

# SCALING NEW HEIGHTS: THE JOURNEY OF BLACKJACK CONCRETE

## Blackjack Concrete At A Glance

**MARKET AREA:** Metro Atlanta

**STARTED IN BUSINESS:** 2021

**SERVICES:** Residential, Commercial

**EQUIPMENT:** Cemen Tech C Series



**Blackjack Concrete, a rising star in the concrete sector, is a spinoff of an asphalt paving company that operates in the southeast area of metro Atlanta. In this case study, we take a closer look at the company's evolution and its successful strategy using volumetric concrete mixers.**



*Brad Kauffman and Jay Herzog, Co-Owners of Blackjack Concrete*

### Target Customers

Blackjack Concrete targets a specific type of customer: one who has multiple ongoing construction projects and requires a regular supply of concrete. These tend to be high caliber clients and municipalities that value Blackjack's on-time, on-demand service, even at a slightly higher cost.

"I think our target is a customer that pours on a weekly basis, not necessarily large pours, but willing to pay more. Smaller pours and are having a hard time getting it from the barrel trucks on a continuous basis, and knows that we're on time, on demand, can provide what they want," said Blackjack Concrete Co-Owner, Brad Kaufman.

### Expanding Into Concrete

Inspiration to add a concrete division came from the success of a friendly rival paving company operating on the north side of Atlanta. The decision was grounded in the prospect of a steady residual income, reduced competition due to geographical placement, and potential for customer diversification. The division was created with the aim of supplying concrete for Blackjack's own use and then gradually expanding to cover retail.

"We've got some friends in the paving industry that we've done a lot of partnering with in the Atlanta market. They're on the north side, we're kind of on the south side. They're a

much larger paving company than we've been. They got into the volumetric trucks with Cemen Tech a year before we did, and they had a lot of success rather quickly," Kaufman said. "So it was very inspirational to hear their story about how it was a residual income for them, a backup plan in a sense, and how quickly it took off."

Jay Herzog, Co-Owner Blackjack Concrete adds, "With them being on the north side, us being on the south side of Atlanta, they realized that these trucks operate efficiently in a 25-mile radius and that there would really be no interference or competition between the two. And in fact, they were getting a lot of calls for the need outside of what they would've called their market."

### Market Potential

Positioned near the bustling Atlanta airport, Blackjack Concrete believed there was considerable scope for growth. Being able to fill gaps left by barrel trucks and having the advantage of being close to the interstate, made the entry into the concrete sector a strategically beneficial move.

"I think there will be a lot of opportunity being this close to the Atlanta airport. There's so much growth in the Atlanta market that, especially on this part of town, being on this south-west side of Atlanta and being this close to the Atlanta airport, I really felt like there was going to be a lot of opportunity," said Herzog. "And those opportunities would be things like filling a void that the barrel trucks couldn't fill. Plus we have the room and the yard proximity to the interstate. There was just a lot of reasons that we felt like it was the right move."



### The Volumetric Mixers: A Game Changer

Volumetric concrete mixers have played a crucial role in Blackjack's operation. After conducting preliminary research



and attending industry shows, they settled on Cemen Tech as their volumetric mixer provider. The decision was influenced by Cemen Tech's superior quality, the positive experience of their business partners, and the excellent customer service offered.

"We did a little bit of research that pointed quickly to the fact that Cemen Tech was kind of the cream of the crop. We're always going to try to be state-of-the-art, best in the industry. And our relationship with our business partners, they were very, very upfront and let us ride with them, experience the whole thing, get in touch with Cemen Tech and talk about the customer service and the support," Kaufman commented. "And it was a quick, quick investigation and we were like, if we're going to do this Cemen Tech's the truck we're going with."

The return on investment is what Herzog was initially looking for in purchasing volumetric mixers stating, "We went to the show in Las Vegas, I could really tell the difference in the quality of the trucks. I mean, really, how long is it going to take to get a return on that investment? Because you need more than one. So now you got to have three or four to realize what we wanted to see financially from that investment."

### Cemen Tech: A Reliable Partner

The partnership with Cemen Tech has been very fruitful for Blackjack Concrete. From on-site services and prompt parts delivery to extensive training, the support from Cemen Tech has matched the quality of their top-tier trucks. This strong relationship has been instrumental in setting up the yard and structuring their business model.

"The support that we've received from Cemen Tech has been superior. I've never ever run into a hurdle. I've always had as a response, "let me help, let me see what I can do". Parts within 24 hours," stated Kaufman. "Training, they offer more training than we can take advantage of just because of the timing on the schedule and so forth. The support is very indicative to the truck; the truck is top of the line and the support has been the same."

### The Power of ACCU-POUR™

ACCU-POUR™, a game-changing business solution from Cemen Tech, was recommended to Blackjack Concrete by their industry friends. The proprietary system has proven itself invaluable in operations, providing precise control over materials and mixes, and streamlining the entire process.

