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Dear Customers

By all accounts, 2023 looks set to be a busy year for Bell Equipment following our recent announcement that we will commence manufacturing a new range of Bell Motor Graders next year. Our new Bell Motor Grader is part of our group strategy to grow our product IP, increase our manufactured product offering, and expand our global markets.

At the same time, we have identified underground mining as an opportunity for growth and have established the Bell Underground Mining business unit to pursue this goal. This will include expanding the existing product range, providing specialised customer support, and ultimately establishing new global markets.

We are extremely excited about these developments and look forward to sharing more details with you in our next edition.

This year we also celebrate our 10-year partnership with Finlay, who is a global leader in the mobile crushing and screening industry. We look forward to many more productive years together and bringing you the latest generation of Finlay plants later in the year.

Looking at our markets, the South African construction sector has been depressed, however small-scale building and construction projects are showing good growth and the SANRAL contracts awarded for the N2 Wild Coast and N11 highways earlier this year should bring some relief. It should go without saying that we are ready to provide our customers with equipment and support for these projects.

High demand for machines into the mining industry continues into 2023, and although ADT product availability is limited, we are doing our best to meet our customers' equipment needs.

In closing, I would like to focus on the good news shared on these pages. It is wonderful to read the success stories of our customers from all walks of life, and the role that our Bell machines and people have played in helping to achieve these successes. Thank you for sharing your stories and partnering with us.

Yours sincerely

Leon Goosen
Group Chief Executive

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Kobelco SK220XD-10 has most frugal fuel in Henra's excavator fleet

After receiving a call from André Rall in Upington regarding the fuel consumption of the new Kobelco Excavator on site, Gerrie Matthee was puzzled. There had to be a mistake. The figure he received from André couldn't be correct as it was far lower than the average his company's five other similarly weighted excavators returned. It was 38% lower.



Bell Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, with General Manager of Henra, Gerrie Matthee.

Gerrie Matthee is the General Manager of Henra, a multidisciplinary civil construction company based at Hartenbosch in the Southern Cape. The company was founded by the late Hennie Rall in 1990 and has since evolved into three divisions, namely Henra Plant Hire, Henra Civil Contractors and Entsha Henra. Hennie's son, André Rall, joined the company in 2018 and is one of the directors.

"Our core business is civil contracting, be it for roads, township development or the installation of services for water or sewerage and other infrastructure," Gerrie says. "We've worked all over South Africa and in Lesotho."

Being in civil construction, Henra's divisions rely on Henra Plant Hire for the yellow equipment they may need. This is the division that acquires, owns and

maintains it. Henra Plant Hire has built up a fair-sized fleet comprising excavators, wheeled loaders, backhoe loaders (TLBs), articulated dump trucks (ADTs), graders, rollers, rigid tipper trucks, low bed transporters and a range of milling machines, recyclers and pavers, the latter for road construction.

"We currently operate a fleet of eight Bell ADTs across the B18, B20 and B25 ranges, the bulk of which were bought on the used market. One Bell B18D was bought from Bell Equipment with Fiona Johnson handling the sale," Gerrie continues. "Fiona has since supplied us with a Bomag BW211-40 Roller in 2019 and a Bell 315SL Work Pro TLB in 2020. These machines have stood us in good stead, performing the multitudes of tasks they were designed for."



Operator of the Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator, Jackson Gcuku.

According to Gerrie, Henra Plant Hire has no fixed policy on machine replacement. With the current situation in the construction industry recovering slowly post-COVID, it will look at new acquisitions should the awarding of significant projects warrant it.

Such was the case late in 2021 when the company decided to trade in an older JCB JS360 Excavator that had given them excellent service on several significant projects. These projects included a solar farm near Pofadder, a 30km pipeline project between the Camphers Dam and the Vaal River, and a major water supply pipeline for Sedibeng Water in the Northern Cape.

"Our JCB JS360 Excavator was then the biggest in our fleet and had done 6 400 hours of really hard digging through the calcrete of the Northern Cape," Gerrie explains. "Bell Equipment saw value in this machine and offered us a good trade-in and an extremely competitive price on a new Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator."

"The new Kobelco SK220XD-10 machine probably spent an hour in our yard before being shipped off to Upington, where it is used to install new 600mm and 800mm sewer lines for the Dawid Kruiper Municipality. This project is expected to take 13 months to complete."

The new Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator was acquired with an extended warranty spanning 36 months or 5 000 hours and was financed on a short term with Henra's own facilities.

"We have five other 20-ton excavators in our fleet. We monitor fuel burn closely as it's a major expense on any contract," Gerrie adds. "We also know that soil conditions in the Northern Cape can be

challenging, wearing heavily on cutting tools and fuel consumption as machines work harder there."

"That is why, when the average fuel burn on our existing 20-ton excavator fleet stands at 16,44 litres an hour and this new Kobelco SK220XD-10 machine comes in at 10,1 litres, it makes you sit up and take notice. That is a massive saving of around 38% on diesel alone."

Jackson Gcuku operates the Kobelco SK220XD-10 Excavator on the site of the sewer pipeline in Upington. He says the following about the machine: "I've been an excavator operator since 1994. This machine is smooth and easy to operate with lots of power. The engine sounds like it's only idling. The cab is comfortable with lots of room. I can easily see all around me, which is important from a safety point of view as we often work close to people."

Gerrie believes that the quality of any piece of earthmoving equipment's is defined by the technical support a customer can rely on from its supplier and regards Bell Equipment as in the top range on this front. "Our relationship with Bell Equipment starts with the company's Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, who is much more than that as she visits us not only to sell her products but also to enquire about our well-being personally," he says. "That's how you grow a business relationship through personal and sincere contact, and all follows naturally after that."

"Bell Equipment's excellent response times, parts holdings and general caring attitude will always bring us back for more. We're happy that the company is now also the distributor of JCB equipment. We have quite a few machines of that brand in Excavators and Backhoe Loaders."

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Frugal fuel burn on Finlay Screen impresses Virtigo Sand & Stone

In South Africa, the year 2010 will be most remembered as the year the country successfully hosted the Soccer World Cup.

Should you be in the business of supplying construction materials, you may also recall that around this time engineers became prescriptive about the quality of materials that went into making cement bricks. To add insult to injury, good quality building sand became scarcer.

Two people who are very aware of this scarcity are the father and daughter team of Jannie and Lejandi Burger, owners of Virtigo Sand & Stone outside Malmesbury in the Western Cape. Jannie learnt about construction material and its transport at his father's knee.

"My late father, Slabbert Burger, was a bit of a legend in the supply of construction material and especially its transport as he ran a business to this effect for 57 years," Jannie tells us. "He was known to still have laid paving at the age of 85 and even after suffering a stroke he diligently went to work each day."

Virtigo Sand & Stone was founded in 2013 and the company mines sand and stone, which is sold and distributed across the Western Cape. "Malmesbury is known for the quality of its sand and stone and especially the colour of the sand which is held in high regard these days," says Lejandi Burger. "Our sand's cube-shaped crystals adhere better to cement which means that less sand is necessary when mixing concrete."

Lejandi adds that the Winelands District Municipality sees laterite gravel from Malmesbury as being the benchmark of quality and that deeper red tones emerge as older gravels are extracted, which makes it a more sought-after commodity.

"Mining sand and gravels would tell you that we'd need a screen to do that successfully and we hired in screens until we could buy our own equipment in 2015," Jannie says. "We found an older Finlay 683 Screen on the pre-owned equipment market that





From left: Lejandi Burger (Director of Virtigo Sand & Stone), Alistiar Bobbejee (Virtigo Sand & Stone's Marketing and Sales Manager), Fiona Johnson (Bell Equipment Sales Representative) and Jannie Burger (Director of Virtigo Sand & Stone).

we kept going by, replacing parts when we needed. It worked well for us, helping us to establish owning the whole value chain in our business from mining the product to delivery to our clients."

According to Jannie, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, had been in contact with them regularly and when they decided to go the Finlay Screen route, Fiona was the first person he called.

"Because of our experience with the Finlay Screens we had hired in, and owning the older machine, we knew how to fine-tune the equipment for it to perform optimally for our needs," Jannie adds. "These are the reasons we bought the new Finlay 683 Screen as we knew what it could do and our faith in the brand along with the fact that Fiona Johnson, the Bell Sales Representative, had stayed in touch with us, made the choice of machine and supplier easy."

With finance in place, the Finlay 683 Screen was delivered in April 2021 within three weeks of being ordered.

"We operate on two sites and are in production for five-and-a-half days a week with the Finlay 683 Screen in operation for up to nine hours a day,"

Lejandi explains. "When screening out the sand, we also take out two gravel sizes equal to G5 and G7 and this material is sold for road construction."

