

Cargo Theft Is an Ongoing Problem. This Trucking Company Found a Solution.



It's an easy thing to forget – that for any major retailer, keeping the shelves stocked with inventory means relying on a complicated transportation network and supply chain. Delays can cost stakeholders thousands of dollars, while the cost of a single lost or stolen trailer easily ranges into six figures.

Trucking companies responsible for deliveries are increasingly looking to technology for greater visibility, efficiency, and control. The continued development of the Internet of Things (IoT) has enabled asset monitoring systems to give fleet operations greater visibility into the entire delivery process and revolutionize asset management.

XTL Transport, a trucking company based in Ontario, Canada, recently seized the opportunity IoT represents.

XTL Transport

Industry:

Transportation

Location:

Ontario, Canada

Product:

BlackBerry Radar®

Deployment Size:

260

Website:

www.xtl.com



TRANSPORT
LOGISTICS
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Reliable Transportation Throughout North America

A full truckload carrier, XTL currently manages approximately four hundred tractors and twelve hundred trailers. With bases throughout Canada, XTL provides transportation services to some of the country's largest retailers and brands.

Like many carriers, XTL is continuously looking for innovations that will enable more efficient deliveries and asset utilization. Most recently, it sought a means of combating trailer theft in its Montreal fleet. It is, says XTL Director Aslan Motahedin, a constant problem.

BlackBerry Radar® provided the solution.

A Losing Battle Against Trailer Theft

Given their customers, XTL frequently transports consumer goods, which could easily be sold if stolen. This is especially pronounced around the Christmas season, when demand for gifts peaks. For XTL, like other carriers, there was one region that proved problematic – Montreal.

"The Montreal area is notorious for trailer theft," explains Motahedin. "Especially around Christmas. It was what initially drove us to look for a trailer tracking solution."

"The trailer itself costs fifty thousand dollars, and the value of its contents are significantly more," he continues. At one point, we were hit with two thefts within two weeks – one was a total loss, and the other was only partially recovered. It was what made us realize something needed to change."

Before investigating asset tracking solutions, XTL implemented multiple security measures to protect their assets. Although these precautions might have deterred some, it seemed they were nothing but a minor inconvenience for more determined thieves. It wasn't enough.

"We had CCTV cameras under bright lights, we stored our trailers in high-visibility areas, we protected them with all manner of locks, but it didn't matter," he continues. "The thieves were both unbelievably brazen and incredibly well-prepared. We realized we couldn't prevent these thefts, so we began looking for a way to recover our stolen trailers faster."

With these objectives in mind, XTL set out in search of a trailer tracking solution.

Their search eventually led them to BlackBerry Radar. A scalable and flexible asset monitoring solution, BlackBerry Radar's ruggedized devices are reliable, easy to install, and provide multiple sensor readings, including location, mileage, and door status from one unit. BlackBerry Radar devices are also capable of communicating with additional wireless sensors to further improve visibility.

"It's not often that you buy a new technology and it works as promised right out of the gate. Everything we were told it would do, it does. And as far as reliability and data integrity are concerned, BlackBerry Radar has been perfect. It worked seamlessly and did exactly what we needed of it."

- Aslan Motahedin,
Director, XTL Transport

The Search for Better Theft Mitigation

XTL evaluated BlackBerry Radar against three competing solutions.

Ultimately, BlackBerry won out for several reasons. First, was the ease of installation and use. The devices are discrete and can be quickly installed almost anywhere on a trailer. Perhaps more importantly, the BlackBerry Radar portal is designed with usability in mind – anyone at XTL can use it with minimal training.

Additionally, since BlackBerry Radar devices are powered by a self-contained battery with no recharging or external wires, they operate regardless of the trailer's connection to the tractor. Many other asset-tracking tools required a trailer to be coupled to a tractor to provide a reading. For XTL, that would defeat the purpose of trailer tracking as a theft mitigation measure.

"We did a comparison with BlackBerry and three others," Motahedin explains. "BlackBerry Radar was doing pretty much exactly what we wanted, and it was easier to use and install than the competition. And our maintenance team loved that BlackBerry Radar is self-contained and doesn't require a ton of attention to maintain."

After a limited pilot, XTL deployed 260 BlackBerry Radar-L devices to their Montreal fleet. Working with the BlackBerry team, XTL began configuring the solution for their unique requirements.

Since XTL leverages a captive fleet, its trailers never leave the region in which they are registered. Trailers assigned to Montreal remain in Montreal, and exclusively travel between distribution centers and depots. As such, the first step was establishing geofences throughout the region.

