

# USG Boral utilizes on AT&T IoT Services to deliver construction innovation to its customers

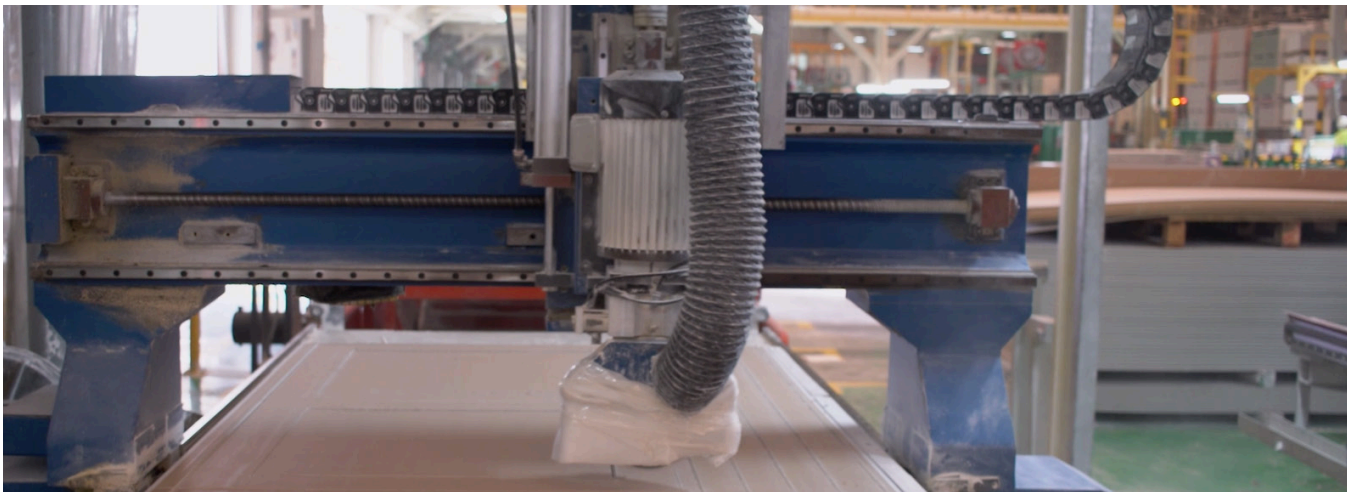
- **Business needs** - Building products manufacturer USG Boral wanted to track its seafreight loading chassis (SLCs). These rolling steel platforms can be secured within the containers the company uses to ship its products around the world.
- **Networking solution** - AT&T Business worked with local providers to deliver an IoT solution that reliably tracks SLCs to help protect USG Boral's valuable assets.
- **Business value** - Helps increase savings, operational efficiency, customer service.
- **Industry focus** - Gypsum building product manufacturing and distribution
- **Size** - 3,500 employees in 13 countries

## About USG Boral

USG Boral is a leading manufacturer and supplier of gypsum-based wall and ceiling lining systems, mineral fiber acoustical ceiling systems, metal framing, joint compounds, and high-performance panels and accessories. The company formed in 2014 as a joint venture of Boral Limited and USG Corporation. It's headquartered in Singapore with sales offices and facilities throughout Asia, Australia, and the Middle East.

## The situation

USG Boral uses rolling steel platforms called seafreight loading chassis (SLCs) to ship its products within Australia and to New Zealand. The equipment was difficult to track manually. That often led to missing and underutilized assets. USG Boral wanted to replace its manual tracking with an accurate, automated system.



## Solution

The customer's AT&T Business account team worked with the AT&T IoT and consulting groups to create a solution that tracks USG Boral's SLCs in near-real time. This helped reduce the customer's operating expenses. It helps—

- Reduce the cost of replacing lost equipment
- Free up staff that previously manually tracked SLCs
- Estimate when deliveries will arrive
- Streamline operational logistics
- Enhance customer service
- Line up a ready-to-go supply of SLCs to fulfill customer orders

## Delivering value through construction-product innovation

USG Boral produces a range of building products, including plasterboard ceiling tiles and suspension systems, metal framing, joint compounds, and industrial plasters. The company operates manufacturing sites across China, Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam,

India, and Malaysia. It also has a production facility in Saudi Arabia and a plaster plant and gypsum mine in Oman.

