

Pre-owned Bell fleet delivers productivity for Kalesa Logistics

A firm belief that a certain brand of earthmoving equipment can be reliable despite its pre-owned status, with its affordability a welcome bonus, has led a Zambian contract miner and plant hire owner to not buy new equipment at all.

Mark Swanepoel was born in Lusaka, Zambia but lived in South Africa too where his father, Corrie, ran his own plant hire company, Swan Plant. By the time Corrie retired Mark had learnt a lot about contract mining and plant hire from his father, and felt confident to go it alone, albeit in the country of his birth.

“I started Kalesa Logistics in Lusaka in 2012 but our work for a variety of clients is spread right across Zambia and the Copperbelt,” Mark says. “We tend to concentrate on mining and plant hire and some of our equipment works in agriculture too, especially where land preparation is called for.”

“A typical site would be like the one outside Ndola where we mine lime for clients in what can be described as a complete quarry management contract,” he continues. “Having being granted a five-year contract gives one financial space to invest in earthmoving equipment and, to do this effectively, I’ve been fortunate to establish a solid relationship with Bell Equipment Zambia at their Customer Service Centre in Kitwe.”

Quarry management at this particular operation sees Kalesa Logistics offer drill, blast and load and haul services and deploy Bell 850J Dozers and Bell B40D Articulated Dump Trucks. “Our philosophy from the outset has been that we’re happy for the first owners of the equipment to pay the premiums and when they’ve benefitted from the initial production hours of the machines, we in turn gain benefits too by acquiring the machines through a reputable OEM such as Bell Equipment who won’t sell us machines not worthy of the proven and legendary marque,” he says.

According to Mark, Bell Equipment resells this equipment that other customers have traded in on new machines, and after minor refurbishments, replacement of consumables and some touch-up of the body paintwork,

the pre-owned Bell machines are good to go. “I’ve established a solid working relationship with both John Fleetwood and Brad Castle at Bell Kitwe, and with Bell Equipment selling these machines at competitive prices I can certainly get more machines for my money,”

Kalesa Logistics’ most recent acquisitions have been 10 Bell B40D and 10 Bell B45D ADTs that have been added to a fleet of Bell B30D and B35D ADTs, Bell 850J Dozers and a Bell HD2045 Excavator.

“As far as the benchmark for a solid, reliable production machine is concerned, you can’t beat any of the Bell ADTs we run,” he adds. Kalesa Logistics’ operators are encouraged to take care of their machines with a bonus incentive scheme.

The company also employs 12 maintenance personnel who assist with daily checks, minor repairs, preventative maintenance and in-field servicing.

Mark is adamant that Bell Equipment’s large footprint in Zambia and quick response times are a boost to any owner of yellow machines. “I have mentioned the names of John Fleetwood and Brad Castle as making a difference in getting us good deals but they also ensure that our downtime on repairs is kept to a minimum,” Mark says. “We can also bank on superior back-up in far-flung places like Kalambila, which is north of Solwezi and close to the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and here we rely on Owen Hundermark from the Bell Customer Service Centre in Solwezi.”

“We’re pretty confident that we can run our fleet of pre-owned Bell machines to high hours before rebuilds become necessary and at the end of the day buying affordable yet reliable equipment, such as that which Bell Equipment offers, brings our clients back for more.”



Chanda Chikunga (Kalesa Logistics’ Operations Manager) with Brad Castle, Bell Equipment Sales Representative from Bell Kitwe.