

VOLUMETRIC MIXERS ALLOW JOE & SONS CONCRETE TO FULLY INTEGRATE CONCRETE BUSINESS



JOE & SONS CONCRETE: AT A GLANCE

YEAR STARTED: 1993

MARKET SERVICE: Okanagan

CUSTOMER PROFILE: Concrete Forming,
Finishing, Repair & Coating Services

EQUIPMENT: Cemen Tech C Series



The ability to offer high-quality service from start to end for his customers is one of several benefits Kris Courtoreille, owner/operator with Joe & Sons Concrete, has enjoyed since adding two Cemen Tech volumetric mixers to his busy Okanagan concrete business.

How did you find out about volumetric concrete mixers?

Jay approached me on-site last year, I was in the middle of a project here in Kelowna, B.C. and he pulled over. I usually dismiss most sales guys because I'm a busy guy. But for whatever reason, I kind of gravitated toward talking to him. I've heard about volumetric mixers before and my initial experience with them, it wasn't a good experience. It was maybe 10-plus, maybe 15 years ago, and I was a little naive at the time. I didn't know why I didn't like it. I didn't have a good experience because there's different things with the ready mix versus the volumetric truck that you need to know that make your life easier as a finisher or it can make it really hard. We were inexperienced and so was the operator at that time.

Naturally I'm a very curious guy as far as what's new and innovative in concrete. I took some interest from his site visit and the follow-up. Jay's a great, personable guy and I got along with him great personally. It kind of grew and developed into a business relationship. This has kind of been a long time coming, we've been working on this since I think August last year [2020] and we're finally rolling and operating now.

Did you look at any other competitive brands?

No, I didn't have to — I was sold. I know enough about concrete and he explained enough about Cemen Tech's product and the competitors and that's all I needed to know. It was great.

Talk about the learning curve for your team with the volumetric mixer.

So far, it's understanding concrete a lot more than we thought we knew. Hydration of cement, it's different when you mix in a volumetric truck versus a drum roll type mixer. You end up seeing things a lot different that come out of the chute. Then when it hits the ground, the slump sometimes changes on the ground versus out of the back of the truck. You have to be conscious that it's not the concrete not setting up, it's the fact it's hydrating.

That's a weird thing to think about because most finishers, when they see something hydrate or set up, you're in panic mode. As a finisher you're wondering 'hey, why is this sort of setting up?' It's not, it's just the way that you mix it. We were trying to figure out how to get our mixes where a conventional mix, your slump, is going to be a lot drier than sort of how you slump with the volumetric mixers because of the hydration times. That was a bit of a learning curve.

I think that it's understanding the truck and its capabilities. There's a lot of functions that we bought; we have the color add-on, we have the fiber chopper, and we're heavy with our admixtures. We like using plasticizers. Dialing all those in, knowing your mix, knowing concrete is important.

How does using ACCU-POUR™ change your dispatching,



invoices, and information?

What I'm finding is the scheduling software — it's nice to separate my two businesses. ACCU-POUR™ is all I use my volumetric trucks for primarily and then my other business, my construction side of things. The program is really easy to use. You type in the address of your mix design. I have two trucks [and know] where those guys are going and what time. It's as simple as that.

It's punch in your concrete, the address, and you're off to the races.

How was your start-up training?

The start-up was, Tyler's great, it was nice for him to come down and kind of show us the ropes. It was backed by SMS Equipment, so there were a few people involved. The support was awesome. We had a few kinks to work out at the beginning which most things you deliver and they come up from the States and then they go through all these inspections obviously and there's a couple of things you've got to work out. If there was an issue, it was like on-the-fly fixed, reassuring me that hey this is going to happen, this is going to happen, and all hands on deck. The team that was sent to assist in that was great.