Calvin Ng, Senior IT Director of Group Infrastructure and Cybersecurity for USG Boral, said they serve diverse markets. "From a customer perspective," he said, "we have architects/designers, developers/building owners, contractors, specialized resellers, retailers and distributors. And ultimately, from a residential perspective, the homeowners."

The company focuses on providing value for customers through its innovative products. "We have an ever-growing portfolio of groundbreaking products backed by unparalleled service and technical know-how," Ng said. "We help our customers work smarter, do more, and build better."

## New ways to engage and support customers

Doing business in more than a dozen countries can be difficult at times for a customer-focused company like USG Boral. "Getting our message across to all the

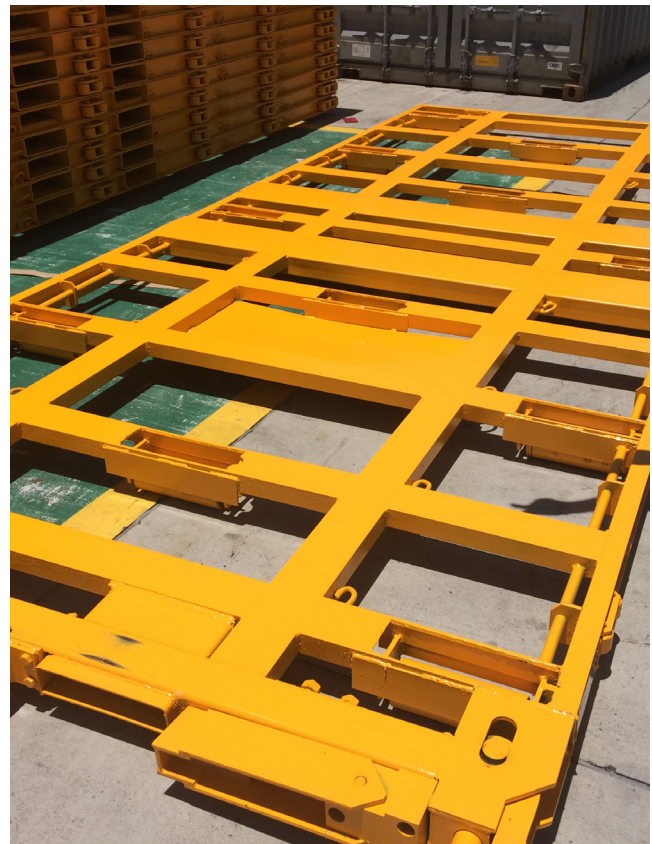
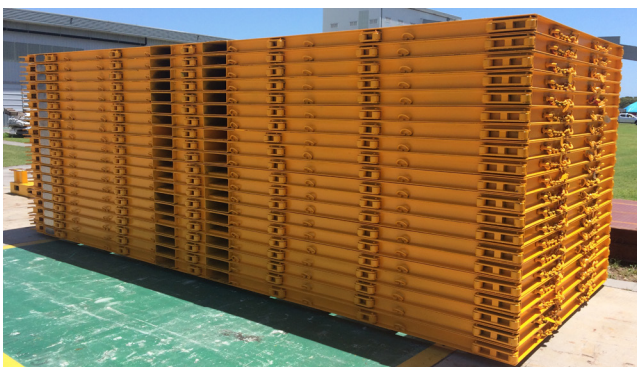
players in the market is a challenge,” Ng said. “We’re probably talking about 30+ locations in different countries, including the plants.”