"We geofenced every major point of interest," recalls Motahedin. "Every time a trailer leaves, we get an exit alert, and an automated process checks our transport management system to see if the trailer in question is currently dispatched."

If the transportation management system (TMS) does not show the trailer currently under dispatch, an automated robotic process checks the location and status of nearby XTL tractors for a possible match. If no match is found, the operations center and security team are alerted via email and immediately act.

Initially, the most significant challenge in this process was false alarms. One of XTL's major clients in the region has its distribution centers directly by the highway. Trailers passing the depots on the highway generated exit alerts which were immediately flagged as thefts.

To address this problem, XTL added speed matching to the equation. If a trailer was moving at fifty miles per hour or more, then it wasn't likely leaving the depot. It was simply passing by and could be disregarded.

"Throughout the installation and integration, BlackBerry was great," he adds. "They told us exactly where to look for the data packets we needed, helped us identify where we were overcomplicating the solution we wanted to build, and ultimately were instrumental in helping us see our initial deployment through from concept to completion. They even made a few minor changes to BlackBerry Radar at our request, such as helping us get exit alerts in a timelier fashion."

An Immediate Return on Investment

Since its deployment, BlackBerry Radar has already helped XTL recover a stolen trailer and its cargo. Just three months after BlackBerry Radar's initial deployment, they received a notification that a trailer that had been recently dropped was moving again.

"When we received the exit alert, it was just forty-five minutes after we'd delivered the trailer," says Motahedin. "Nobody can empty a trailer that fast, so we knew almost immediately that it was stolen."

After tracking the trailer's movement and verifying its location once it stopped, XTL notified the police. They arrived just as the criminals finished unloading the trailer. Although the delivery was a day late, everything was recovered, and XTL avoided a six-figure operating loss.

"The police were very impressed that we managed to track the trailer so quickly," Motahedin recalls. "And even though their delivery was delayed, the customer was pleased that we'd prevented a theft. As far as I'm concerned, BlackBerry Radar has already provided a return on our investment."

Since deployment, XTL has seen several other benefits with BlackBerry Radar, many of them unanticipated. First, the organization has started using BlackBerry Radar's yard check feature to improve trailer utilization. And though the company already has excellent utilization – very few trailers sit in the yard for more than two days – Motahedin feels visibility into this is still extremely important.

"We're able to keep an eye on the trailers as a security measure, but that also lets us know where every trailer is in real time," says Motahedin. "We know if a trailer has been sitting somewhere for too long without moving. If one is sitting somewhere for more than two days, we can investigate why – we can figure out why it's not being properly utilized."

BlackBerry Radar has also been a huge hit with the operations center, providing insights into traffic that might not be available elsewhere. The staff there were so taken with the solution that they requested the installation of a sixty-inch flat screen television that's perpetually logged in to the BlackBerry Radar portal. This provides them with insights into fleet movements that might not be available elsewhere, as well as advance notice of any potential thefts.

"The big thing for us about BlackBerry Radar is that we were able to prove it worked the way we wanted it to. We were able to foil a theft and do it quickly. On the IT side, BlackBerry Radar is a trusted source of data we can do all sorts of things with – we had a problem, we found a solution, and now that we have that solution, we can see it's going to be useful in many other places."

- Aslan Motahedin,
Director, XTL Transport

A Promising Road Ahead

XTL is also investigating using BlackBerry Radar-L to handle trailer detention. By using geofence exit and entry alerts, the BlackBerry Radar report helps manage assets and billing. "We'll know exactly how long a customer has had our trailer – and whether or not we should contact them or bill them for hanging onto it for too long," explains Motahedin. "We are now integrating the data from our BlackBerry Radar units into our trailer detention monitoring software."

Trailer detention aside, Motahedin is also excited about several other potential use cases. BlackBerry Radar can enable more effective maintenance, tapping into data such as mileage. It can also be used to help drivers more effectively locate trailers in the depot, saving them a significant amount of time.

"There's a huge pool of data that we haven't even tapped into," says Motahedin. "We've only scratched the surface – I look forward to seeing what else it can help us accomplish."

About BlackBerry

BlackBerry (NYSE: BB; TSX: BB) provides intelligent security software and services to enterprises and governments around the world. The company secures more than 500M endpoints including 150M cars on the road today. Based in Waterloo, Ontario, the company leverages AI and machine learning to deliver innovative solutions in the areas of cybersecurity, safety and data privacy solutions, and is a leader in the areas of endpoint security management, encryption, and embedded systems. BlackBerry's vision is clear – to secure a connected future you can trust.

For more information, visit [BlackBerry.com](https://www.blackberry.com) and follow [@BlackBerry](https://twitter.com/BlackBerry).