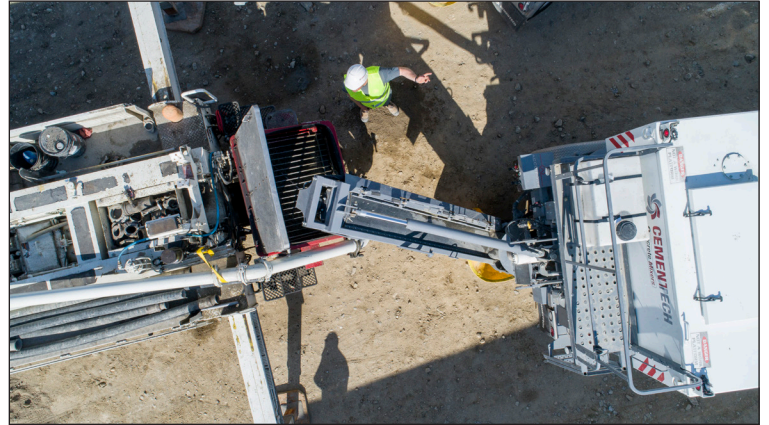
Jay was great with following up, if there was something I had missed or they had to send. There were a few things on the trucks in inspection Tyler found and I was like hey what about this and he was like yep and things were sent up from the factory in Iowa. Something came up within like two days and they fixed it right out of the shop.

My guys, because I was busy, they paid more attention [during the startup] than I did so I'm learning stuff from them. To be able to take two guys, those are my drivers who don't know much about concrete and they're kind of showing me the functionality of the trucks — I thought that was pretty impressive. Shows how user-friendly those trucks are if a guy who doesn't know much about concrete can kind of show a seasoned guy like myself hey this is the button you press to do this, it's easy to use.

Is there anything else you want to tell us about Cemen Tech or the mixers?

We're lucky, the economy is booming here and everything is busy. But you've got to be able to sell something more than this service of supplying concrete. The benefits and the sale end of things also goes to it's not a homeowner or a contractor, it's selling it to other placers, finishers, even my guys.

The technology, the fact that you can kind of batch on-demand allows my guys to have a better quality product. They're placing and finishing concrete that's basically setting up in a wave and it's from when you turn on the truck to the end of the pour. It's





not a roll mixer where everything sets up and you don't have that time to finish everything in that fashion where it's sort of moving forward with the set-up time of how the truck is mixing in the back. Roller mixers are setting up and the concrete is going and it's hot climbing and it's stressful.

We find that when we're using the trucks now when we're doing our own stuff, the quality is better and the guys aren't nervous if a pump shows up late, my guys show up late. I've had trucks sit there for an hour to two hours; I've got to pay the driver but there's not a load of concrete going to waste.

Talk about the quality difference you've seen so far.

From the standpoint of quality, it's increasing our quality from the fact that we're not sending back hot loads or a load that's been sitting there. The financial benefits are there for me as a business owner. We're now finding that we're able to get some mixes here that in small batches are able to go 'ok, at this site we're going to use this exposed rock, we're going to switch the mix design and use the same rock but go do something we can do a different type of finish on.' It's nice that we can sort of on-the-fly press a button and change the mix designs.

The saying "control your concrete" that's what we're doing. We're controlling it and we are able to offer our clients a really well-rounded service now on top of what we already do. We form, we place, we finish concrete and we supply it — ultimately we own the warranty on the whole scope of work and the quality can then fall under us. There's no pointing fingers, it's hey this company is able to offer all these services why wouldn't

someone go with us. There's no fingers that point at that point, right?

What has the local reaction been?

There's an excitement when people see the trucks, what is that, and then you press the button and the people are taking pictures. It's pretty funny. They're like 'what is this thing?' and i'm like 'well, you got all these dry materials and you press this button and out comes this concrete.' Yeah, it's awesome.

We're so excited to be the first in our area. I guess there was a company here years ago but we're the first in our area, we're the only company in our area to have these trucks here. The benefits, we haven't even scratched the surface of what we're going to be able to help people with.