"We have however also built a name for ourselves in being very client-centred which sees us blending certain types and coloured sands for specific clients and those blends are distinguished by carrying that clients' name. We really believe that going the distance for our clients breeds loyalty and brings repeat business, a precious commodity these days."

Fed using either a 21-ton excavator or a wheel loader, both Jannie and Lejandi have been impressed with the frugal average fuel burn of 8,5 litres an hour that they are achieving with their Finlay 683 Screen. "We've also been really impressed by how well the Finlay 683 Screen can be set up to meet our expectations and those of our clients," Lejandi says smiling. "These days it's all about colour and the Finlay 683 Screen really allows us to deliver on what our clients demand."

Virtigo Sand & Stone's Finlay 683 Screen was bought with a standard 12-month, 2 500 hour warranty and mechanics from Bell Equipment in Cape Town do all the servicing during the warranty period.

JCB Backhoes are a mainstay for Jodan Construction

Buying over a hundred backhoe loader models from one well-known brand during a period of some seventeen years should imply a certain sense of brand loyalty and this is indeed the case with a well-established Gauteng construction company.



Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Kobus van Niekerk, with Jodan Construction's General Manager: Plant and Logistics, Sagay Naicker, and Bell Equipment Product Support Representative, Ben Spangenberg.

Jodan Construction started its life as a small plant hire concern in 2005 in Centurion. Founded by the present Group CEO, Nico Pretorius, and his father, Wiesie Pretorius, Jodan Construction has grown into a multidisciplinary construction company now confidently reflecting its 9CE and 9GB classification of capabilities to add to its Level 1 Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment status. The Jodan Construction Group is headed up by Nico, the Group CEO; Dave Bennet, the CEO; Wilhelm du Toit, the Operations Director and Walter Ramapala, who is the Director of Business Development.

Working all over South Africa, Jodan Construction has successfully completed projects in township and housing developments, private property development such as shopping malls and office parks, mining infrastructure, and roads and bridges. Explaining the Jodan Construction Group's success

is the General Manager: Plant and Logistics, Sagay Naicker. "We believe we, as a company, are known for employing the best people who are innovative thinkers resulting in projects being completed on time and on budget.

"Where necessary, we deploy new and well-maintained mechanical equipment that offers maximum uptime through quality design, build and regular maintenance that works hand in hand with successful project delivery."

There is no mistaking Jodan Construction's well branded fleet which consists of backhoe loaders, graders, excavators, compaction equipment, dozers, recyclers, milling machines and pavers, articulated dump trucks (ADTs) and rigid tipper trucks. Water carts, field service and fuel trucks make up the balance of the line-up.

"We have a long and happy association with especially JCB Backhoe Loaders, of which we've owned over a 100 such machines from the time that the company first did only plant hire to the present day," Sagay explains. "We've enjoyed being part of the JCB Backhoe Loader's evolution from a fairly basic machine to the more powerful and sophisticated machine it is today."

According to Sagay, every project team within the company relies on the JCB Backhoe Loader's versatility and multi-tasking abilities whether it be used on major construction sites or in tight confined spaces such as working on road medians.

"We've found that we can use the machine's backhoe bucket to dig trenches for piping and excavate soil for foundations, concrete plinths, septic tanks, V-drains and a host of other uses," he adds. "The front buckets, especially when multi-purpose buckets are specified coupled with forks, can do even more, such as loading building material and rubble, backfilling trenches and excavated areas, loading and unloading pallets with bricks, cement, tiles and bulk-bags and levelling areas for landscaping."

"The multi-purpose 6:1 buckets have been a revelation for us in the variety of tasks they can be used for as both the opening edges have cutting edges while the front edge is equipped with ground-engaging tools."

Jodan Construction has a general policy of replacing Backhoe Loaders when they have completed 12 000 hours of service, which at a rate of roughly 2 000 hours a year, translates into six years of service. The company has built a reputation of taking good care of its JCB Backhoe Loaders with regular servicing and, as each machine comes

with a complete service history, they are sold privately where they are eagerly received with good resale values.

Jodan Construction took delivery of four new JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loaders fitted with multi-purpose front buckets and forks in May 2022 and these machines were put to work immediately, evenly split between infrastructure projects in Gauteng and coal mining sites in Mpumalanga.

"The JCB Dieselmix 444 4,4 litre turbocharged engine serves us well with its power output of 68,6kW at only 2 200rpm and with impressive torque of 400Nm at 1 400rpm, it still delivers fuel burn of between 11 to 13 litres an hour," Sagay says. "We're also very pleased that Bell Equipment is now the South African distributor of JCB equipment and we believe that the Bell-JCB partnership was instrumental in creating a very favourable financing deal through ABSA that made it hard to refuse the offer."

Sagay is adamant that any machine, no matter how reliable or popular, doesn't always sell itself. "I'd like to mention the great business relationship we have with Kobus van Niekerk, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative who calls on us regularly, so maintaining a business relationship even when we aren't in the market for new equipment," Sagay smiles. "Kobus also has the pleasing habit of answering his phone wherever he is, and when the time did come for us to buy new Backhoe Loaders, he was the first person to get a call."

Jodan Construction first bought yellow equipment from Bell Equipment back in 2011 when they acquired four Bell B25D ADTs, which despite their extremely high hours, served the company well. They have since been sold.



Procrete thrilled with combination of JCB brand and Bell support

After Jonathan Sussman had completed his BCom degree in Management, he found the prospect of merely being a manager of anything, rather boring. This is when he turned to building the craft in which both his grandfather, John Sussman, and father, Nathan Sussman, had excelled.

"After finishing school, and while studying, I had worked for and with my dad, Nathan Sussman, and learnt a lot about actual construction, the planning thereof and most importantly, how to fulfil a business plan," Jonathan, who prefers the name JJ, tells us. "Having completed my degree, I felt the urge to be self-employed in this very competitive field of construction and set about doing just that as I thrive on challenges."

JJ started his company, Procrete, in the town of Matsapha in Eswatini in 2014. Armed with a Building Council of Eswatini grading of B4 in the building category, he found himself competing with other construction companies in the private sector building houses, commercial buildings and even

doing work for international companies. Procrete also undertakes roadworks.

"We often hire in yellow machines like graders and padfoot rollers to assist us in our building projects, although we own a smooth-drum roller, tippers and flatbed trucks," he says. "In November 2021, I decided to buy a JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader for its supreme versatility on the types of building sites we have."

"My decision to buy the JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader was based on a few factors such as JCB being a strong British brand but more importantly, being distributed and backed by Bell Equipment here in Eswatini. We all know that any piece of





JJ Sussman (left) chats to the CSC Manager of Bell Swaziland, Charlie Boucher.

earthmoving equipment will need maintenance and repair at some stage and having the likes of Bell Equipment here on our doorstep is a reassuring factor as Charlie Boucher and his team are just a phone call away."

According to JJ, his father Nathan has bought and relied on yellow machines sold and maintained by Bell Equipment in Eswatini. This has justified his own decision to invest in the brand.

Since its delivery late last year, Procrete's JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader has fast made a name for itself as the machine of choice on the many sites where it has since clocked up close to 500 hours as it is used for at least seven hours in each working day. The 1,1 cubic metre front bucket is used to stockpile topsoil, backfill and load waste material onto trucks. The 600mm wide backhoe digs trenches for foundations and services, although JJ admits that they rely on heavier equipment like excavators to dig deep trenches for piping.

"JCB has really moved with the times and the company's 'Live Link' monitoring system gives me

updates on the machine's performance on my phone, even when I'm not in Eswatini," JJ enthuses. "In that way, I can ensure that the operator and the machine are where they should be and taking care of the machine, so ensuring longevity, which is what any yellow equipment owner strives for."

We asked JJ about the JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loader's fuel consumption and while he hasn't yet noted exact fuel burn figures, he mentions that whatever fuel the machine consumes is not breaking the bank and fits in well with project estimates and budgets.

"I believe the JCB range of Backhoe Loaders has proved itself as the market leader in southern Africa. Having solid technical backing by an established company, such as Bell Equipment, is more than a good enough reason to buy this machine and we have plans to add one more in the coming year," he says. "Also in the planning is the acquisition of a grader that we'll use for our own projects and possibly hire out as this is a scarce commodity in Eswatini."

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Timrite grows its fleet with Bell Forklift and JCB Wheel Loader

A marked saving in fuel consumption has justified the purchase of new and more efficient material handling equipment for a Mpumalanga-based manufacturer of timber products.



Timrite Saw Mill Manager, Emmanuel Sithole (left), and Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Daniel van Huyssteen, with some miniature samples of the Timrite Apollo Mat and Lexus Mat support packs.