Cultural and language barriers can create additional difficulties. And the needs and requirements of customers in one segment differ greatly from those in others. The company is always looking for better ways to engage and support its customers. It’s all part of their bigger vision of people living and working in buildings that are safe, healthy, comfortable, and beautiful.

“At the end of the day, we are in business because of our customers,” Ng said. “So, that’s always an area of focus that we’re really driving to improve.”

## A better way to track valuable assets

The company owns hundreds of SLCs—the flat steel platforms on rollers that fit 40’ shipping containers. They use these to deliver their plasterboard and other building products to Australia and New Zealand. The SLCs are loaded onto ships and then transferred to a truck or freight train for delivery. In the process, they are sometimes left at sites or forgotten in customer yards.



“Our customers’ locations can be quite a distance from the ports,” Ng said. “So the ability to track the sea-loading chassis (SLCs) is important for us. We lacked that ability. It led to poor utilization and having to purchase additional units.”

The replacement cost for a lost SLC unit is about \$5,000. What’s more, the company could incur charges for canceling or postponing a shipment because it didn’t have enough available SLCs.

Staff tried using spreadsheets to track the equipment. It was time-consuming and inaccurate. They needed a reliable way to see the location of the SLCs at any time and receive alerts if the equipment were taken outside pre-defined zones (such as its manufacturing plants). Such tracking could also create efficiencies within its business production line.

## Better inventory control, significant ROI

USG Boral worked with AT&T Business to create a tracking solution for their SLCs. The customer's AT&T account team teamed with AT&T IoT and Consulting groups to develop the possible solution to help address the customer's needs.

The project was complicated due to the diverse locations and custom solution requirements. The team from AT&T Business explored various vendors that could support the customer's needs. "We're now able to track each and every individual unit easily and with accuracy," Ng said. "It helps our business by increasing the equipment utilization, because now we know where it is. Equipment loss has been greatly minimized, as have lost customer orders due to unavailable SLCs."

The solution includes staging and testing of an industrial tracking device, GSM (Global System for



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Mobile Communications) SIM connectivity, access to an online tracking and reporting portal, and help desk support—all via the solution developed by AT&T Business. What's more, AT&T Business developed a customized report that lets USG Boral extract the data they need from a single dashboard.

"Customized reports helped us reduce the cost of reentry," Ng said. "They also helped improve our customer service by knowing exactly how many units we have and where are we shipping them. This solution AT&T Business helped create has been a great help to us. With the ability to track the device ourselves, we are basically able to stop buying hundreds of SLCs. That provided direct savings to the organization."

## A long-standing alliance

The IoT tracking solution is the latest in a series of deployments AT&T Business has provided for USG Boral. AT&T Business currently manages most of the company's network services and infrastructure across Asia Pacific. It also supplies managed WAN acceleration devices and private cloud connectivity into an Australian provider's data center.

There's more. USG Boral uses AT&T Business for MPLS connectivity via the AT&T Virtual Private Network Service. They get their internet via the AT&T Dedicated Internet Global. AT&T Business also supplies managed colocation and hosting services within 2 Asia-Pacific data centers, as well as remote-hands service for tape backup changes.

Additionally, USG Boral relies on AT&T Business to manage its firewalls, LAN switches, remote access services, and internet security, and a security help desk. The company has recently started using AT&T Managed Threat Detection and Response. They continue to use several AT&T consulting services.

"We've been working with AT&T since the mid-2000s," Ng said. "It has been a very good relationship. The reason we selected AT&T Business is its market presence and ability to offer us the solution across the countries in which we operate."



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## A platform to support speed and agility

USG Boral appreciates the strong relationship it's built with AT&T Business. "One of the things I value is the in-depth understanding of our entire architecture," Ng said. "AT&T has the ability to look at the data and provide sound solutions to us."

His experience with his account team and project managers has been very positive. "I see AT&T as a reliable and dependable service provider that I would recommend to my peers," he said. "I think one of the biggest benefits is the expertise AT&T Business brings to the table. It's gives us a platform to be more agile."