

HFI Thought They Were a “High B” at Workforce Planning. They Were a Low C. Now They're an A.



“We thought we were a high B. We were actually a low C. Now we're definitely an A — and the productivity lift shows up year after year, in a market where productivity is falling.”

— Kyle Livingston, Vice President of Operations, Harrell-Fish Inc.

THE CHALLENGE

For a 40-year-old mechanical contractor scaling 6x to 600+ field workers across four Indiana offices and a 35,000-square-foot fab shop, the most dangerous problem is the one that hides behind **“we have good communication.”** At Harrell-Fish, labor coordination ran on what Kyle Livingston calls **“a lot of song and dance”** — phone calls passed down a chain from VP to general superintendent to foreman to apprentice, with every detail re-translated at each link. The cost wasn't always visible. **“That miss of that one man, that one apprentice going to the wrong job that morning,”** Kyle says, **“that's a dollar a minute. It equates to hundreds of dollars.”** When HFI graded its own labor planning honestly, the team thought they were a **“high B.”** They were actually a low C.

OUR SOLUTION

With RIVET, HFI moved from a low C to an A — and the productivity lift shows up year after year, in a market where productivity is falling. The dispatch chain went from phone-chain song-and-dance to one app pushing every detail to a worker's cell phone: job site, who's there, what background they need, what certifications matter. Field Operations leader Michael Bruner runs daily labor moves out of the Bloomington area without ever logging into the ERP. And HFI does something most contractors don't even attempt: pairing young apprentices with the right foremen intentionally — using job history and skill tags on each worker to make development decisions, not just dispatch decisions. **“It's all about our people,”** Kyle says. **“The tool allows us to train them and bring them up.”**

ROADBLOCKS

Adoption wasn't painful, but it required commitment. **“You had to do it, and you had to keep it up to date,”** Mike says of the early days. The reward was the visibility that exposed the gap between where HFI thought they were and where the bar actually is — the same realization Kyle says he sees in every contractor that gets honest visibility for the first time.

RESULTS SNAPSHOT

Low C → A

self-rated workforce planning grade

100 → 600+

field workers in 16 years

Productivity up

year-over-year in a falling market

Intentional pairing

apprentices placed with right foremen

1 app

replaced phone-chain song-and-dance

COMPANY OVERVIEW



INDUSTRY

Mechanical Contractor — HVAC, Plumbing, Fabrication

HEADQUARTERS

Bloomington, IN — Indianapolis, Evansville, Fort Wayne

FIELD WORKERS

600+ field, 150 office, 20+ VDC team

INTEGRATIONS

ERP integration (Field Operations runs without entering accounting)

Watch the full interview ▼

