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Richmond Scale Ltd.

Ready to Roll

TradeRoute™ Legal for Trade onboard vehicle scales are the cornerstone of a Canadian junk collection business.

By Caleb Olson, editor

WHEN BARRY HARTMAN BROKE HIS ANKLE PLAYING COLLEGE SOCCER, HE WAS BED-RIDDEN FOR MONTHS. AT FIRST, HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH HIS TIME. Like a normal college student, he could have honed his video game skills, learned every line from "Animal House" or refined his tastes as a potato chip connoisseur. Instead, Barry did something abnormal. He worked on a business plan that would soon propel him and his future co-founder into the competitive world of professional junk collection.

Barry had a feeling he was onto something big, so he recruited Scott Foran, a Kwantlen Polytechnic University classmate, to join his team. Scott helped finish the business plan—one that would differentiate them from the dozens of existing junk collection companies. Together, they would create a modern, transparent, customer-focused enterprise built around onsite Legal for Trade weighments. Competitors charged based on volumetric approximations (such as half of a truckload). However, this approach is prone to subjective assessments, higher-than-estimated charges and customer dissatisfaction. Using weight for customers' junk provides a scientific, professional and verifiable method for straight-forward transactions. The only thing standing in Barry and Scott's path was one minor detail: they had no idea if a Legal for Trade onboard scale existed.

Unsure where to look, they hired a team at the university to conduct research, calculate operating costs and present the best options. They returned with only one product: Rice Lake's TradeRoute onboard weighing system. The only Legal for Trade onboard vehicle scale in North America, TradeRoute was a perfect prescription to bring their original vision into clear sight. Barry and Scott decided to build their company, 505-JUNK, on its sturdy, frame-hugging shoulders.

They contacted Scott Trewella, foreman with Richmond Scale Ltd. in Delta, British Columbia. He worked with a local truck equipment installer to integrate TradeRoute, then performed the calibration. "We went through every possible test to try to make it fail and we couldn't," Scott recalls. "We put it through front-back twisting and crazy pitches. The truck was almost tipping over and TradeRoute still worked. It returned to zero every time. TradeRoute's performance is amazing." TradeRoute was ready to roll.

505-JUNK was off to the races. Barry and Scott were sure their business would be successful, but it was not easy to break into a market dominated by big-named veterans. A modern company with a modern approach, 505-JUNK embraced social media marketing and search engine optimization (SEO). They made themselves easy to find amongst the sea of search results, as well as easy to book.

Customers liked the new approach to junk collection. "Charging based on weight is more transparent for the customer," Barry explains. "That makes their decision-making easier

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505-JUNK co-founders Scott Foran (left) and Barry Hartman (right) ride the roads of Vancouver, Canada with TradeRoute.

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when they're choosing whom to hire. It's an oversaturated market, so standing apart from the rest is huge. Our entire business model is built around transparency, honesty and trust. No matter what business you're in, customers appreciate that—but in this industry, it's especially refreshing because there is a lot of misdirection and questionable practice.”

With TradeRoute, 505-JUNK can leave the customer with a receipt, documenting the weight of the goods collected. Integrated into the system are Rice Lake's 920i® indicator/controller and a mobile printer, making for quick and easy transactions. The paperwork also helps Barry and Scott keep track of each pick-up, authenticating operations for their accounting and tracking reports.

Customers weren't the only ones taking note of the innovative new business. A local environmental auditing agency examined 505-JUNK, and concluded

TradeRoute reduced vehicle operating time by three hours per day, and almost one metric ton of emissions per month. TradeRoute not only saves on operating costs, but also reduces pollution, traffic congestion and wear-and-tear on the roads.

Operating in the greater Vancouver, Canada area, 505-JUNK embraces green initiatives, which are rapidly gaining traction in public awareness.

If recyclable or donate-able material is collected, they distribute it to appropriate recycling or donation centers. “They love that we're able to tell them specific weights of donations,” Barry explains. “It makes their jobs a lot easier.”

It wasn't always easy, though. “Before we had TradeRoute installed,” Scott remembers, “We ran a truck without an onboard scale, and we would use nearby truck scales. That presented a problem with donations and recycling because we couldn't easily get the weight of those materials. We had to go to the transfer station, take it

off the truck and put it back on, or we had to travel to more expensive transfer stations that had donation facilities onsite. It was wasteful on several levels. With TradeRoute, we can just lift it up, get the weight of the material, charge the customer onsite, take it straight to the donation facility and bypass everything that used to tie us down.”

By reducing operating costs, TradeRoute paid for itself in 12 months. It should outlast the truck, and can be transferred to a new vehicle when needed. The advantages seem to be endless, and the future is bright for 505-JUNK. “We're looking to expand our business model,” Scott explains. “The foundation is there with TradeRoute, and we also have the marketing tools in place to open new territories and grow the currently successful model.”

One thing is certain: the demand for junk removal is not going away. Most of us go through stages of collecting and purging,



Molten Metal

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TradeRoute's 920i indicator and built-in printer provide a complete mobile weighing solution, as well as documentation for customers and management.

not realizing the accumulating stockpile of knickknacks in the basement is creeping its way toward the ceiling. Barry remembers an unforgettable example of this reality, "An elderly woman's daughter hired us to clear everything out of their house, as her mother was moving to a nursing home. Our staff found \$2,000 cash and \$18,000 in uncashed checks, as well as an emerald, 18-carat gold engagement ring. We put everything in a sealed bag, and when it came to pay the bill, we presented her with not only the cash to pay for it, but also \$18,000 and the ring—which turned out to be her mom's original engagement ring."

Sometimes, it's not important what you take away. It's what you return. ■

Editor's note: Since capturing "Ready to Roll" for *Rice Lake Magazine*, 505-JUNK has placed a second TradeRoute-enabled vehicle into service, expanding their coverage in the greater Vancouver area.

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