ACCU-POUR™ has streamlined Blackjack's operations. The software allows precise scheduling of trucks, detailed tracking of the poured concrete, and customized billing based on the exact volume used. Furthermore, it enables the creation of mix designs for specific client needs.

"Our buddies in the industry said, do not buy a truck without ACCU-POUR™. They'd purchased their first one without ACCU-POUR™, and said it was well worth the spending of the money to get the ACCU-POUR™ on the second truck. And they immediately went and added it to their first truck.





Kaufman's advice to those purchasing volumetric concrete mixers, "Don't try to invent the wheel from scratch on your own. Use Cemen Tech resources and experience to put yourself ahead. They helped us structure our yard. They helped us structure our business plan. They helped us structure who our target customers should and would be outside of the people that we thought we would want to sell to and are selling to. Don't try to reinvent the wheel, take their advice."

"I think that you just have to have patience. We've been in this for a year and a half and we've just had challenges of trying to educate the consumer on what these trucks are and the benefits of the trucks and why to use the trucks," added Herzog.

### On-Site Services

On-site services have been crucial for Blackjack Concrete. Support from their local Cemen Tech dealer, Reynolds Warren, and the swift assistance provided in maintaining the trucks have been instrumental in their smooth operations. "Reynolds Warren has been very good in support. Anything that we need, they really, really help us. We're very fortunate to have a dealer here locally that can help us in that situation.

### Key Takeaways

Blackjack Concrete's journey is a testament to the potential of volumetric mixers in the concrete sector. Their success is a result of identifying the right customer base, partnering with the best in the industry, and leveraging state-of-the-art technology. A patience-driven approach, combined with robust customer relationships and strategic geographical positioning, has provided a solid foundation for their continued growth in the market.

So they have multiple trucks now," said Kaufman. "They told me from day one, do not go without the ACCU-POUR™ system."

### Patiently Building a Customer Base

Despite initial hurdles in educating customers about the benefits of their volumetric trucks and overcoming resistance, Blackjack Concrete remained patient. They focused on building stability within their organization and developing relationships with their clients. This approach has paid off with a growing base of repeat customers.



### Emily – Manages Blackjack Concrete ACCU-POUR™

#### Can you take us through how you would set up an order in ACCU-POUR™?

##### Emily:

A customer calls, I ask questions regarding where the pour location is, just to make sure that it's not out of our service area. If it's within our 25 mile radius, just ask how many yards they're pouring. We book our trucks about nine yards for each truck is what we schedule. So, because our trucks hold from nine to 10 yards so and we'll book out based on need to know how many trucks based on what they're pouring, kind of ask them what they're pouring and then I'll go into our schedule and book for eight, noon, and three. This gives an opportunity for our drivers to come in, in the morning and load and then have three pours throughout the day. And then they're home in the afternoon so they're not out late in the day, which in Atlanta you don't want them out late because you're going to be stuck in traffic. So for this morning, I got a phone call about needing 23 to 24 yards. This is on the south side of Atlanta. So took all their information, input it here, schedule my trucks, and then create the, if it's a COD customer and then, or if it's a

customer that I'm used to talking to that has an account, put everything in. And then you can see here this was a COD customer this morning, which they were new. This is the first time they had used us.

#### So then they pay on site?

##### Emily:

Yes. I sent a credit card authorization through email. They respond to me and I've authorized the card for the estimated amount and discuss with them that if it goes over, I will do an additional charge and it's under, I will only charge what we pour. So, and that's the key point is that if you estimate 23 yards, but it's 22.5, I'll only charge you for 22.5. If it goes over, there's an additional charge to the estimated total, for what we booked out for the job. So I have three trucks going here this morning. This one is already complete at 9.41. I can see all the detail from the truck. I know that, know this would be calcium. I know that no calcium was added. So there's no additional charge on that one. Any color or fiber. I use all that to help me with billing. So I make sure that when I bill them, that I know what they used from the truck. All my order information, I have price per yard, estimated, and the mixed design. This is where I schedule my trucks. Let me know if you would like something different. The customer, all their information.

This is the estimated total given from ACCU-POUR™. Today we have a big developer in the Atlanta market, that we pour with a lot. We do a lot of their small pours. And it may just be a lot of holes that we fill, but they've come to use us a lot, which has been a really good relationship that we've built. I have a guy that I speak to multiple times a day for that company to make sure that he gets all his concrete needs.

#### What are your most common mix designs?

##### Emily:

So we have the 3,000. I do that a lot. I do that with calcium and fiber, dependent upon the customer. And that's another reason I like to talk to a customer because you'll get some that, a lot of one customer that'll use a lot of fiber and you start to learn that as you go too. And then a lot of them during the winter, I mean calcium was requested. I know that's not going to be as frequent in the summer months, but it was during the winter months. We did use a lot of calcium. So we have the 4,000 air mix regular.

