



CASE STUDY: **BELLAS LANDSCAPING**



“Knowing where everyone is without having to call, to see when they are coming back, is saving thousands and thousands of dollars.”

ADAM BELLAS, CO-OWNER, BELLAS LANDSCAPING

Leading landscaping firm serving central Illinois streamlines operations with Samsara’s real-time fleet tracking solution:

- 30+ vehicle fleet includes International Terrastar dump trucks and flatbeds, medium- and light-duty pickups from Ford and Chevrolet. Winter fleet includes snow plows and salters.
- Deployed Samsara VG33 gateways with GPS and WiFi hotspot to manage fleet operations in real time

Highlights:

- Real-time location tracking enabled faster loading turnarounds, increasing billable hours
- Precise visibility into time on site resulted in increased T&M billings
- Streamlined maintenance and refueling increased operating efficiency

Run by brothers Adam and Justin Bellas, Bellas Landscaping has grown to become one of the top three landscaping design-build firms servicing central Illinois. Bellas serves both residential and commercial customers and performs snow plowing in the winter. With a fleet of over 30 vehicles, fleet operations are a major factor in Bellas' operating costs and productivity.

Eric Bellas, who is the company's technical advisor, first contacted Samsara after reading about the solution in the news. Eric had considered GPS technologies in the past, but was intrigued by Samsara's real-time capabilities. After seeing an online demo, Bellas decided to try Samsara on their fleet, deploying VG33 gateways on their International Terrastar dump trucks as well as Ford and GMC pickups.

Once the gateways were installed, Bellas' team began using Samsara's real-time fleet visibility across many aspects of their operations.

Once deployed, Bellas immediately began using Samsara to streamline operations, beginning with the loading and delivery of materials. The result was an instant boost in worker productivity and increased billable hours. "On busy days, we'll have 10-12 deliveries," said co-owner Adam Bellas. "With Samsara, we can see when trucks are en route back to our facility, and we can have an operator ready to load materials when they arrive." Using Samsara, Bellas eliminated the time drivers would sit idle, waiting for materials to be prepared for loading, and also minimized the time that workers waited for materials at job sites.



Bellas even knew when to warm up their front-loader, used to load mulch, gravel, pallets, and sand into the delivery trucks, so that the loader was ready to use when the trucks arrived. And based on the location of other vehicles in the field, operators could intelligently decide whether to shut the loader down between loads, or keep it running if another truck will be arriving soon.

Visibility into routing has also led to increased efficiency. "We found that people are avoiding main roads because they are more busy, but we've found out [with Samsara] that the main roads are always faster than the side roads. We never would have found this out without Samsara. If we can save 5-10 minutes each day with a two man crew, you're talking about a very large savings over the course of the year."

While faster loading increased efficiency, visibility into time spent on customers' sites helped Bellas more accurately bill for the work they were already doing. "When we do a job that's time and materials, we can see exactly when a crew arrived on a job site," noted Bellas. "If we thought that they arrived at 8:15, but we see they actually arrived at 8:00, that extra 15 minutes of billing will pay for the unit for the month."

Along with increasing revenue, Samsara also helped Bellas reduce operating costs. Bellas' maintenance staff uses the visibility into mileage, engine hours, and fault codes to optimize maintenance - scheduling servicing based on actual usage instead of calendar days - so that heavily-used vehicles are serviced more frequently and lightly used vehicles are not serviced unnecessarily. Knowing in real time when trucks were about to arrive back in the yard also helped the maintenance staff plan their work more efficiently. "If our mechanic sees that a truck that needs work is on its way back, he'll prepare all of the parts" and plan his schedule around the vehicle's availability, Bellas explained.

Refueling also became more efficient. Bellas wants to refuel in the evening, so crews don't come to work in the morning and realize they don't have enough gas. To do this, Bellas uses Samsara's Fuel Report. "I can tell them to fill trucks 1 and 8 and he fills those two, instead of going to every single truck, turning on the ignition, and checking the fuel level."

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Finally, Samsara provides Bellas with peace of mind. Adam and Justin no longer have to worry about vehicles being abused or stolen. "We have alerts set up to let us know if our vehicles are outside of our operating area, which is unbelievably great." And by knowing that the vehicles are monitored, driver behavior has improved - from keeping lunch breaks within the allowed times, to avoiding the harsh driving that creates wear and tear. "Guys know that if they take an extra-long lunch, we know down to the minute, so they're more conscientious about arriving to the job site," said Bellas. "We don't have to get down on our guys. Just letting them know that we monitor the vehicles improves their driving."

While Bellas has "already seen a huge value", they look forward to Samsara's ongoing feature upgrades, which are provided to customers at no additional cost, from WiFi Hotspot capabilities to the Driver App. Bellas even plans to install Samsara on their snow plows, using the Auxiliary Input feature to determine when the plow blade is lowered, so that they can more precisely determine rates and maintenance for their snow removal service.