The Thebe Group of companies owns, amongst many other entities, three sawmills that supply specialised timber products for use in mining support systems. The mills also produce structural timber and that used in furniture manufacture and are situated at Bushbuckridge, White River and Kemp, just outside of Piet Retief. It was at the latter where we met with Emmanuel Sithole, Saw Mill Manager for that Timrite mill.

"We buy in timber from local and distant larger growers, some from neighbouring Eswatini, and work exclusively with *Eucalyptus grandis* and *dunnii* hardwoods," Emmanuel explains. "At this mill, 80% of our production gets used for mining support timber and the rest as wet off-saw timber, meaning it's not dried and is then used for the wooden pallet market."

E. grandis and *E. dunnii* is sold in tons as opposed to softwoods like pine that is sold in cubic metres.

The Timrite mill specifies that its raw timber be cut to 2,4 metre lengths and the taper should not exceed 0,8cm per metre in length. This leads to uniformity in production, which the mill regards as an important quality aspect. A standout feature of the mill's use of its precious resource is that no part of the log is wasted. "What we don't use for either mining support timber or pallets, meaning chips and sawdust, is sold to a nearby particle board mill, which turns those smaller bits into chipboard," Emmanuel adds.

He goes on to explain that Timrite creates three different sets of mining support timber products at his facility, namely packs, trims and splits which all

differ in lengths and thicknesses. These are then transferred (in component form) to another division of the company that creates the various formations of mine supports such as the Timrite Apollo Mat and Timrite Lexus Mat and sells these on to mining houses. These mine supports are used in especially deep gold mines in the Free State, North West Province and Gauteng.

"We form the backend of the supply chain while our sales department, which deals with the mining houses, is referred to as the frontend," he says. "Our colleagues in the frontend also test the timber for strength and coat it in a fire-retardant solution."

When raw timber arrives at the Timrite mill, it is unloaded from trucks using an overhead crane. All other handling of the 2,4m logs is done using two Bell 220A Loggers. "These two Bell 220A Loggers are at least 10 years old and have been well used in that time as we have a policy of getting the maximum out of our mechanical equipment, really sweating each machine," Emmanuel says with a smile. "The longevity of these Bell Loggers is great testament to the machine's proven quality in design and build as they simply keep soldiering on."

Early in the second half of 2021, Timrite decided to replace two older machines, a rough terrain forklift and a wheel loader fitted with a quick-attach bucket and fork option. These had become

uneconomical to operate further and were sold out of hand.

"The long-standing and solid relationship our company had forged with Bell Equipment stood us in good stead as we could confidently turn to Bell Equipment's Sales Representative in Nelspruit, Daniel van Huyssteen, for advice on what the company could offer us," Emmanuel says. "Daniel listened to what our needs were and suggested the Bell 225F three-wheeled Forklift and the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader with their respective 3,5 ton and 6,6 ton lifting capabilities."

The equipment was ordered in July 2021 and delivered two months later in September.

"We use the Bell 225F Forklift to move strapped packs of processed timber to the export yard where it is stacked and as the terrain is uneven and even muddy in the wet season. The traction those big front wheels on the Bell Forklift deliver, sees it trundling along effortlessly," Emmanuel says.

Timrite currently use their new JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader to move and stockpile around 100 tons of woodchips every day. They have plans to convert the front frame to be able to swap between a bucket and a set of forks quickly as different needs arise.





Timrite currently use their new JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader to move and stockpile around 100 tons of woodchips every day.

"Having new equipment is great as one is assured of sustained uptime, but I feel it would be amiss not to mention things we noticed immediately such as the noise levels that are much less on especially the Bell 225F Forklift," Emmanuel says. "That new Yanmar engine is really quiet and that is also why the very audible reverse siren is a great safety feature."

Emmanuel is of the opinion that the extended service intervals, now at 500 hours, will provide for more productive time. Centralised grease points lower down on the machine are easily accessible and the Bell design engineers have reduced the vibration in the machine.

"You would appreciate that fuel consumption is a major overhead for us but we've been pleased to see that both the Bell 225F Forklift and the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader each use at least one litre of diesel

less per hour than their predecessors which, at current utilisations of 1 000 hours per year per machine, is a huge saving in diesel to us and will have a direct and positive impact on our operating costs."

The Bell 225F Forklift has been returning fuel consumption figures of 3,5 to 4,5 litres per hour and the JCB 422ZX Wheel Loader, 6,5 to 7 litres.

"Our operators took to the new machines seamlessly and comment on how much smoother and responsive the controls are in both," Emmanuel says. "Another big plus for us is the fact that Bell Equipment has a branch with mechanics and a good parts holding on our doorstep in Piet Retief, and our experience of the company's service of late has been nothing short of phenomenal."

Dwellers Trading and Projects impressed with new JCB fleet

Growing up in the Mthambeka section in Tembisa on Gauteng's East Rand inspired a young man of that area to make his mark in civil construction and bulk earthworks in South Africa's busiest province.

Vusi Sithole's father, Mike, built houses on Johannesburg's East Rand, the area that now falls under the Ekurhuleni Municipality. Vusi came to work in the area too, learning about building materials in the yard of a large national building material supplier.

"During the two years I spent in the yard of the material supplier, I also dabbled in a few small building contracts as a sub-contractor with skills I had learnt from my father," Vusi says. "I had always wanted to be self-employed and left a salaried job in 2010 to start my own company in Johannesburg which I called Dwellers Trading and Projects."

But this didn't mean Vusi could take the Gauteng construction world by storm, and he admitted to himself that he needed to learn many building skills and some business acumen. Fortunately, he was able to make full use of an initiative of the Gauteng government's Public Works Department, which through the Ekurhuleni Municipality offered a three-year contractor development programme in construction techniques and practices.

"We had lectures during the first year and then undertook practical building projects in the second and third years, working under the supervision of qualified people who taught me personally, so much," Vusi explains. "I started off at a CIDB (Construction Industry Development Board) rating of Level 1 and ended the third year at Level 5,

which says a lot about what we were able to learn from the course and the knowledgeable people who mentored us."

Having successfully completed the course meant that Vusi was now listed on a panel of potential contractors. This soon paid dividends as he was contracted to undertake construction projects at the Johannesburg fresh produce market, the bus rapid transport system in Tembisa and various water reticulation projects for schools in Mpumalanga.

"I also learnt the hard way that in civil construction when you need to hire in yellow equipment it eats into the bottom line. Subsequently, buying used equipment, as I could not yet afford new machines, also came with a price," Vusi continues. "When looking to grow your company, you also need to grow your asset base and that's why, when new contracts were looming in 2021, I eventually decided to invest in several new machines, and I chose JCB."

Vusi goes on to say that when chatting to fellow contractors and friends, the one brand name that was mentioned often was that of JCB, and when he learnt that Bell Equipment was now the South African distributor of the marque, he felt much more assured of his choice.





Vusi Sithole and his wife Jabulile enjoy paging through a copy of the Bell Bulletin.

Vusi's choice fell on two JCB 205 21-ton Excavators, two JCB 3DX Plus Backhoe Loaders and one JCB 116D Roller with an operating weight of 12 tons.

He arranged his own finance for the equipment and explains this as follows: "Many of our contracts run over 36 months which gives one the opportunity with a substantial deposit, to pay the equipment off over 18 months," he adds. "When dealing with Bell Equipment I met with Sales Representative, Enock Mabaso, and he offered the guidance to make sure I bought the correct machines for what I believed we needed. It's a great feeling dealing with a company that understands your business and the challenges you face."

"Another justification for buying five new machines from one supplier is that as the equipment was bought with extended warranties to 6 000 hours on their wet drivetrains, we'd get to establish a relationship with Bell Equipment and its mechanics when they service our machines. Spares would also be obtained easier from one supplier."

Vusi points out that on the issue of maintenance costs, his research had shown that the cost of replacement parts and service kits for JCB machines was reasonable by industry standards.

His JCB equipment was delivered to him in December 2021 and the two JCB 205 Excavators and 116D Roller have been deployed on a roads project in the Moakeng township near Kroonstad in the Free State, which shows that his company,

Dwellers Trading and Projects, is now firmly spreading its wings beyond the borders of Gauteng.

"This project is a real win-win situation for the local community in Moakeng as in terms of our contract we must train and employ local people from the area to make up at least 30% of our labour force there. This will be done once we've excavated the road footprint between existing houses, laid the base course and started the final layer of brick-paving, which will involve a lot of manual labour, providing skills transfer and employment."

Vusi has one JCB 205 Excavator working in a nearby quarry excavating fill material for the base course of the road and the second similar machine, is used to excavate the road's footprint and flatten heaps of fill material to enable a grader to process it faster. The JCB 116D Roller is used to compact the processed layers.

