



Panasonic

Auctioneer Ritchie Bros. Chooses the Toughpad FZ-G1 to Cut Operational Costs

The Client

Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers is an industrial auction company based in Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. Established in 1958, they're the world's largest auctioneer of used equipment for the construction, transportation, agriculture, and other industries. The company has operations in 19 countries, including 44 auction sites worldwide.

In 2015, Ritchie Bros. sold US\$4.25 billion of equipment, including US\$1.9 billion sold to online buyers.



The Challenge

A typical unreserved public auction involves managing thousands of inventory pieces. This requires handling data input, marketing and sales transactions with speed and agility. Initially, Ritchie Bros. used a series of manual processes to set up their auctions. From receiving and cataloguing inventory, publishing inventory photographs to the website and recording sales, their processes required multiple staff at different stages of data input. Their processes were labour intensive and exposed them to data entry error.

"As a company with such a high volume of inventory, we weren't being efficient," said Arne Nonneman, Program Manager, Inventory Information, Auction Operations. "With so many sales globally, we needed a solution to collect the data accurately and efficiently".



As a growing company in a global economy that's increasingly connected, it made no sense to continue to rely on costly and unreliable operational processes. Manual processes slowed them down while multiple data input and documentation points increased the chance for error.

Ritchie Bros. decided to streamline their operational processes by upgrading to a paperless system. To do that, they needed a solid, portable and highly connected hardware solution. Given their global presence with varying climates the solution would need to stand up to heat, cold, moisture, etc. It had to allow them to conduct auctions and serve their customers without any downtime.

The Solution

Ritchie Bros. evaluated several tablet manufacturers, but in the end, Panasonic's line of ruggedized tablets proved the best value for their needs. Their overall design, features, and price, along with Panasonic's extensive experience with ruggedized technology made them very attractive for the company's needs. And given Panasonic's global support network, Ritchie Bros. knew they would get the help they needed wherever they go.

"We're a global company," said Nonneman. "Everywhere where we do business, Panasonic can support us locally. That was another very big selling point for us".

Ritchie Bros. chose the Toughpad FZ-G1 and began developing an application to run their data collection platform on it. Its weight, battery life, advanced functions, and price made the FZ-G1 the perfect fit.



Field-tested and with a fully-rugged chassis, it could operate flawlessly in a variety of environmental conditions. And because screen brightness is crucial to the operational staff when working in difficult climates, the high brightness, daylight viewable screen made it perfect for working outdoors.

The Results

When a company's website is its most powerful marketing tool, it needs to operate with speed and rely on powerful technology. The Toughpad FZ-G1 has completely overhauled the way Ritchie Bros. collects equipment information. As soon as inventory is received, all of the pertinent documentation is inputted by one person, saving time and eliminating duplication of data. With this new streamlined process, each equipment item is uploaded quickly and gets maximum exposure on the company's website. In 2015, the company's operational staff processed more than 304,000 items.

Equally impressive are the cuts to operational costs. The company reports an estimated operational savings of about \$1M per year with a 30% ROI per year. Savings have also extended to paper and ink cartridge expenses, which has both a cost and environmental impact.



MOVING FORWARD

Ritchie Bros. continues to travel, often to remote locations, to conduct auctions to satisfy their customers' needs. In the rain, snow, heat or dust, they rely on the Toughpad FZ-G1 for all aspects of their yard operations.

They also take advantage of an open line of communication with Panasonic engineers by sending them ongoing feedback on the tablet's performance.

"Ritchie Bros. has an excellent relationship with Panasonic," said Nonneman. "We really appreciate their commitment to improve their products and we look forward to a successful long-term relationship."

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