

High uptime keeps Mafoko Brothers' Bell machines in demand

Imagine that you, as a plant hire owner, buy a machine and you never see it in your yard again. If this sounds far-fetched you'd better believe it as this is what a growing plant hire company in Mafikeng is experiencing with some of their most recently acquired equipment.

Benny and Victor Mafoko make up Mafoko Brothers, a construction and plant hire company that was started in 2005. Their target market lies mainly in and surrounding their home town of Mafikeng and they work as far away as Danielskuil in the Northern Cape with their client base being mostly emerging contractors and local municipalities.

"When we first started our fleet consisted mainly of tipper trucks, but by 2010 we realised that we needed a multipurpose loading tool such as a tractor loader backhoe," Benny Mafoko tells us in their neatly appointed offices on the outskirts of Mafikeng. "We scouted the

market and noticed that a Bell 315SJ 4x4 TLB was much more competitively priced than many similar opposition machines and although we weren't that familiar with the Bell brand, we still bought the machine."

They took delivery of their first Bell 315SJ TLB in March of that year and by December of the same year, the demand from their plant hire customers was such that they had no hesitation in buying a second similar machine.

"Our growing client base has been encouraged by the fact that we supply them with new machines that deliver much better uptime than what they are used to and this results in longer contracts and repeat business for us," Benny says. "Ever since buying our first Bell 315SJ TLB we've never looked back."

On rare occasions when their Bell TLBs are not out on contract, they are used to load sand and other

building material that Mafoko Brothers sell into the local construction market. They also buy in building bricks from as far away as Potchefstroom to sell locally.

By 2014 the demand for the Mafoko Brothers' machines had grown even more and clients were asking for bigger machines, similar to a Bell HD1430 Excavator they had bought on the pre-owned market in 2011. Having attained a Level 5 CIDB-grading and with a solid business plan in hand, they were able to apply for a Department of Trade and Industry grant whereby once successful, the Department would pay 50% of the purchase price excluding the VAT, on a new piece of earthmoving equipment.

"You may imagine that this grant is a huge help for us as we had budgeted to buy a Bell HX230E Excavator and a Bell 315SK 4x4 TLB," Benny says. "And the best news is that since we took delivery of the Bell HX230E Excavator, we have not seen it back in our yard as it went straight to a client who seems to have enough work to keep this machine busy for a long time."

The Mafoko Brothers have found that because many houses are being built in and around Mafikeng, there

is much demand for their machines to dig trenches for services and foundations, move rubble and load building material. The ease with which they are able to move their Bell TLBs around is a plus factor and while they do most of their hiring on dry rates, the fact that their Bell TLBs are fuel-efficient, pleases their clients and does wonders for repeat business.

This young company has also realised the value of preventative maintenance in ensuring the longevity of their mechanised fleet and to this end, they have three roving diesel mechanics to help with daily checks and maintenance. All servicing under warranty is done by Bell Equipment technicians from Rustenburg.

Looking ahead, Benny Mafoko is confident about the sustainability of their company. "We are often amazed when outside contractors arrive in our area knowing that they need a grader to fulfill their obligations, but they arrive without one, hoping to hire one here," he smiles. "Now that is what we plan to buy next, a Bell Grader... or perhaps two."



Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Devon Cort, with Benny Mafoko of Mafoko Brothers.