"With the equipment being so new, we haven't settled fuel consumption figures yet but as we supply the diesel ourselves on this project, I can tell you that all our JCB machines are running well within the fuel cap of our budget."

With the level of service Vusi has enjoyed dealing with Bell Equipment, his future plans include a grader and possibly a mobile screen for use in remote areas. We're positive the sparkle in his eyes means that he will keep on buying earthmoving and material handling equipment from one now favourite supplier.

Civils 2000 adds six new JCB Backhoe Loaders to its fleet

Back in the early 1990s when Cape Town was being touted as a possible venue for the 2000 Olympic Games, Colin Shapiro and Rob Starke were planning too.

These Cape Town-based business partners were planning to start a civil construction company and it was their dream to ensure that the company made it to the year 2000, which is why they called it Civils 2000.

We can happily report that Civils 2000 has not only passed that milestone but has grown exponentially into the third millennium. The company currently employs 170 permanent staff but depending on operational requirements, meaning employing more labour for specific contracts, that number easily swells to between 300 and 500. Living one of its core values of 'unlocking potential', Civils 2000 prides itself on upliftment and training when employing people and mentoring SMMEs and emerging contractors.

Tackling civil construction projects in mainly the Western Cape, Civils 2000 has built a name for itself in housing and commercial buildings, bridges,

installing infrastructure services, sustainable energy projects, township development and road construction to the final asphalt layer.

Working in civil construction implies that yellow machines will be used extensively, and Civils 2000 is no different as the company's Plant Manager, Andrew Newborn, explains: "We own and operate a substantial fleet of yellow plant comprising excavators, compaction equipment, backhoe loaders, graders, wheel loaders, recyclers and milling machines, pavers and a fleet of rigid tippers and water trucks."

"We offer full plant hire solutions, both internally and externally, and our clients know that they can rely on our well-maintained equipment for maximum uptime during rental times."

Civils 2000 adheres largely to its own policy of running yellow equipment to the viable limit of its



(From left): Justin Williamson (Civils 2000 Workshop Foreman), Percy Edwards (Civils 2000 Plant Maintenance and Workshop Manager), Tyron Ravenscroft (Bell Equipment Sales Manager: Coastal Region), Andrew Newborn (Civils 2000 Plant Manager), André Jordaan (Bell Equipment Sales Representative) and Dirk du Toit (Civils 2000 Plant Operator and Utilisation Manager).



first life, which means backhoe loaders, as an example, are operated to 8 000 hours and excavators to 12 000 hours.

"We don't only buy new equipment to replace older machines but may also want to increase our capacity, which is important to properly service a growing client base and project order book," Andrew explains. "This was the case recently when we took delivery of six new JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loaders from Bell Equipment where four were replacement machines and two were to assist us in building more capacity."

According to Andrew, Civils 2000 has had a long and happy relationship with JCB Backhoe Loaders for their role as versatile tools on their sites but more so for the durability of their design and build, factors which promote sustained production from these workhorses of the construction industry.

We used to use the JCB 3CX naturally aspirated model, which has now been replaced by a turbo charged option on the new 3CX Global model but have found that the naturally aspirated worked just as well at the coast, where most of our work is. We therefore have opted for the JCB 3DX Eco naturally aspirated unit when rejuvenating and expanding our fleet," he explains.

"We're also pleased that Bell Equipment, a company we've had many pleasant dealings with over many years, is now the South African distributor for JCB equipment as this means we can depend on reliable technical backup when working locally and in other parts of the country."

The cost of fuel has become a major factor in the pricing of work, but Andrew does not expect much to change from the JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader to the JCB 3DX Eco. Civils 2000 currently has eight JCB 3CX models and are selling four out of hand as these machines have done between 7 500 and 8 000 hours. As they are known to have been well-maintained with a full service history, a good resale value is almost guaranteed.

To acquire six new JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loaders all at once takes more than merely relying on petty cash, but Andrew is quick to point out that the offer to purchase the machines through JCB Finance and ABSA Bank was unmatched in the industry. A generous amount of cash assistance sweetened the deal further to match the competitively low interest rate and reasonable terms.

Andrew is of the opinion that the competitive pricing of the JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader makes it an ideal machine for plant hire.

We visited the site of an extension to a waste-water plant in the Cape Winelands where one of the new JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loaders was working in a deep pit. It was impressive to see the machine ease up a steep ramp with a full front bucket of waste rock material that had been excavated.

When Civils 2000 marks its thirtieth year in business in August 2023, the company will be able to look back with pride and reflect on its purpose of 'to build a better tomorrow together'. We are confident that Bell Equipment with its outstanding range of product offerings will be made to feel part of that purpose.

JCB 3DX is a game changer for KDT Construction

Kobus du Toit had never bought a Backhoe Loader for his construction business as he had always been worried how he could keep it busy. Now that he owns one, he keeps thinking he should have bought two such machines.



Kobus du Toit, owner of KDT Construction (left), with Bell Sales Representative, Anthony Enslin.

But allow us to take you back to where all this started. Kobus, along with his older brother André, had worked in construction, building houses for the speculative market in Cape Town. "I have a qualification in human resource management and worked for a while in a large banking group's foreign exchange division, but I needed something more and found this in construction, thanks to my brother André," he said when we met at the site of an exclusive housing development southwest of East London.

"André had later bought land here at Winterstrand, where we are now, and we came here to build one show house but then I stayed, working first for another contractor." The one show house that Kobus helped to build has led him to build around

130 more, at first working for a contractor before stepping out on his own in 2017 with his own construction company, KDT Construction.

"We're busy with 14 houses at once and I employ 120 people, which makes it a challenging and busy site," Kobus adds with the smile of someone who is in a good place. "We're proud of the fact that we offer a complete construction service from foundations to handing over the keys to happy homeowners."

The Winterstrand site is a picturesque one, sloping down towards the Indian Ocean offering spectacular ocean views, but one which presents challenges with landscaping. With so much on the go in terms of construction, one would imagine

some mechanisation would be key, for example, to speed up the digging of trenches for foundations and water and power related services.

"I have always hired yellow machines like backhoe loaders and even excavators and kept thinking that I could never afford such a machine, let alone keep it busy," Kobus says. "This was until recently when our hiring costs ran to around R60 000 per month and I sat down and took a long hard look at figures and utilisations."

It was in December 2021 that Kobus visited the JCB website and filled in an online enquiry to which Anthony Enslin, Bell Equipment's Sales Representative in the East London area, responded immediately. "I chose JCB because we had often hired in a JCB Sitemaster Backhoe Loader and having experienced the machine's power, versatility and reliability, it seemed a natural and easy decision to make," Kobus says. "Knowing too that JCB is sold in South Africa by Bell Equipment, with its big service footprint, made the decision even easier. And at such a competitive price I had no hesitation when ordering the JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader with a clamshell bucket and forks."

"As with any upmarket secure housing estate, you will appreciate that the finished product calls for landscaped gardens and this one is no different," Kobus adds. "Our JCB Backhoe Loader moves many, many cubic metres of topsoil for this purpose and the large clamshell bucket has proved to be very handy for some precise placement of soil in awkward places such as behind retaining walls on the slopes of the estate."

Kobus explains that when using the forks on the JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader, the operator can open the clamshell bucket to get a clear view as to whether

the forks are level when loading a pallet with bricks or cement bags. This, to his mind, is an important safety feature of the machine.

KDT Construction's JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader was bought with a standard 12-month warranty and unlimited hours. According to Kobus, his operator has a competency certificate for this type of machine and is well-versed in pre-start checks and preventative maintenance. "We saw the value of buying from a reputable dealer recently when we had a slight problem with some of the hydraulic hoses, which were replaced almost immediately. Bell Mechanic, Andries Olivier, followed up the next day with preventative measures to not have this problem repeating," Kobus said. "That type of prompt and positive response just underlines my choice of JCB and Bell Equipment as the right decision."

Judging by figures Kobus quotes, the JCB 3DX's utilisation is high as it's used for around seven hours a day, six days a week. Despite this, the machine's fuel consumption is not setting off alarm bells. "For the value we get out of the machine, the fuel consumption, not that we don't record it, is not a huge factor," Kobus says. "We probably fill up every third day or so which would put the fuel consumption at around seven litres per hour."

"As opposed to a hired machine, this one is available to us all the time and I don't know how we survived without it. Trucks will arrive bringing essential building material such as bricks, cement or tiles, all heavy stuff and the JCB is there, getting it unloaded and stacked and the process just runs so smoothly. That is why I keep thinking how much smoother a second JCB 3DX Backhoe Loader will make our workflow."

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Eswatini's Top Technics expands with Bell Loggers and Skogger

When Cedusizi Dlamini wanted to start his own forestry contract harvesting business, he turned down a lucrative loan offer from a family member as he didn't want to risk any disharmony in his family that loaned money may cause. Instead, he did it the hard way, paying back a substantial loan from another party over a mere twelve months.



