inventory visibility

Knowing where a given tool is, who is responsible for it, what jobsite it’s on, and when it’s expected back, all in real-time.



### Greater employee accountability

A reduction in shrinkage due to loss, theft, or hoarding of tools and supplies.



### Reduction in purchase and rental expenses

There is no longer a need to buy or rent tools and supplies they already have.



### More effective service scheduling

Maintenance schedules no longer slip through the cracks, so tools are being better maintained and lasting longer as a result.

As Farber Corporation continues to use the Trimble AllTrak system, we’ll be following up with them to nail down some specific stats and dollar amounts tied to these anecdotal results.

But, in the meantime, if you’re interested in seeing similar results for your construction firm, [contact Trimble](#) today to discuss the AllTrak Cloud asset management solution.