

Bell spreads its dealer footprint across South America

The appointment of three new dealers in South America in recent months has positioned South African heavy equipment manufacturer and Articulated Dump Truck (ADT) specialist, Bell Equipment, to expand its footprint and market share on the continent.

Raico SA and Seijiro Yazawa Iwai (SYI), two Liebherr dealers, have been appointed in the mining-focused countries of Chile and Venezuela respectively while REPAS Sociedad Anónima, a Hyundai dealer, has been appointed in Argentina.

Bell Equipment Regional Marketing Manager, Llewellyn Roux says: "We have appointed like-minded companies that have proven capacity to support a growing machine population with spare parts and dedicated service."

These are well established dealers with existing sales and support networks that have their own rental fleets as well as direct sales. We have also purposely aligned with existing dealers in the region that have a full range of loading tools. By adding our Bell trucks to their offering, these dealers are now able to deliver a quality full line solution to their customers."

RAICO's Cristóbal Alexandroff said: "We are very happy to be able to add a world class brand such as Bell to our product offering. Our philosophy as RAICO SA has always been to 'sell the lowest cost per handled ton with a customer service oriented structure,' and this is exactly what Bell offers. We believe that the Bell ADTs are a perfect match for our earthmoving and mining portfolio and will open up opportunities with business areas, customers and tenders that we couldn't previously tackle. These trucks will also be an important addition to our rental fleet. We feel that we are a part of the strong reliable support, for Bell Equipment's strong reliable machines."

Vice President of SYI, Mitsuru M Yazawa commented: "We are happy to bring our partnership with Bell a step forward,

allowing us to strengthen our product portfolio for our Heavy Machinery Division. Our company's philosophy is to accompany products from first class manufacturers with a very solid service operation: factory trained / customer oriented technicians, service vehicles, tools and infrastructure. We look forward to a long term and successful relationship."

Meanwhile, Repas SA, which has 50 years of machine trading experience in Argentina, entered into the mining and primary rock production segment in recent years and a partnership with Bell was a natural business progression. Repas SA Vice President, Pablo Schulzen explains: "Our family-owned board took the decision to enter this segment influenced by market demand and the growth of Hyundai Heavy Industries and Terex - our long term and internationally renowned alliances. This new challenge includes gaining market penetration for our new players, such as Terex Finlay crushers and screens, Soosan breakers and drills and now Bell ADTs, which will transport from the blast to crush. The first Bell B30E has arrived in Argentina and we expect to have it working in one of the country's leading quarries in due course. It is our hope to have success in this new challenge and to be part of the new and successful South American Bell network."

The new dealer appointments come at an opportune time considering SNL Metals & Mining data, which shows planned capital spending in the South American mining sector increased by almost US\$50 billion from October 2015 to April 2016. Llewellyn says: "We saw signs of this at Bauma 2016 in April where we noticed a large number of South American visitors on our stand as well as representation from all our dealers, which was very pleasing and exciting."

Bell Equipment has a strong history and brand awareness in South America through its appointed dealer, Latin Equipment, which has sold the OEM's Tri-Wheeler forestry and agricultural products in Chile and Argentina for many years. This footprint is currently growing with expansion into the sugarcane farming areas in the north of the continent.

However, the opportunity to market the company's core product in South America, the ADT, only presented itself in 2013, when a distribution agreement to sell Bell ADTs in the Americas under the John Deere label came to an end.

Since this time Bell Equipment has actively pursued the South American market with the appointment in 2014 of Mercovil, a Hyundai dealer in Colombia, the continent's third largest economy behind Brazil and Argentina.

The appointment of MS Sales and Services in Panama followed in 2015 to cover the Central Americas and Caribbean.

Mercovil's Vice President: Commercial and New Developments, Francisco Mora Uribe recalls that when the company undertook to sell Bell dumpers in Colombia three years ago, to become the first distributors of the South African brand in South America, they faced the challenge of convincing traditional ADT users, who had been long standing supporters of other brands, for decades.

"We strategically placed a number of units in our Colombian market with various customers and in different types of operations to thoroughly test the trucks in our rough conditions. Colombian conditions include severe slopes, a difficult climate with high temperatures and humidity as well as working above 3 500 metres above sea level. The Bell ADTs have demonstrated high levels of performance in all working conditions and we now offer Bell trucks as a premium brand based on the evidence in the workplace. They achieved better results than the traditional ADT brands in terms of fuel burn, productivity and performance in quarry, road construction and mining applications," he said.

"Today some of these Bell trucks work 20 hours a day, 364 days a year. After 12 months Bell trucks give the best indicators of availability, fuel consumption and production so with the imminent start of large infrastructure projects in Colombia, like the 4G, (fourth generation pathways) we believe that Bell is definitely a competitor robust enough to position itself as one of the leading players in the Colombia market."

Continues Llewellyn: "These existing dealers have performed well considering the economic challenges of the region in terms of weak commodity prices and exchange rate fluctuations. We've been able to quickly grow market share in North America and we will be looking to further develop our dealer network to leverage spin-off in South America.

"We see opportunity for Bell on the continent due to the quality of our ADT product and its suitability to the South American environment, which experiences high rainfall in some areas and high ambient temperatures in others. With our African heritage, Bell trucks have been specifically designed and manufactured for these conditions, and they have proven to be well priced and well accepted," he says.

To fully support its dealer development and ensure a high standard of customer service Bell Equipment will undertake sales and technical support training during the course of the year. The company's International Product Support team will similarly be conducting 'First-of-Family' machine handovers, coinciding with the 100-hour service of machines already in the field, to provide hands-on training. Technicians from the dealerships will also be sent to Bell Equipment's South African factory for additional training.