Cedusizi Dlamini (left), owner of Top Technics, with Charlie Boucher, CSC Manager of Bell Equipment Swaziland.

But that was all a while ago and today Cedusizi and his young company, Top Technics, are enjoying the fruits that diligent labour and commitment bring.

"The day I left school in 2007 I joined my brother, Thulani Khumalo, who worked as a supervisor for a forestry company here in Eswatini, in the forest working as a general labourer," Cedusizi says. "This taught me a lot and I learnt about hard work before embarking on tertiary study in electrical engineering a year later."

Cedusizi qualified as an electrical and electronics engineer from the Eswatini College of Technology in 2012 at the end of a three-year course.

In his first permanent position he worked as an office clerk for six months before his employer realised that, given his previous experience in forestry, he was being under-utilised. He then became the operations manager for the company's silviculture division where he stayed for three years. "While serving this company I learnt a lot about hard work, managing money and importantly, what makes a forestry business successful."

"After those three valuable years, I joined a silviculture contractor for a year at Usutu Forests," Cedusizi continues. "It was around this time that I put into place plans to create my own company and Stephan Olivier, the Project Manager for Peak Timbers Limited at that time, gave me that

opportunity when he tasked me to salvage all timber left over from a devastating fire that had swept through the Piggs Peak area in 2016."

But employing even only 15 manual labourers called for immediate cash flow and considering that he'd have a period of at least two months with no immediate income, Cedusizi faced a financial crisis. Nonetheless the brother of a friend looked at his business plan, cash flow predictions and general enthusiasm and decided after much discussion, to loan him the money he needed for start-up. This substantial amount though had to be paid back within 12 months, which was also the length of his first probationary contract with his clients.

"I managed to pay back that loan over 12 months in 2018 and now had the benefit of a positive credit score with the bank, which would stand me in good stead going forward," he says. "By 2019, I started the process to buy my first new Bell 225F Logger from Bell Equipment in Eswatini, which turned out to be the first machine of the new Bell F-series Logger range in the Piggs Peak area."

"I chose a Bell Logger because that is the only logger you see offering sustained service in our forests all over Eswatini. They just never seem to have an end and there are some very old machines around as well which says a lot for the brand."

In 2020, Cedusizi bought a Bell 225A Logger on the pre-owned market that had worked for 8 000 hours, feeling confident that should that machine need a further overhaul, it would be possible due to its sturdy design that made this feasible. This machine was followed six months later by another new Bell 225F Logger.

From salvaging burnt timber, Top Technics received a full commercial harvesting contract working in Eucalyptus when new owners took control of the timber plantations in that area Cedusizi could now properly plan for capital expenditure with longer contracts in place.

The year 2021 saw Cedusizi really expand his fleet of timber handling machines from Bell Equipment when he bought a third new Bell 225F Logger and a Skogger after receiving a contract that demanded increased production. These machines were ordered in October and delivered in November the same year.

"We generally harvest and extract during daylight hours only," Cedusizi explains. "We have six chainsaw teams felling the Eucalyptus trees and the Skogger then extracts these full tree lengths to a roadside depot. Here a Bell Logger will be used to arrange these full tree lengths that are cross-cut to a variety of lengths, depending on the order and these vary from 2,4 metres to 14 metres. The Bell Logger then stacks the cut timber into various stacks determined by their lengths."

Cedusizi is full of praise for the difference the Skogger has made to his operations. "I'm grateful to Charlie Boucher of Bell Equipment in Matsapha for the valuable advice he gave me around the benefits of owning a Skogger, especially from a safety point of view, a subject we take seriously," he adds. "Processing at roadside, where there is enough space to work safely, is now possible because of the Skogger's ability to extract the full tree lengths."

Cedusizi is considering adding a winch to the front of the Skogger for use in the steeper compartments that they encounter in the Piggs Peak area.

Although his fuel credit limits stipulate a maximum daily fuel consumption, neither the Bell 225F Loggers at 7 litres an hour or the Skogger at 7,5 litres an hour exceed this limit.

"It's reassuring to know that one can rely on Bell Equipment, which is not far away, for technical backup and servicing with a good parts holding," he says. "With the level of service that we get from Bell Equipment, I feel as if the mechanics, Russell Myburg and Christos Ginn, have been allocated to us exclusively."

The next piece of equipment Cedusizi plans to buy will be a 13-ton excavator with a harvesting head and he is taking a keen interest in the Kobelco SK135SR Excavator as a carrier. He also currently runs a used skidder and a 35-ton rigid timber truck which is used for transporting timber to mills and end users.



Kobelco and Bell are a winning combination for J & B Timbers

Barend Steenkamp faced a somewhat unique problem in his felling, extraction and loading of pine thinnings operation in forests in the west of Eswatini. His contract called for full tree-lengths, up to fifteen metres long, to be loaded onto specialised stinger-steer truck-trailer combinations, but there was not enough space in the narrow roads between forest compartments to do this safely.

Barend is the fifth generation of farmers in South Africa's landlocked neighbouring country. His family first farmed dairy but, starting small, moved into timber harvesting in 2010. While still farming with livestock, this new arm of the business, J & B Timbers, has grown exponentially since then.

"Our client, a large timber grower and sawmilling group, had amended our current contract to now process full tree lengths on a deck near the mill," Barend explains. "Their thinking was that they wanted to harness the biomass that is traditionally left in the compartment after felling, extraction and cross-cutting, in one place which is near the mill. In that way, they could also possibly utilise this biomass, in which they now saw value as fuel for power generation. Removing the biomass from the compartment would also reduce the fuel load that forest fires thrived on."

"Added to this was the thought that the recovery of saw-wood, the most valued commodity, would be increased through easier handling on the deck close to the mill."

This meant that instead of cross-cutting the felled tree at roadside, the full tree-length would now be transported to a specialised open area or deck as it's called, near to the mill, where the full tree-lengths would be processed by removing the branches which form the biomass and doing the cross-cutting there.

"We were using a Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator carrier fitted with a MT600 grapple to load timber but, because of the narrow road, we could not turn the Excavator at ninety degrees to the truck to load the full tree-lengths safely," Barend continues. "This is when I took a design idea to Justin Bell, Product Designer of Bell Equipment's Forestry and Agriculture division to see if we could fit a hydraulic heel to an extension on the MTR600 grab to steady the bunched timber and so create a steady fulcrum to do this safely while loading full tree-lengths.

"The almost similar knuckle-boom concept has been widely used in the forestry industry in both the USA and New Zealand," says Justin Bell. "This means that we didn't have to reinvent the wheel so to speak, but rather make adjustments to what was at hand and create a live heel which is different from the stationary heel on a knuckle-boom loader."

According to Justin, one such major consideration was to lengthen the dipper on the excavator with a nose cone to accommodate the standard bucket cylinder of the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator whilst still achieving the required heel range of motion, making aftermarket support of the complete product easier.

"Both static and dynamic (live) heels are in use globally. Whilst it would have been quicker and simpler to bolt or weld a static heel onto the dipper of the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator, the live heel certainly provides a wider range of operating configurations for the tight space constraints Barend had to deal with."

Justin commends Maxwell Quarmby, one of Bell Equipment's young design engineers, who in consultation with himself, produced both the design and drawings for this innovative project and despite the challenges, took it in his stride.

"We now have a pretty smooth flowing felling, extraction and loading operation of pine thinnings in the forest thanks to these applied innovative ideas," Barend continues. "This came about as a result of higher tonnages as stipulated by harvesting contracts, and as always, we make every effort to comply and do it safely, as this is our livelihood."

J & B Timbers uses a Bell MT50FH Single-stem Feller Buncher head fitted to a Kobelco SK135SR Excavator to fell trees as the flexible boom quickly reaches into areas where a traditional felling machine can't always go. Again, this Feller Buncher head came about as an idea that Barend had brought forward



Mandla Nkosi Dlamini, Charlie Boucher (Customer Service Centre Manager: Bell Equipment Swaziland), Salpelo Dlamini, Barend Steenkamp (MD: J & B Timbers), Brian Sibandze, Edmund Bothma, Mcolisi Sibanyoni and Victor Kunene.

after using the Fastfell and this particular model is the first one that the Forestry and Agriculture division of Bell Equipment had produced.

The same machine then places the felled trees in piles in the compartment from where a Bell Skogger extracts them to the road where the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator, fitted with the live heel attachment, loads the full tree-lengths onto the stinger-steer trailers.

The average fuel burn on the Kobelco SK210LC-10 Excavator comes in at 10,8 litres an hour and that of the Kobelco SK135SR at 9,8 litres an hour of which both figures fit comfortably into the business plan.

