

## Union Contractor Experiences Double-Digit Growth with GPS: The ElectraComm Services Story

### **ElectraComm Services, Inc.**

**Company Name:**

ElectraComm Services, Inc.

**Location:**

Frederick, MD

**Industry:**

Electrical Contractor

**Fleet Size:**

10

**Customer Since:**

2007

In 2004, Jennifer and Glenn King founded their own electrical contracting business, ElectraComm Services Inc. They have grown steadily over three years doing commercial electrical work (*no residential*), covering a service area of Maryland, northern Virginia and Washington DC with a fleet of 10 service trucks. Glenn came from a union shop background, and the Kings decided to make their company a union shop as well, affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (*IBEW*).

“The union is important to us because we believe in worker’s rights,” Jennifer King said. “But it comes with the union territory that it’s very expensive to keep workers in the field at all, since their pay and benefits are going to be higher than in non-union shops. So anywhere and everywhere we can save money is critical for us.”

They decided to look into GPS technology because they had heard from colleagues that it saved money by reducing overtime payments and fuel expenses. In addition to this, they let employees take the vehicles home each night, and discovered that some of their people were driving their kids around in company vehicles – “which would be a major liability issue for us should anything happen.”

“Of course, when we told our guys about the system, they weren’t happy about it at first,” King recalled. “But we explained to them we needed to know where our vehicles were for insurance and security purposes – and so that we could give our customers accurate information.” The employees who protested “turned out to be the ones doing things with our vehicles during off hours they shouldn’t have been doing.”

It’s commonly assumed that unions and GPS tracking systems don’t mix, but the Kings take a different view on the subject. “The unions don’t have any rules in place prohibiting these systems,” said King, “and more and more union shops are allowing them because of safety and security considerations. Also, it’s a tool that can confirm work is being done as easily as it exposes when work isn’t. In the end, it’s good for both the workers and the company that uses it.”

### **Business challenges ElectraComm faced:**

- **Unauthorized usage of company vehicles** – ElectraComm had employees that were using company vehicles for their own purposes, be they side jobs, personal social activities or even bringing kids to and from school. “We don’t mind if our guys want to stop for coffee or whatever,” King explained, “but we can’t have them running all over for their own reasons with our vehicles. It costs us too much, it’s that simple.”
- **Unnecessary insurance fees** – The Kings’ insurance company requires them to report on where their vehicles are parked at night, and use that information to determine their fees. If they provide inaccurate information, they could be vulnerable to additional charges.
- **Safety and liability concerns** – One of ElectraComm’s employees was caught running a red light in a company vehicle at 4:00 AM in downtown Washington, and this incident triggered the owners’ concerns over both safety for their drivers, and liability for their company. “Once we realized this type of thing was going on, it became literally hard to sleep at night,” said King.
- **Inability to provide customers with accurate information** – “Customers call us all the time asking where our technician is and when he’s going to arrive. Having to tell them you’ll call them back, hanging up and trying to find a guy on his cell phone just isn’t professional,” King admitted. “It’s frustrating for us and for the people we’re trying to do business with.”
- **Union rules and regulations** – Jennifer and Glenn King are committed to the union they’re members of, but they’re also realistic about the restrictions it imposes on business owners. “The union took care of us, and we’re committed to passing those same benefits on to our people. But, each truck costs us between \$40-50,000, and we feel we have a right to protect those assets. It’s about security and liability, not watching our techs’ every move.”

“Our profits have jumped nearly 15% in one year since we put in the Navtrak system... we knew we would become more efficient, but we had no idea what a deep impact it would have on our operation. It’s been truly amazing.”

**-Jennifer King**

Vice President  
ElectraComm Services, Inc.

## Driving Business Success

## Benefits Navtrak has delivered:

- **Improved reputation/"better sleep"** – The Kings noticed an immediate difference in the way their company was viewed once they installed Navtrak – by both internal and external people. "I think people think differently about us now, because we can give them exact information over the phone. Our customers love that. And as owners, we definitely get better sleep at night thanks to Navtrak, just knowing where our trucks are and where they've been."
- **10% increase in sales/14% in profits** – In the first year that they've been using Navtrak, ElectraComm has seen sales increase by 10% and profits jump from 4% to 17% - despite actually losing a few employees. King puts it bluntly: "That jump in profits is absolutely and directly attributable to having installed Navtrak. We know the time our guys are putting in on the job, our guys now know that we're using it and know we expect the right thing to happen. The work is getting done faster, and we're increasing our productivity simply by being more efficient. We couldn't be more excited about what the GPS system has done for us."
- **ROI within first two months of use** – King noted that the Navtrak system paid for itself within the first two months of use, through a reduction in overtime payments and increased jobs getting done per day. And she said that even though ElectraComm is paying each month for several vehicles they're not using right now, their profits have still increased through this improvement in efficiency. "We knew some good things were going to happen, but this kind of jump in profitability really surprised us."
- **Increased protection for union workers** – It may seem counterintuitive, but the Kings have actually learned how using a GPS tracking system can be an aid to their union workers. "For one thing, union members are required to take lunches and breaks, but sometimes if they're working with foremen who don't allow for them it can cause conflicts. We can check our records and make sure they are taking the breaks owed them," said King. The system also provides a way to disprove false accident and liability claims, they said, which the union appreciates.

To sum up, ElectraComm is having the most profitable year they've had since going into business, and the Kings cite their investment in Navtrak as a major factor in their success. "We had some rough spots when we first installed the GPS, mostly due to misconceptions about how we'd use it," Jennifer King explained. "But we worked through this and I think our people realize now what it's done for us. It's paid for itself, and we've never been more successful than we are now. What more can we ask for?"

### Navtrak: The Proven Remedy for Mobile Workforce Headaches

All organizations with mobile workforces contend with "headaches" that limit productivity and reduce profits. If any of the following pain points is an issue for your business, be sure to read the corresponding case study (available at [www.navtrak.net](http://www.navtrak.net)) to learn how Navtrak provides the cure!

- Excessive overtime costs:  
*The Bug Doctor story*
- Insufficient knowledge of vehicle location/activity:  
*The Sunshine Paving story*
- Inaccurate dispatching:  
*The Choptank Electric story*
- Security and liability concerns:  
*The J.H. Peterson story*
- Inaccurate tracking of vehicles:  
*The Boucher Real Estate story*
- Inefficient delivery practices:  
*The Somerset Food Service story*

For more information on how Navtrak can "heal" your mobile workforce headaches, contact your local Navtrak salesperson today, or email us at [sales@navtrak.net](mailto:sales@navtrak.net).

## GPS-Based Management Tools for Businesses with Mobile Workforces