



Batson-Cook Combats the Heat and Embraces Portability with the TOUGHBOOK 33

CHALLENGE

[Batson-Cook Construction](#) is one of the premier construction organizations in the southeastern United States with expertise in general contracting, construction and design-build contracting. With long days on-site in the southern heat, Batson-Cook's consumer-grade devices could not withstand daily field conditions—quickly running out of battery power, breaking when dropped, and overheating in the sun. The unreliability of consumer-grade devices caused downtime and high-replacement costs hindered operational efficiency. The use of these devices also posed a challenge during the layout process of construction. The laptops the team was using could not be used in the field, making it difficult for workers to show and visualize measurement discrepancies between the markups on their laptops and on-site.

SOLUTION

To streamline the layout process of construction projects and increase productivity on the job, Batson-Cook decided to replace its consumer devices with the Panasonic Connect fully rugged TOUGHBOOK 33. Its long-lasting battery, 2-in-1 form factor, superior display in bright sunlight, and performance of business applications like AutoCAD®, Autodesk Point Layout, and Bluebeam®, made the TOUGHBOOK 33 a perfect choice for deployment on job sites.

RESULT

Since the introduction of the TOUGHBOOK 33, Batson-Cook's workers have reduced downtime significantly. Hours are no longer spent recharging batteries, waiting for devices to revive from overheating, or traveling to find shady locations to view screens. Workers also expressed their satisfaction with the 2-in-1 functionality of the TOUGHBOOK 33 which offers the ability to detach the screen from the keyboard base so the device can be used as a tablet, allowing them to share measurement data with supervisors in the actual field to more accurately visualize and express key points.



For over a century, Batson-Cook Construction has served the Southeastern United States community with commercial projects as general contractors, construction managers, and design-build contractors. The company's work spans industries including education, retail, multi-family spaces, and offices. Batson-Cook is committed to developing superior infrastructure for its clients, so when the quality of devices used by workers was not meeting job demands, the company knew something needed to change.

For years, Batson-Cook's workers used consumer-grade tablets whether they were in the field office or breaking ground on a job site. Amid the harsh southern sun, the tablets were continually overheating and crashing, causing data loss and unplanned downtime. Even when the devices were up and running, the screens were difficult to view in direct sunlight, causing workers to seek a shady spot away from the job site to view schematics or use construction management software, wasting more time. On top of that, the tablet's short battery life, coupled with a long workday often required users to leave a job location to recharge in a car or at the field office.

Consumer-grade laptops were also impacting the efficiency and success of the most critical step in the construction process: layout. Determining the layout of a building starts in the dirt by measuring the specific points where the footers and retaining walls should lay. If the base of the building is wrong – even by just a sixteenth of an inch – every step after will be incorrect and run the risk of not being able to stay upright. Finding the location of these points in the field is done using AutoCAD® software, which provides a visualization of where the layout should be located. However, Batson-Cook created these visualizations on consumer-grade laptops that could not go into the field without the risk of breaking when dropped, even with a protective sleeve. This made it difficult to compare the visualization on the computer to the layout on the construction site and highlight discrepancies to building supervisors. The result was significant time going from laptop to field to laptop again. Batson-Cook needed a portable solution to seamlessly share these critical points.

When searching for a new solution Batson-Cook knew its team needed a device that would check off many boxes: long battery-life, durability, heat-resistance, and a removable touch-screen. That's why they decided on the TOUGHBOOK 33.

The TOUGHBOOK 33 features up to 20-hours of battery life, allowing workers to go a whole shift without needing to charge. Other features like enhanced screen brightness and extreme heat certifications mitigate the challenges of working in extreme temperatures and in direct sunlight. Its 2-in-1 layout also provides a detachable touch-screen option which converts

“We've been so impressed with the TOUGHBOOK 33 and couldn't be happier with how it has performed in the field.”

— Jason Waddell, director of construction technology at Batson-Cook

the computer from a laptop format to a touch screen tablet for enhanced portability. This means workers can easily carry the device from the office to the build site, and without fear of the screen breaking if it's dropped. They can also show managers layout visualizations with a swipe of a finger. The touch-screen is also water-resistant and glove-compatible, meaning workers can continue using it even when the weather turns to rain or cold.

Today, Batson-Cook's workers no longer find themselves needing to take breaks throughout the day to charge battery packs or cool down tablets. This means less downtime and more efficiency in the building process to meet deadlines. The TOUGHBOOK 33 also transformed the building layout process because Batson-Cook employees can now create critical data points on the TOUGHBOOK 33 using AutoCAD software, which is then exported to a robotic data collector that tells workers exactly where to place the layout.

“The TOUGHBOOK 33 was an absolute game-changer when it came to the layout process,” said Hunter Watts, field engineer at Batson-Cook. “I always had trouble showing point discrepancies on my consumer-grade laptop which made it difficult for my supervisors to visualize the changes that needed to be made in the field. With the TOUGHBOOK 33's detachable screen, I was finally able to bring this data into the field and show these discrepancies in real-time.”

Adopting the TOUGHBOOK 33 has been instrumental in making work days and processes more seamless for employees. The array of benefits has inspired Batson-Cook to add even more rugged devices to their lineup to continue bringing efficiency and a quality work experience to their construction projects.

“Before using the TOUGHBOOK 33, our staff was visibly frustrated by how easily their devices were breaking, as well as the involuntary downtime they experienced. Now, our employees can shift their focus from dealing with faulty tech to doing the task at hand efficiently and effectively,” added Jason Waddell, director of construction technology at Batson-Cook.