On the processing deck, J & B Timbers deploys three Kobelco SK260LC-10 Excavators fitted with third party processing heads to strip the branches and bark and cross-cut the timber into predetermined lengths. Currently, the three Kobelco machines produce 18 000 tons of timber a month and run an average of 18 hours in a 24-hour cycle.

"These Kobelco SK260LC-10 machines are phenomenal and seem to idle along while producing more than enough hydraulic flows to efficiently drive the processing heads at sustained mechanical availabilities," Barend says. "And their added benefit is that they do all this running on average at 8% cheaper than competitor machines in the same mass class."

"Kobelco have got this right by creating a simple machine with far less electronics," he adds. "Let it

be said though that none of this sustained performance would be possible without the non-stop great service that we get from Charlie Boucher and his entire team at Bell Equipment in Matsapha."

Barend makes special mention of Bruce Larkan, Bell Equipment's Product Support Representative who happens to live near to J & B Timbers' operation and stops off every second day on his way home to check the condition of the various machines or to drop off service kits or essential consumables.

When asked about the company's replacement based on machine hours Barend says: "Our policy would stipulate 20 000 hours, which is high but which we're confident of getting due to good design and build of especially the equipment we buy from Bell Equipment, and due to diligent and preventative maintenance which we see to ourselves, with Bell Equipment's support. Our next machine purchase will be another Kobelco SK260LC-10 Excavator fitted with a third party processing head to replace an older machine that has given us 14 000 hours of great service. The older machine will get its original bucket back and we'll take it to the farm where it will do maintenance earthworks."

Barend is adamant that machines from Bell Equipment provide the backbone of his timber harvesting, extraction and processing operations. This is evident in the number of such branded machines the company owns. The fleet includes no less than eight Bell Loggers, a Fastfell and three Skoggers, one Kobelco SK135SR, three SK210LC-10s and now four SK260LC-10 Excavators with a variety of heads.



Cousins succeed at contract harvesting with Bell forestry fleet

What do a pharmacist, an agronomist and an accountant have in common barring the fact that they are all related as cousins? Probably nothing you'd say unless all three are partners in a business venture doing contract forestry harvesting, which started out as a timber transport company.

The idea of buying a truck to haul timber came about during informal discussions in December 2017 between Kholiwe Shabangu, the pharmacist, Maswazi Mkhathshwa, the agronomist and Jabulile Kunene, the accountant.

"I had spent some 12 years working for a forestry company here in Eswatini and, as a minor director, held a minor shareholding," says Maswazi Mkhathshwa, the 'thorn' amongst his two partner 'roses'. "I had this dream though of being self-employed and when Kholiwe suggested we buy a truck to do timber haulage, I supported the idea wholeheartedly."

"Maswazi at first wanted to do contract work for Jabulile and I, but we insisted he be a part of the partnership as well because we saw the value that he would bring," Kholiwe says. "In the end, it merely took a phone call from Maswazi to make it happen and we had a five-year contract to haul timber for the company he had worked for."

The young company, called Khojama Investments, bought its timber truck in January 2018 and started hauling harvested timber from forestry areas in the west of Eswatini to a large sawmill at Bhunya, a distance of some 30km. The three partners soon realised that they were ready to take on bigger



Maswazi Mkhathshwa (left), Kholiwe Shabangu and Bell Swaziland's Charlie Boucher.



things and when Maswazi approached their client's forestry manager, he offered them a contract doing thinnings where selected younger pine trees are removed to stimulate growth amongst the remaining trees.

"By May 2018 this new contract was in place, and we were tasked with delivering 2 000 tons of pine thinnings a month, which was a daunting task as we were working manually," Maswazi says. "We decided then to rent two Bell 225A Loggers and a Skogger from a forestry plant hire company. Although it was expensive, it got us going which meant we had cash flow and we started building up a credit score with the bank.

"Looking back, the two Bell Loggers and the Skogger saved the day and our future reputations, as we could realistically not have sustained our production in any other way!"

Typically, Khojama Investments would deploy three chainsaw teams into a compartment where the trees to be felled would be marked. A Bell Logger would pre-bunch the felled trees which would then be extracted by the Skogger to roadside, where the other Bell Logger would stack the timber. Here it would be cross-cut into predetermined lengths and stacked again using the Bell Logger.

"Our plan was to buy our own equipment and we started this process by paying a deposit on two Bell 225F Loggers in January 2019," Kholiwe says. "In May 2019, our dream came true when we took

delivery of two new Bell 225F Loggers and we have high praise for Charlie Boucher and his team at Bell Equipment in Eswatini for making this happen."

Mechanics from Bell Equipment's Eswatini branch at nearby Matsapha serviced the Bell Loggers while they were under warranty and have continued this service for major servicing. Khojama Investments attends to minor servicing now that the Bell Loggers are out of warranty.

In August 2020, Khojama Investments' thinnings contract changed in that their clients no longer wanted the felled timber cross-cut at roadside but hauled to the mill in full tree lengths where another contractor would do the processing. "We thought at first that this would ease the pressure on our production, but the opposite happened as our clients doubled our production targets. By mid-2021 we realised we would need to buy our own Skogger to meet the demand," Maswazi says. "We subsequently ordered a new Skogger from Bell Equipment in June of that year, and it was delivered in October 2021."

Khojama Investments now runs two shifts in their thinnings operations, one from 6:30am to 3:30pm and the second from 4:00pm to midnight, which calls for high mechanical availabilities and utilisation of their mechanical equipment.

Despite this, their Bell 225F Loggers use diesel at an average of 5 litres an hour while the Skogger runs at between 6,5 and 6,8 litres an hour with both types of machines' fuel consumption well within the fuel cap that is set and monitored by their clients.

"Safety in the forest is a big concern for us and our clients, and the lights, especially on the Bell Skogger, make for good visibility and safe operations," Kholiwe adds. "But more impressive is the level of service we get from Bell Equipment at Matsapha when even at 4am one phone call to Charlie Boucher ensures that a mechanic is on his way to us quickly."

Kholiwe also says that should parts not be available immediately, Bell Equipment ensures that they arrive within 48 hours at the utmost and so minimises the downtime of their equipment. Both she and Maswazi echo that communication between themselves and Bell Equipment is clear and the latter is always prepared to listen.

The young company's third partner, Jabulile Kunene, was attending to other matters on the day of the interview but both Kholiwe and Maswazi say that she shares their dream list of a feller buncher and a processing head mounted on an excavator carrier as the next equipment to acquire. We're confident that with their drive and energy, they won't need to wait long.

Radds grows its Bell and Kobelco fleet to drive progress

Hard work, tenacity and absolute faith in one brand of mechanical equipment has seen a transport company borne from humble beginnings live its mantra of 'driving progress' to grow exponentially in stature and confidence and take on bigger and more challenging tasks.

More than 50 years ago, the late Radhalal Bachoo founded his company, today known as Radds Plant and Logistics, at Shakaskraal on the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast with one 6 cubic-metre truck. His sons Suren and Shan joined him as truck drivers when they finished school and the company showed steady growth, first in bulk transport and later with construction and material handling plant.

"Our first big break into material handling and transport came in 2005 when we landed a contract with Transnet Port Operations in the Port of Richards Bay and subsequent and larger contracts saw us expanding both our fleet and human capital," says Suren Radhalal, now the company's Managing Director. "Lessons learnt from my late father still hold

true and with our motto of 'driving progress', we haven't rested on our laurels. We are constantly looking ahead to expand our portfolio of services into other disciplines and so spread the risk associated with having to rely on contractual work."

Much of the material handling in the port involves loading and unloading, transport and stockpiling of bulk commodities such as magnetite, pig iron, ferrochrome and coal and for this Radds needed an ever-growing fleet of wheel loaders and articulated dump trucks (ADTs).

"We fortunately turned to Bell Equipment early on in the life of our company to supply us with



wheelloaders and ADTs across various ranges and sizes," Suren says. "We use Bell Wheel Loaders across the L1806E and L2106E ranges and have enjoyed wonderfully reliable service from our Bell B20 and B30 ADTs in both the D- and E-series."

Suren is adamant that his company's growth trajectory involves mastering new disciplines and this led Radds to take on work at the quarry operation of a large international group supplying stone and aggregate to the construction industry. "We started at our clients' operation near Empangeni, initially only supplying tipper trucks and water carts and this has seen us grow this side of our business at six of the group's quarries in KwaZulu-Natal, the North West Province and the Western Cape," he explains. "Our success at these quarries has given us the confidence to up our game and we're now involved in a complete opencast mining operation at the same clients' lime mining operation near Lichtenburg doing drill, blast, load and haul of material that will ultimately end up as cement."

