

Double-quick delivery of fleet expansion keeps Stefanutti Stocks on track

It has often been said that being in the right place at the right time is an important factor for success but the added requirement of doing something about it, is needed to ensure that success.

This was demonstrated recently when Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Chris Botha, stopped by the office of Freddie Strydom, the Contracts Director for Stefanutti Stocks' Mining division, merely as a courtesy call. While exchanging pleasantries, Chris learnt of his client's urgent need for loading and haulage equipment for a new coal mining site north-east of Bronkhorstpruit.

Says Freddie: "We as Stefanutti Stocks Mining Services had, towards the end of 2016, embarked on a new coal mining project for clients whereby we would deliver the full mining package from planning and design, drill and blast to load, haul and rehabilitation and the creation and maintenance of infrastructure," he says. "We believe we were enhancing an existing mining operation with changes to its original design and had to ramp up the current production urgently. This necessitated us needing more yellow machines in a hurry and when I spoke with Chris Botha, I mentioned this to him."

Stefanutti Stocks Mining Services has grown rapidly since its parent company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 2007/2008. This division offers four

main groups of mining services, namely technical services, open-pit contract mining, material handling and tailings management. The open-pit contract mining division is the largest of the four and has built its good reputation on successful turnkey opencast mining operations. In addition to mining, it also undertakes amongst others, complete rehabilitation of mined areas and designs and manages pollution control measures across the full scope of environmental management plans.

"Due to the mine design, expected underfoot conditions and the urgent ramp-up in production, our fleet requirement necessitated all-wheel drive traction. We needed an additional fleet of eight 45-ton articulated dump trucks along with two 80-ton excavators as loading tools but our dilemma was that we needed them within five days to start with our ramp-up exercise," Freddie adds. "We needed an original equipment supplier who had stock and we were very concerned whether we could be helped by any supplier on the market."

"We had, however, not fully reckoned with Chris Botha and his sales principals at Bell Equipment who, in the space of a few days, put our deal together and started delivering the exact new equipment we needed in eight Bell B45E ADTs and two 80-ton Kobelco SK850LC-8 Excavators," he says. "We were overwhelmed by this



level of service and attention to detail from Bell Equipment, which meant that we in turn could show our clients that we and our suppliers mean business in this ultra-competitive field of opencast mining.”

Stefanutti Stocks Mining works a three-shift system, which allows the company to provide its clients with almost continuous service of 20 hours a day and for seven days a week. This impacts the company’s load and haulage fleet as machine hours are racked up quickly in the process.

“While we acknowledge that the hours on our fleet of Bell B45E ADTs and large Kobelco Excavators are still low, we’ve been very impressed with their work rate and mechanical availabilities,” says Stefanutti Stocks Operations Manager, Zahed Hoosen. “We’ve compared the fuel consumption of the Bell B45E ADTs in these challenging underfoot conditions that have increased rolling resistance, to those running in drier operations elsewhere, and at around 26 litres an hour they compare favourably with the 18 litres an hour for similar Bell machines running in dry and firmer underfoot conditions.”

The Kobelco Excavators are fitted with 5,1 cubic metre buckets and, boasting a breakout force of 432kN, make for quick cycle times for the Bell B45E ADTs, which are primarily used to haul overburden. “We work on dry rates but having a cap on the amount of fuel we may use in a month, makes us monitor the fuel consumption of our

entire fleet diligently,” Zahed explains. “We are however pleased with the Kobelco Excavators’ average fuel burn of 43 litres an hour considering their superior work rate.”

Fleet operators will echo the thought that any piece of earthmoving equipment, new or old, is only as good as its maintenance. Both Freddie and Zahed are adamant that Bell Equipment placing a dedicated full-time mechanic on their site, has created a feeling of confidence for them as any issue or service can be attended to immediately. Some downtime is unavoidable when a machine is withdrawn from service due to servicing requirements, especially under warranty. Downtime may be minimised when the necessary consumable and other essential parts are kept on site.

Stefanutti Stocks’ fleet of new Bell machines have been acquired with extended warranties on the wet drivetrains to 12 000 hours for the Bell B45E ADTs and 8 000 hours on the Kobelco Excavators.

“While we’ve owned equipment manufactured by Bell Equipment before, we’ve grown our relationship with the company more in these recent times and appreciate the support we’ve had from especially Gary Bell, who endorsed our deal,” Freddie says. “Relationships such as this are very important to us and we appreciate that such mutual respect augers well for any future projects we may land as solid business relationships create win-win situations.”



(From left): Graham Ralph (Contracts Manager), Zahed Hoosen (Operations Manager), Chris Botha (Bell Sales Representative), Dibuseng Mokoena (Production Manager) and Freddie Strydom (Contracts Director) in front of one of the B45Es owned by Stefanutti Stocks Mining Services.