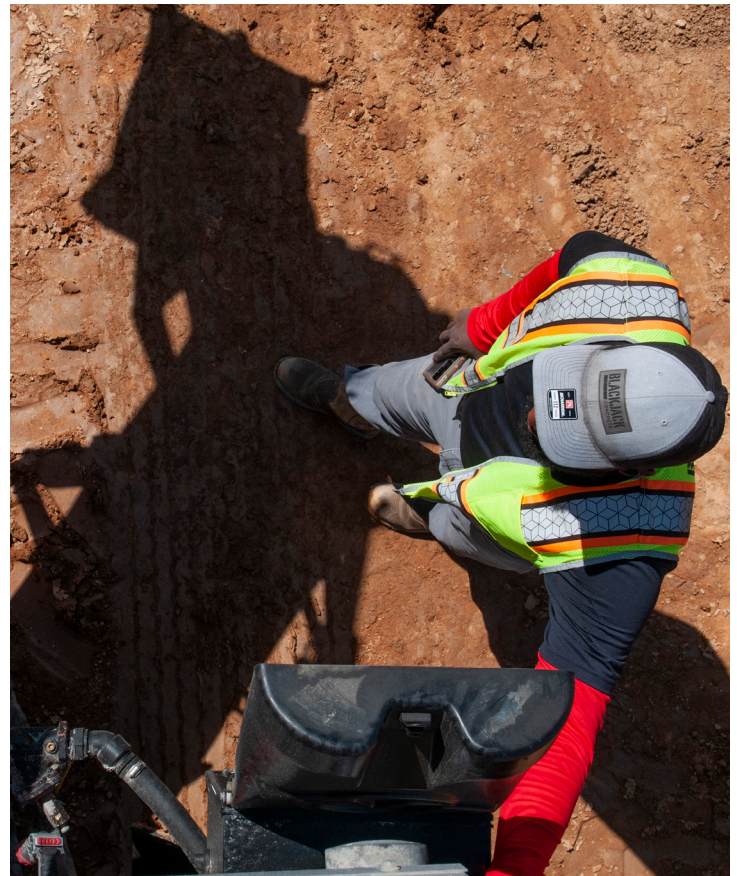
We do have the pump mix with the small rock that we use a lot for the line pumps. And then we do 5,000 mix. We haven't done a whole lot of 4,500 or 3,500 mix psi. We do have flow able that we've used with customers before. And we have a customer across the street who does, they do

apartment buildings. So they do the patios and the corridors in apartment buildings that use it. They use us a lot, and we have a special mix for them that they took out a lot of the breaks in it that was so, and that brings them coming back to us because we have just a mix for them.

### Do you do a lot of pump mixes?

#### Emily:

We do a lot of pump mix. And they have to be specific as far as letting me know. Because we do charge a little bit more because of the small rock. I know that's more detailed than maybe. And we have a lot of pump mix around here and a lot of companies that do a lot of the line pumps in the area. So we have done a couple exposed mix, where the rock comes up more, but that's always mainly the few and far between. But we do have a few customers that will do patios like that for customers and they'll talk to us about our mixed design. We did have a utility company that was out of Texas pouring a electric grid, the little substations, that we worked with and they came out and got our mixed design and had their engineer approve it. So we do have that occasionally where they need their mixed designs approved and we'll provide everything, get it checked off and then send our trucks to go pour everything.



Felton Gaither – Blackjack Concrete Mixer Operator

### How long have you been working on volumetric trucks?

#### Felton Gaither:

I started with the company about two years ago. I was the first driver they hired to operate this vehicle. It's been about two years.

### Did you have any experience with concrete trucks, any type, before that?

#### Felton Gaither:

None whatsoever. What I did was go on YouTube and kind of see what I was getting into because the company had a vision of selling cement, but they were trying to explain to me in the interview that it wasn't a regular barrel truck, that it was a volumetric truck. I was confused, what is that? So of course I went on YouTube, and saw you guys, Googled it, Cemen Tech came up and I just started watching different pours and just getting all the information I could. They sent us to another company that had the trucks already and I was able to go up there and train with them guys and get a feel for what's going on and how everything is run.

### What do you feel like your startup learning was? What it fairly easy?

#### Felton Gaither:

Once you get the basic concept, it was fairly easy. They get the job done so trying to keep them clean. That's one of the things I stress here with my drivers. We try to keep them clean, keep them washed out, keep everything fine-tuned and the trucks aren't going to let you down. They do a good job. Customers are really satisfied. They're satisfied that we



can make changes right there on the spot. I love them and still to this day we still get people still taking pictures. “Hey, how does it work?” Asking questions. Yeah.