"Our experience with what ADTs designed and manufactured by Bell Equipment can do has helped us to radically expand our fleet of these reliable haulers, even buying many of them on the pre-owned market," says Llewellyn Pain, Operations Manager at Radds. "As an example, we've bought used Bell ADTs throughout the B30, B40, B50 and B60 ADT fleets in both D- and E-series as we know that with proper maintenance, longevity of these superior machines is assured. We also know that Bell Equipment's Sales Representative, Haig Thompson, who has looked after us for a while now, will always find the best new and used machines for us as he understands our business model."

Radds's Bell ADT fleet now numbers some 95 vehicles.

"We've boosted our operations at Lichtenburg with two new Bell B45E ADTs and a new Kobelco SK520XDL-10 Excavator," Llewellyn adds. "While we realise the B45E ADT is perfectly matched to the Kobelco SK520XDL-10 Excavator with a 4,5 cubic-metre bucket as a loading tool, we're keen to deploy more Bell B60E ADTs on the site to further boost production."

And proving their point, Radds has brought in four Bell B60D and five Bell B50D ADTs for this operation and both Suren and Llewellyn are confident that this fleet will lower production costs of this important mined commodity.

Radds's tasks at the Lichtenburg mine include a full mining package including removing and stockpiling about 800mm of overburden before the limestone is exposed. Two shallow pits are currently being mined and the mined limestone is hauled between 1,8 and 2,6km to an area where it is blended. The Bell ADTs also haul waste material and topsoil for the continuous rehabilitation that takes place in terms of the mining plan.

The mined material becomes fine and underfoot conditions become slippery in wet weather. This is where the Bell ADTs with their superior traction, even under full loads, come into their own and production is rarely stopped during the wet summer months.

"We're concerned about diesel quality and therefore have based our contract calculations on wet rates so that we can monitor both the quality and quantity of fuel we use," Llewellyn adds. "With the Bell ADTs' frugal fuel burn across the models that we deploy, we're happy with the fuel burn they return."

On the maintenance of their Bell ADT fleet at the Lichtenburg operation, Radds relies on a Bell Care Package that is attended to by mechanics from Bell Equipment's branch in nearby Wolmaransstad.

"It would be amiss if we didn't mention the name of Corné Olivier who runs the Bell Equipment branch in Wolmaransstad and who sees to it that their response times are prompt, and his technical personnel are attentive with the correct service kits and spares when needed."

Suren has the last word when he says: "We created this expanded market ourselves through the quality of our service brought about by our committed people performing well with reliable equipment such as that which we source from Bell Equipment."



ADTs deliver next level safety

Bell Equipment is purposefully agnostic - this approach takes our Bell ADTs to a whole new level of safety by allowing our customers to fit their trucks with a third-party **PROXIMITY DETECTION SYSTEM (PDS)** and/or **COLLISION AVOIDANCE SYSTEM (CAS)** of their choice.

Both systems are designed to prevent injury and possible loss of life during the operation of mining vehicles near mining personnel. **PDS** improves the operator's awareness by detecting potential collision threats and warning the operator visually and audibly. **CAS** physically intervenes by either slowing a vehicle down or stopping it to prevent, or at least reduce, the severity of collisions between equipped vehicles and equipped pedestrians.



PDS/CAS Level 9 ready

Bell1705

Backhoe and Excavator fleet bears fruit for Riaan Palvie Sloomgrawers

A former fruit grower from Wellington in the Western Cape has found the Kobelco SK55SRX Excavator to be the machine of choice for his plant hire customers in the agricultural sector he himself once worked in.

Riaan Palvie and his wife, Simone, once farmed fruit close to the town of Wellington on land owned by their family. During this time Riaan had the foresight to buy a used two-wheel drive backhoe loader that he used on his own property and rented out on a plant hire basis. "By the time my siblings and I decided to sell the property in 1993, I already had a steady client base for the plant hire business I was building, so the switch from fruit grower to plant hire owner was almost seamless," he says. "I at first used a variety of machines until I bought my first two-wheel drive Bell 315SE Backhoe Loader in 2001 and had full use out of this machine for six years."

By now, his company Riaan Palvie Sloomgrawers's solid reputation had spread by word of mouth and, with increasing demand for his equipment and

trained operators from especially the local fruit and wine growers who all knew him, Riaan bought a new Bell 315SG Backhoe Loader every year for four years in a row.

"We would generally run the Bell Backhoe Loaders to 6 000 hours and then sell them out of hand with a full service history as they had good resale value," he says. "These days with improvements in design and build we run machines to around 9 000 hours."

By 2011 Riaan was running a fleet of six Bell Backhoe Loaders that were all busy machines steadily clocking up hours. Their tasks included removing old vines on wine and table grape estates and the associated infrastructure like gum poles, wire stays, concrete anchors and irrigation pipes.





Bell Equipment Sales Representative, Fiona Johnson, with Riaan Palvie, owner of Riaan Palvie Sloodgrawers with his new JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loader.

"In early 2022, we decided to replace an older Bell Backhoe Loader with a new JCB 3DX Eco Backhoe Loader which was delivered in March the same year," Riaan says. "Our operators and clients have been very pleased with this new machine and, being naturally aspirated, its fuel consumption is really reasonable considering the steep increases we've seen in the price of fuel recently."

Demand from the market saw Riaan acquiring some smaller excavators since 2011. He currently has six units. After Bell Equipment took on the Kobelco brand in 2017, he started looking seriously at the Kobelco SK55SRX 5,5-ton Excavator that had arrived with good reviews. His first such machine was delivered in 2019 and has since done some 4 500 hours.

"The smaller excavators have given us another tool in our offering and have proved to be winners," Riaan says. "These small but robust machines do much the same tasks as Backhoe Loaders but can get into steep areas where Backhoe Loaders struggle, and the steel tracks on the Kobelco SK55SRX Excavator last longer and offer really good traction which translates into a stable machine being a safe one."

According to Riaan, an equally important reason for acquiring the Kobelco SK55SRX Excavator is that

its compact design eliminates tail-swing, which allows it far more free movement in between vines in vineyards and rows of trees in fruit orchards. This has gone down particularly well with his farming clients. This first Kobelco SK55SRX Excavator was so popular with clients that Riaan bought a second one in 2021, which has already clocked 1 400 hours. Average fuel burn runs to around 4,5 to 5 litres an hour.

All Riaan's machines and the operators he supplies are utilised for between seven to nine hours a day including Saturdays. Attachments like ripper teeth and augers, and pole planters are also available.

"We've always relied on Bell Equipment's branch in Cape Town for our in-warranty servicing and major repairs of which there have been few," he says. "We do a lot of preventative maintenance ourselves and are guided by our in-house mechanic, but when we do need parts and service kits from Bell, we've always found their stockholding to be sound."

"In closing I'd like to mention the attention we get from Bell Equipment's Sales Representative Fiona Johnson, who often calls on us even when she knows we're not in the market for new machines. Her kind and caring attitude makes her more of a friend to Simone and me than a supplier."

All the bells and whistles for new E-series Water Tankers

Local original equipment manufacturer, Bell Equipment, has expanded its range of water tankers and now offers eight tank sizes having introduced 16 000-litre and 50 000-litre offerings.

Bell Equipment Product Manager, Warren Swart, represents the company's custom-made machines that are designed and manufactured by its dedicated Bell Application Equipment (BAE) division. This includes the Versatruck programme that comprises derivatives based on the chassis of the acclaimed Bell E-series Articulated Dump Truck range, such as Water Tankers.

