

# The BID Group leveraged Vuforia Chalk to streamline service and improve the customer experience

## Service with speed

In the industrial maintenance and repair landscape, augmented reality (AR) is transforming aftermarket services unlike any other technology. Many manufacturers are turning to AR to help their customers unlock value and achieve key business outcomes like improved first time fix rate, reduced mean time to repair, and decreased downtime.

The BID Group, a sawmill industry expert and leading supplier of wood processing machinery, is an example of a company that successfully leveraged AR technology to expand their aftermarket services, improve the customer experience, and equip their employees with collaborative tools to improve workflow.

## Accelerating time to problem resolution

Following on the heels of an expansive enterprise-wide IIoT transformation, BID recognized the opportunity to take their operations to the next level by improving their customer service offerings. Previously, BID service experts relied on traditional service methods like phone calls, text messaging, and emails to address customer issues. Those methods, however, mandated multiple exchanges of photos and written communications, leading to longer wait times. "The old-fashioned way of talking over the phone and describing things doesn't work because the visual piece is very important for solving the problem quickly," said Hugo Patenaude, BID Service Manager. Patenaude and his team knew there had to be a better way.

Confident in the value of AR technology, BID decided to use PTC's Vuforia Chalk to improve communication during service calls. Chalk is an out-of-the-box remote assistance and collaboration tool that helps service technicians provide accurate and precise service and repair instructions to customers in real-time, wherever and whenever needed.



Customers simply downloaded the Chalk app and connected with BID service experts in real time to troubleshoot problems. By combining real-time audio and video with AR technology, Chalk allowed the service expert to view the end-customer's equipment and annotate directly onto the screen. Because the tool's digital annotations were powered by AR, they could "stick" to the location on which they were drawn, helping the customer complete the steps to resolution more quickly. "Using Chalk was a no-brainer for providing better visuals and tools to support the customer and help them in an easier way," said Patenaude.

The results were clear: Patenaude's service department achieved faster problem resolution and decreased downtime. With Chalk, customers with all levels of technical capabilities and backgrounds could work seamlessly with BID technicians to solve their problems quickly. The true business value of using Chalk was more than just a great customer benefit—when customer problems were resolved faster, BID could service a higher volume of customers and drive revenue without sacrificing quality.

## Empowering frontline service teams

A key benefit of using Chalk is that it's more than just a way to connect with customers—it's also a powerful tool for service technicians to connect with one another during service calls. In BID's case, for example, local field service technicians often traveled to the customer for maintenance or repairs. Using Chalk, the on-site technician connected with a remote expert for guidance if they encountered unknown problems that they couldn't resolve on their own.

In a recent example, BID's research and development team, stationed in Canada, was unable to travel to a US-based customer due to COVID-19 restrictions. Instead, they sent a local mechanical service technician to the customer's facility and equipped him with Chalk pre-loaded on a RealWear headset. Despite having minimal experience on that particular piece of equipment, the on-site technician was able to work through the maintenance process completely hands-free with the help of remote service experts. After the repair, the on-site technician confirmed Chalk's ease of use, explaining that "it helped to see the critical areas that needed to be examined and to have an expert explain everything I needed to know about the machine, as if someone was right there beside me."

Chalk helped frontline workers gain access to the valuable expertise of BID's subject matter experts, regardless of location and previous technical experience. The ability to scale expertise using Chalk helped improve workforce productivity and efficiency, and with its intuitive user interface and "over-the-shoulder" collaboration capabilities, it has been extremely beneficial for helping new hires learn on the job. In a time when remote work is quickly becoming commonplace, Chalk can even help reduce or eliminate the need for travel altogether, saving the associated expenses and ensuring the safety of customers and employees.



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**Hugo Patenaude,**  
*BID Service Manager*

### **Driving continued growth and looking to the future**

The shift toward AR has been huge for how BID thinks about customer satisfaction. “PTC’s AR technology is transformational for how we approach the overall aftermarket service opportunity,” says Steven Hofer, BID Executive Vice President, Strategy and Business Development. Hofer notes that the addition of Chalk into their service portfolio has allowed BID customers to receive faster, more accurate fixes that keep their equipment working in better condition for longer periods of time.

The ability to feel both empowered and supported is just one aspect of what makes so many of their customers a loyal part of the BID family. As AR technology continues to change the way they work, BID is now exploring additional ways to leverage similar PTC technologies to elevate workforce productivity and provide the best experience to their customers. BID originated as a company with core values around world-class customer service—and as they continue building a world-class business, AR technology is helping them stay true to those values for years to come.

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