

Bell customer service impresses ROK Civils from Day One

Wupperthal is a tiny hamlet in the Cederberg mountains of the Western Cape, best known for its Moravian mission church and its handsewn 'velskoene', popular soft leather suede shoes. And should you mention the surname Koopman, you will be told of skilled craftsmen originating from the town who took great pride in their work as stone, brick and concrete masons.

Randall Koopman is the son of one of these craftsmen. After qualifying as a motor mechanic, he worked in the Western Cape motor and light industrial trade for some years before deciding that this was not really where his heart lay. "My father Fritz, had worked as a sub-contractor for road construction companies, laying kerb lines and building culverts and, as a young lad, I worked with him during school holidays and learnt a lot of what he did," Randall says. "When I decided to pursue a career in civil construction, this background knowledge stood me in good stead while learning other disciplines such as tendering, quantity and material surveying, ordering and general civil contracting."

Randall had attended an eight-month long course presented by the Western Cape Government with retired civil engineers as lecturers. He started his

business ROK Civils in 2005 and persuaded his father Fritz, a qualified bricklayer, to come out of retirement and assist him. His younger sister, Frizette Solomon, takes care of the all-important accounting duties.

"We built sidewalks for the City of Cape Town for some months and this led to us building a 3km long service road for Transnet, which took seven months," Randall says. "I operated a hired walk-behind roller myself and when I needed larger equipment, such as a tractor loader backhoe (TLB), I quickly realized that should I resort to more plant hire, I'd be paying off someone else's machine."

Randall did extensive market research looking for the TLB that would suit his needs and pocket until someone referred him to Bell Equipment in the



Randall Koopman and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson.

older industrial area near the Cape Town International Airport. "I remember my dad being with me and us walking into Bell Equipment's premises off the street, not knowing how I would afford to pay for a Bell TLB," he explains. "I had, however, not reckoned with the persuasive powers of one Mario Ferreira who treated us like we were Bell Equipment's biggest customers and recommended a pre-owned Bell 315SG TLB that had done a mere 4 000 hours."

According to Randall, Bell Equipment set about fixing everything that was not right on the machine and, when the repairs were delayed waiting for parts, Mario instructed him to hire in a machine and Bell Equipment would cover those costs so that he could fulfil his commitment to his clients.

"Owning versatile earthmoving equipment such as a Bell 315SG TLB gave me the confidence to tender for larger projects and much work followed since that time for amongst others, the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Department of Agriculture," Randall explains. "We successfully undertook the construction and installation of water lines, storm water drainage systems, paving in parking lots, sub-soil drainage, raised intersections and speed calming humps on busy roads."

"I should mention that the level of service we've enjoyed from Bell Equipment has been incredible," Randall enthuses. "Once, our older Bell TLB was working in Paarl and our operator had left the ignition key at home. I called Fiona Johnson, the Bell Equipment Sales Representative, to ask about whether a John Deere key would fit and Fiona kindly offered to bring a spare key all the way from Bell Equipment near the airport, to Paarl, an offer we appreciated so much but we made another plan. Fiona's kind gesture and client-centred attitude will, however, never be forgotten."

Randall also experienced tough times between 2007 and 2014 but feels the economy had turned by 2017 when larger contracts were awarded. By 2018, he felt the need for some new equipment and again turned to Bell Equipment when purchasing a new Bell 315SL TLB and two Bomag BW-65H Double Drum Pedestrian Rollers. The latter were added to his existing fleet of Bomag BW120 AD-5 Ride-on and Bomag BW-75H Pedestrian Rollers.

"Our Bell and Bomag machines are an integral part of our operations and the Bell 315SL TLB is so versatile when digging trenches, backfilling, loading and unloading material," Randall says. "Any equipment needs maintenance or repair from time to time and here I believe that my relationship with Bell Equipment's Ian Marais, the Product Support Representative, and Kobus van Zyl, the Workshop Manager, is key in getting the best out of our Bell machines. Being able to talk to anyone at Bell Equipment directly is a major advantage and we get straight answers to our questions."

"This personal touch and caring attitude are the factors that will keep us coming back to Bell Equipment and we look forward to a long relationship using their tried and trusted equipment."



Randall Koopman and Kobus van Zyl, Bell Equipment Workshop Manager, at the Cape Town CSC.