



BILL HORST AUCTIONS

A LIVE AUCTIONEER DISCOVERS THE POWER OF AUCTIONTIME

“Oh my gosh, it’s really taken off way beyond my expectations.” So says longtime auctioneer Bill Horst, who had been doing only live sales until late 2019 when he decided to give AuctionTime a try.

AND THEN CAME 2020.

“I had 13 (live) spring auctions booked—good quality farm auctions—for March and April, and a couple in May,” Horst says. But when the lockdown happened, that number of upcoming sales plummeted to zero. “They were either cancelled or postponed,” Horst

says, but “about four of those I actually sold their equipment online with great success. All were pleased with the outcome and I don’t believe the equipment would have brought any more money through a live auction than they did being sold through AuctionTime.”

ADAPTING TO CONDITIONS

Doing business as Bill Horst Auctions since 1994, and with help from his son Justin and the rest of his family, Horst has built a reputation for hard work, honesty, and

exceptional customer service. But with gatherings restricted to just 100 people in southwestern Ontario around his hometown of Millbank, his typical 300- to 400-person live sales simply wouldn’t have been able to match their usual level of success. And so, since April, Horst has sold about 140 items on AuctionTime, including a 2015 John Deere 8320R tractor in May for \$162,300 USD and a 2013 Case IH 8230 combine for \$114,000 USD.

“Last week we sold a 2008 AGCO RT100 tractor. It fetched at least \$5,000 USD more



than I expected,” Horst says. “I talked to a couple dealerships and they said it sold for more than retail.” Horst also sold an air seeder for a profit on Pre-AuctionTime two hours before it went to auction. The platform has demonstrated its international reach by calls from the Philippines and winning bids coming in from the Netherlands and Russia.

“My experience with AuctionTime so far has been great,” Horst says. “It took probably about a year to get me on board, because I wanted to make sure it’s the right thing for me. Then I did realize, you know what? The world is changing.”

INVESTING FOR SUCCESS

Horst credits Sandhills representative Scott Earnest for giving him the push he needed to pivot his business online during the pandemic and become a Featured Auctioneer. “It was perfect timing,” Horst says. “Scott and I, it took a little bit, but man, we work well

together. We are a team, and we understand each other, so I’m really pleased with Scott.”

Earnest also encouraged Horst to expand his Canadian print advertising “about ten times,” Horst says with a chuckle. “In MarketBook, Scott was the one that spent a whole lot of my money on back pages, center pages, and full pages, and boy, has that been the best thing. It took me a while, and I thought, ‘Scott, you’re spending my money!’ Oh, man. That was a turning point for me, absolutely, because in my area the MarketBook and AuctionTime books are in every local business, right, so potential customers see them. And if they’re doing that, they know you’re doing business.”

One of Horst’s full-page ads inspired a pair of local brothers to give him a call. Horst ended up selling 13 tractors for them in a single day.

“MarketBook has really helped to get my name out there, because I had just started

[doing online auctions], but boy, do they know me now,” Horst says. “They knew me before as an onsite auctioneer but now I’m really getting well-known through AuctionTime selling online. And like I say, there have been no regrets.”

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Horst also appreciates being able to use Sandhills’ asset valuation tool FleetEvaluator on his mobile phone, so he can tell potential customers in the field what their equipment might bring on AuctionTime. “I think it’s a great tool, absolutely. Now, on the other hand, that’s not always the price, right? But it gives you a really good idea.”

Despite all of his newfound success online, Horst looks forward to the day when he can get back to doing live auction sales again as well. “But am I going to keep pushing AuctionTime and working even harder at it?” he asks. “Absolutely.”