**Have you attended any training at Cemen Tech headquarters?**

**Felton Gaither:**

I have. I just went this past March and it was a great experience. I got a chance to go up there and see how the trucks are put together. That was awesome and I learned so much just talking with other customers that has these trucks and just getting different ideas from different customers. It was great and I love them. I love them.

**What do you think about ACCU-POUR™?**

**Felton Gaither:**

ACCU-POUR™ is a great system. Of course, we’re still learning a lot of little stuff, but I feel as though ACCU-POUR™ is good. It’s good for us to be able to call dispatch, they make changes or send us updates and stuff we need. Even when it’s come to training a driver, it’s good to already have the missed designs in the system, send them to the tablet, send it back to the back of the truck and they can go, versus them trying to put stuff in manually. I think that is a great feature, especially with new drivers coming in.

**What do your new customers say about the concrete when you get to the site, are they always prepared for a volumetric mixer?**

**Felton Gaither:**

Sometimes they look at us like, “I think you might have the wrong location,” and then once they see, “Oh, okay. They do have cement,” that’s when we get a lot of questions, “How does it operate?” They want to film and stuff of that nature.

A lot of them are amazed and want to get pictures and stuff. That’s why I stress, the company, Blackjack, we’re big on trying to keep the truck clean and just all about appearance. The contractor that’s used to the barrel truck, they feel as though our concrete set a little faster versus the barrel truck. Once they get familiar with our trucks and how cement pretty much set, we really don’t have no problem. They keep coming back. A lot of times they might be like, “Oh, it’s getting too hard.” But once they kind of see how it runs and get a couple of pours with the customer, they all good. We keep going back and that’s one thing about us, we’re big about being on time, not having a customer waiting two or three hours for concrete. That’s one our selling points of, “Hey, you want it there at eight, we’re going to be there at eight.” We do that, and, so far, no complaints.

### What about the finishers? Do they like it?

#### **Felton Gaither:**

We did have a couple of finishers complain that, hey, it was taking too long to set, but once we called Cemen Tech, called some couple of companies to have the truck, we went up on our water reducers and we haven't had that problem since. That's one of the key things about this truck is that if you have certain problems, you can nine times out of 10 get in contact with someone that can help you figure it out to make it better for everybody.

### Is Phil your Cemen Tech service tech?

#### **Felton Gaither:**

Yes, he came, and one thing I like about Phil, Phil is just a phone call away. If he doesn't answer the phone, he will give me a call back and he have helped me through a lot as far as little small things. Whether my fiber chopper is not operating correctly, call Phil up. "Hey, why don't you try this?" Now with the new app that Cemen Tech have, where we can video call.

I was able to download that one once I went to the training to have that app. That's great too. Nine times out of 10, if I have any questions, the owners of the company have pretty much gave us everything we need, provided us with everything to work on the truck and do self-troubleshooting. It's just good to be able to call if I have a major problem and get it figured out, versus us just sitting and being down and not able to pour.

### How is it pouring with the pumps?

#### **Felton Gaither:**

It can be smooth. I think the problem we run into the most is, does the customer have a good pump? If it's a good pump, we really don't have any problems. For the most part, all the customers we deal with, we pretty much know their pump. We know how to adjust the truck accordingly. But for the most part they go pretty smooth. The pump mix is a good feature that, and we do, especially with a lot of pools that we do.

### Do you think the wash-out is easy? Thinking about the end of the job.

#### **Felton Gaither:**

Wash out. That's the only thing. You're going to get a little dirty trying to wash out, especially if you do a good one. But once you get experienced enough, you can do a quick washout, a decent one. That's one thing I like about how our yard is set up. We're able to, if a customer can't provide a big washout, we're able to wash out. We keep wash out

bags in the trucks, each driver, so a customer can purchase one of those. Nine times out of 10, they don't want to purchase it, so they'll have us wash out in a wheel barrel, which is fine. That'll get us back to the yard in time to be able to do a decent washout. We have a pit area and we also have an area over there where we can wash out. It tends to work out.

### Is there anything else you want to say about the mixers or Cemen Tech?

#### **Felton Gaither:**

I would say that I feel as though this is the future. I feel as though Cemen Tech is... I know y'all been around for a long time, but here in the South, especially in Georgia, it is still fairly new here. I guess some of the older trucks with some of the customers that have dealt with the older trucks, they're kind of like, "Oh, I don't know." But once the new C60, once we get to rolling, they were like, "Oh man."

They have really came a long way. I really feel as though this is the future. My biggest compliment I get from customers is that they like the fact that they pay for what they use, that it's nothing really wasted. People really tend to like that. It's even good for the finishers. They do not have to worry about hauling it nowhere or pretty much all this stuff and trying to find a place to put it. That's one of the reasons why I'm all in with this company. I really do feel as though this is the way it's going to go.

