

Expanding Bell fleet helps All Pro Construction diversify its business

What would a former professional rugby player and an erstwhile stockbroker have in common? Would it most likely be their love of rugby, hunting or perhaps a passion for business opportunities in the competitive world of hiring out earthmoving machines to mining and construction companies?

If the latter was your answer, you'd be correct but their common passion is much more than just another plant hire company.

Former stockbroker Carel Brink is a chartered management accountant but years within the Johannesburg corporate world only fuelled his dream of being self-employed. His investment company is always on the lookout for diversified business opportunities and this saw him start a company in 2006 that hired out 10-cubic metre tipper and ready-mix concrete trucks to a captive market. "This business did well for us but we realised that should we want to grow it further, we'd need

an experienced driver with passion for the business to take us forward," he says.

Enter André van Niekerk, a former professional rugby player who did well with the Cats and Lions franchises. André had run his own plant-hire and bulk earthworks company before the world economic downturn in 2008. "When Carel and I got together in 2012, we started All Pro Construction as a subsidiary of Carel's existing transport company, Aura Management Services," he says. "Our aim was to find exposure to the mining and bulk earthworks industries and for this, we needed yellow machines as opposed to the tipper and ready-mix concrete trucks he had run up to that point."

André had enjoyed an appreciation of yellow machines designed, built and sold by Bell Equipment and when it came to haulage vehicles for their fledgling company, it was to the Richards Bay based company that the business partners turned.



Pictured from left: Kobus van Niekerk (Bell Sales Representative), Carel Brink (Managing Director, All Pro Construction) and André van Niekerk (Director: All Pro Construction).



"On the strength of my earlier experience with Bell Tractor Loader Backhoes (TLBs), we first bought four Bell B18D Articulated Dump Trucks (ADTs) and followed that up with two pre-owned Bell B35D ADTs," he says. "Bell Equipment builds the best ADTs on the market and their fuel efficiency and high mechanical availability makes them sought after machines, especially from many of our clients who specify Bell ADTs in scope-of-work documents."

All Pro Construction's fleet of yellow machines has grown steadily and now includes two Bell 315SG and 315SK TLBs and a Bell HD1430 Excavator as well.

"We're in a growth phase now and we're seeing our equipment used in a diversified range of applications such as bulk earthworks, construction, general plant hire and hard rock mining," André adds. "This helps to spread the risk and shows banks that we don't have all our eggs in one basket. We were keen to get exposure to coal mining as well and that is why we decided to add three Bell B25E 6x4 Supertrucks to our fleet in early 2016."

The Bell B25E 6x4 Supertruck has the same 24 000kg payload and engine performance as the standard Bell B25E and, coupled with the typical ADT layout but with a 6x4 drivetrain and 20.5R25 tyres, it is designed to deliver a substantial cost saving. This has quickly become evident to All Pro Construction's owners and its clients as the Bell B25E Supertrucks deliver constantly lower cost per tonne with frugal fuel burn figures of around 10 litres an hour.

"Having Carel, with all his knowledge and experience in matters financial, as our principal is a huge advantage and he has taught us the value of watching our overheads closely," André says. "This is why we buy all our new Bell haulage vehicles with extended warranties to 8 000 hours and in doing so, have all maintenance done by Bell Equipment, so avoiding having to appoint our own maintenance staff. Bell Equipment's excellent Fleetm@tic® system also shows us exactly how our equipment is used."

All Pro Construction sees this as a move to guarantee uptime and mechanical availability to the advantage of its customers and further extending the first life of a machine to hours beyond what was originally planned for. Experience has also taught the company that the sustained uptime that their Bell machines deliver, makes for building solid reputations in a competitive market and brings repeat business from reputable customers who don't hesitate in settling monthly invoices.

"We've found Bell Equipment to be a very approachable company with a consistent open-door policy, be it the managing director, sales representative or product support representative," Carel says. "We get the impression by the assistance and advice we've been given that Bell Equipment firstly knows what our business is all about. The fact that they care about it too is a priceless asset to us as fleet owners of their great products."