

Canoe Forest Products Ltd. Gains Visibility and Control of Reporting and Inventory Across All Sites, with Azzier CMMS



Many industrial firms with dispersed plants struggle to achieve operational visibility into inventory, maintenance and storeroom management for their facilities. Such was the case for Canoe Forest Products.

Canoe has maintained a proud tradition of manufacturing quality plywood and veneer from sustainably managed forests at their mill in Canoe, British Columbia. Canoe Forest Products is part of the Gorman Group of companies which operates three mills in B.C., and a fourth mill in Oroville, Washington State that remanufactures and ships products for the U.S. market.

This operating complexity makes inventory management difficult, resulting in redundant inventory across multiple plants. In an effort to gain control of the inventory and reduce associated costs, Canoe had explored a variety of systems during its 50+ year history. After an in-house-developed solution proved too basic to meet its current needs, and other commercial offerings failed to impress, Canoe turned to Tero Consulting's Azzier CMMS/EAM.

Gaining Integrated Control

"We have about 10 different corporate systems, an inhouse payroll system for check writing and SAP for accounting," says Canoe Forest Products Maintenance Manager Gord Palmer. "We wanted an inventory order system that could send data straight to SAP."

What I really liked about Azzier is that it can be customized by us as opposed to having to go out and get someone.

—Gord Palmer
Canoe Forest Products Maintenance Manager

"We also wanted a good work order system that could link all our documents," Palmer continues. "Our old one had issues. It was so slow, and there were delays in the information going back and forth to the cloud. The preventive maintenance function was OK, but the options we needed just weren't there."

As a mature CMMS user, Canoe had established workflows and a lot of data they needed to manage and control. Management knew what they were looking for and was circumspect about any proposed solution due to its historical struggle with CMMS. The firm also wanted to engage in succession planning. "If someone walks in and views my work order system, I want them to be able to see what is happening," says Palmer.

After performing an exhaustive online search and "watching a lot of Internet webinars," Palmer says, the company had evaluated close to 150 programs. "We short listed 25 and narrowed it to five for which we requested more information," he continues. "We developed a series of questions, and Tero answered them in just the right way."

A Solution Emerges

As part of its Azzier presentation, the Tero team took Palmer and other Gorman Group representatives on a site visit to a Canadian brewery in British Columbia that was also an experienced Azzier client. "Tero set up a meeting with their Planner to explain what Azzier could do. He had been using Azzier for years and had been able to make it do a lot for him," says Palmer.

"I saw that once we got parts, inventory and equipment into the system, we'd be able to cut down on our inventory because we didn't have to keep everything at every mill," says Palmer. "If you need one \$20,000 item, you don't have to have one at each mill and that saves money."



After learning about Azzier and its flexibility, and seeing it in action, Canoe was sold. “What I really liked about Azzier is that it can be customized by us as opposed to having to go out and get someone,” Palmer continues. “The reporting, the screens, the print forms... we can modify ourselves. We don’t have to pay someone to do every little thing every time we want to make a change. I can make it look any way I want. It is really easy and straightforward to use.”

Using a phased approach, Tero would deploy Azzier for Canoe as well as Downie Timber Ltd., the firm’s finished board operation. A third project, custom integration between Azzier and Canoe’s SAP deployment, would take place concurrently.

In July 2019, Tero hosted an introductory training on Azzier for personnel at the Canoe mill, which was followed with end user training at the Canoe facility in October 2019. Tero’s Azzier experts engaged in several months of data collection and analysis, populating the Azzier database and giving Canoe personnel the chance to use it in a test environment before being rolled out to production.

Azzier probably saves my supervisors eight hours a week from where we were.

—Gord Palmer
Canoe Forest Products Maintenance Manager

New Solution; New Era

“The rollout of Azzier was good,” says Palmer, “and startup was almost painless.” He also applauds the time savings, which he says have been considerable. “Our inventory is in SAP and we had an add-on program that tracked it with a work order off to the side. With Azzier, we have inventory, purchasing and the work order done in one system. So, we’re saving the purchaser a day a week.”

All of my people find Azzier easy to use, and it gives us everything we need.

—Gord Palmer
Canoe Forest Products Maintenance Manager

“Azzier probably saves my supervisors eight hours a week from where we were,” Palmer continues. “Before Azzier, laying out and prioritizing the plant schedule and generating work orders for the weekend took more than a day and things always changed on Friday nights,” he says, speaking of weekend production. “Now, they layout the schedule and prioritize it in a couple of hours, so each of my guys has work orders for the weekend. With this system, we can make changes in 15 minutes.”

“We are integrating our safety program, CorePoint, with Azzier, as well,” Palmer concludes. “When we do a safety tour and there is an action item about something that needs to be repaired, like a machine guard, the inspector will put the request into CorePoint, and it will communicate with Azzier.”

“All of my people find Azzier easy to use, and it gives us everything we need.”

About Canoe Forest Products Limited

Canoe Forest Products Ltd. (CFP), a proud member of the Gorman Group of Companies, produces superior quality Canadian softwood sheathing and specialty plywood products under the trademark CANOE brand®. Since 1965, the CANOE brand® has distinguished itself as a premium quality plywood panel that is well recognized and valued throughout the world.

CANOE brand®
Canoe Forest Products