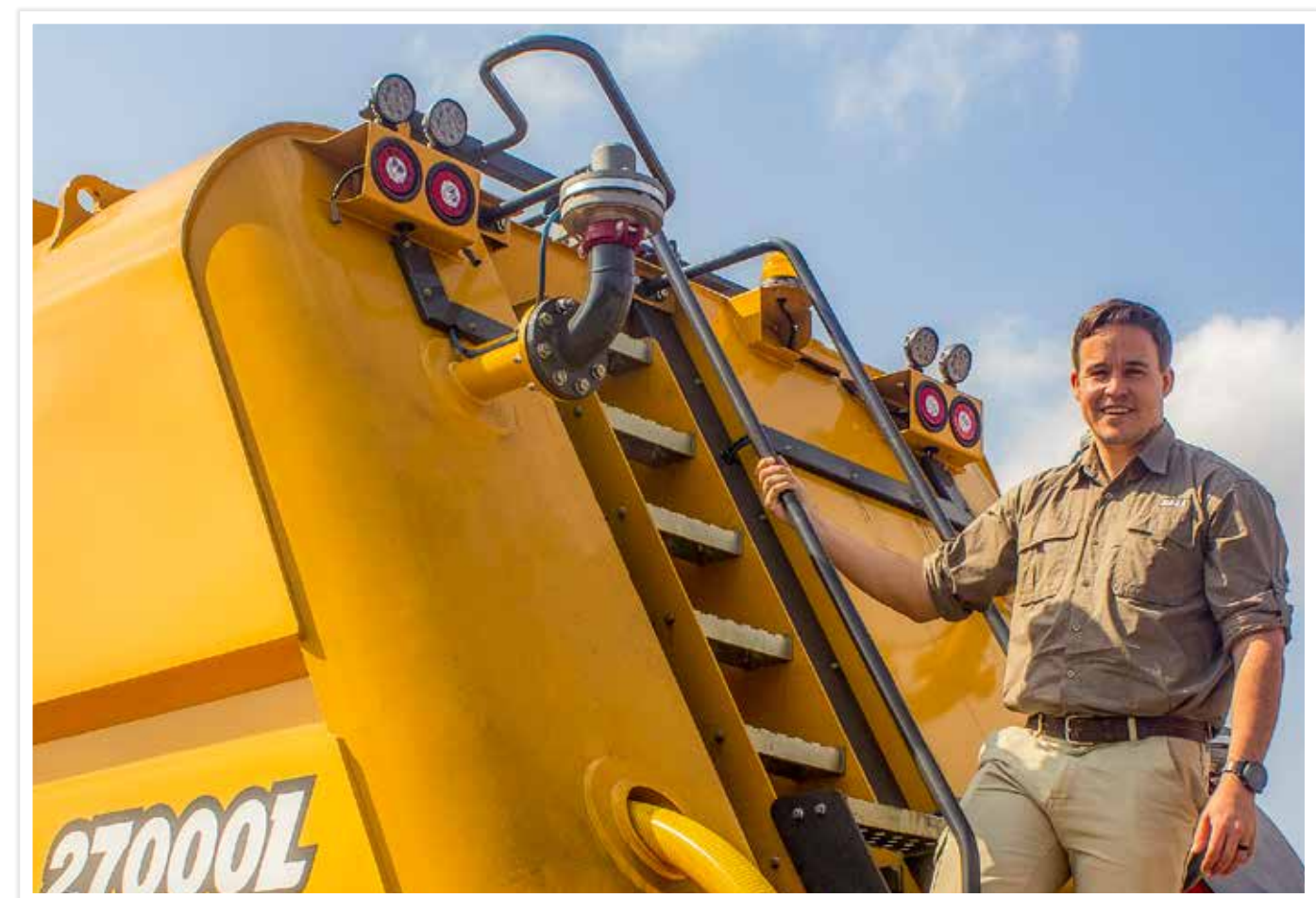
According to Warren, one of the primary purposes of a water tanker is dust suppression and the 50 000 litre tank was designed following interest from larger mining companies requiring more capacity for dust suppression on longer runways.

"During dry seasons, dust suppression is a critical part of safety in mining and construction operations, from visibility improvements to pulmonary disease

prevention. We are also able to offer fire fighting options to provide an additional benefit with one of our customers recommending our 38 000 litre water tank for mitigating fire risks in tall structures due to the remote water cannon stream reaching heights above 30 metres."

The 50 000 litre tank is paired with the B60E powerhead making it one of the largest articulated water tankers available on the global market. While it enables Bell to offer a full range of tank sizes, the B60E Water Tanker importantly offers commonality of parts to the growing number of customers running fleets of B60Es.

At the opposite end of the scale, the 16 000 litre Water Tanker was developed specifically with Bell Equipment's Australian customers in mind.



Bell Equipment Product Manager, Warren Swart, with a 27 000 litre water tank ready for fitment.

“Meeting the unique requirement to have a smaller articulated water tanker in tight industrialised areas stands as a testimony to our longstanding skill of listening to our customers’ requirements and innovating solutions to meet these needs.

The 16 000 litre water tank compliments the 38 000 litre water tank commonly sold into Australia with a top fill chute only, which excludes the standard dam or reservoir filling solution we have available. External plumbing is also kept to a minimum and guard rails are used to increase safety when an operator is required to climb on top of the water tank,” he says.

Bell Equipment Specials Division gives focus to the design and manufacturing of specialised products for individual markets and ensures that quality standards are on par with the rest of the Bell range. With regards to the Water Tanker design, Warren explains that the centre of gravity is kept low to reduce the risk of rollovers. A fully engineered baffle system prevents water surge and slosh, and provides increased stability for greater safety. In addition, tanks are coated internally with a dual epoxy paint lining as standard to prolong the life of the tank.

“Most of the truck is built through Bell Equipment’s standard high quality production facility while the Water Tankers, as specialised vehicles, are manufactured on our low volume line. This ensures that we remain cost competitive, while providing the time that our specialised vehicles require to meet our world-class quality standards.

“We adhere to international welding quality standards for earthmoving and construction equipment (AWD D14.3) with the inclusion of additional Bell specific quality inspection processes, such as a pressurised leak test on all tanks produced,” he adds.

“Our water tanks are engineered to perfectly integrate with our E-series ADTs as a complete unit, however they can be purchased separately and retrofitted to our E-series ADTs,” he continues. “Our water tanks can be customised to meet the customer’s requirements with a wide range of options. To mention a few, we offer a manual water cannon with a long-range spray nozzle and a remote water cannon that is remotely controlled using a joystick inside the cab.

“This cannon has an adjustable fog/stream pattern and a variety of flow settings between 1 100 and 3 200 litres per minute. Both water cannons feature high quality components making them highly suitable for heavy duty applications,” says Warren.

“Other options include additional batter spray valves that expand the spray pattern horizontally. A range of rear spray bars are available beginning with a gravity fed dribble bar that delivers an even

spread pattern covering the width of the vehicle. Penetration spray bars are also available, with either nozzles or holes, and are pressurised by the pump to create a jet of water which is not affected by wind.

“These options are complemented with the design of an in-cab control panel for all water tank functions. This provides an ergonomically sound controlled environment for the operator inside the cab. The in-cab control panel increases productivity and ensures operations are never interrupted by the need to exit the cab and manually open external valves.”

However, perhaps the most important feature is that since Bell, as an OEM, builds both the main chassis and the additional component required by the customer – in this case the water tank – the finished product enjoys full factory support. This means that wherever in the world a customer takes a Bell Water Tanker, they can be guaranteed of Bell Equipment’s technical support offered through the company’s global network of customer service centres and dealers.

Bell powerhouse pairings for the company’s range of water tanks:

16 000 litre	Bell 2806E
18 000 litre	B18E
23 000 litre	B25E
27 000 litre	B30E
35 000 litre	B40E
38 000 litre	B45E
43 000 litre	B50E
50 000 litre	B60E



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JCB Telehandler helps Opihi Builders reach new heights

How do you get a sofa that is too large to go up a stairwell into a third-floor apartment, or what to do if your new fiberglass swimming pool needs to go into the backyard of your home that has no access there?

It's pretty easy if you have a stable JCB 540-170 Telehandler and you simply extend its impressive 17-metre boom to reach those places with enough capacity for safe loads.

The introduction does not need to rely on 'marketing-speak' catchphrases but rather on actual situations that faced Plettenberg Bay-based Opihi Builders. Opihi Builders is owned by New Zealand-born Pete Henderson and 'Opihi' is a Maori word that means growth. According to Construction Manager, Raygen Hurford, the company has made its name in the picturesque Garden Route towns of Plettenberg Bay and Knysna since its founding in the mid-1980s and builds mostly luxury residential and holiday homes and high-density housing in secure complexes.

Some commercial buildings make up the balance of the company's portfolio.

"We can happily say we've built our reputation on delivering quality and ethical work and bringing projects in on time and on budget," Raygen says. "We have noticed changes in the industry though as skilled labour becomes scarcer and clients demand shorter turn-around times, which has led to us becoming more and more mechanised. It's important to note that mechanisation doesn't take away jobs but rather complements the human capital that is present."

To this end, Opihi Builders had previously owned a JCB 540-170 Telehandler and with an upturn in the company's post-COVID order book, they decided



to sell the older machine out of hand and buy a new one from Bell Equipment in Port Elizabeth where Sales Representative Tom Swartz assisted them.

"Having owned a similar machine before, the JCB 540-170 Telehandler almost sells itself due to its many varied, safe and efficient uses," Raygen continues. "From the outset, it immediately replaces antiquated technology like belt conveyors taking building material and support structures up to raised floors on multistoried building sites due to the long reach its 17-metre boom offers."

Raygen goes on to tell us about the JCB 540-170 Telehandler's mobility as being road legal – it can drive on public roads and can easily be moved between nearby sites without the use of lowbed transport. He mentions its tight turning circle through innovative all-wheel steering, making it the ideal tool in tight spaces like courtyards and parking areas.

"Some of the machine's obvious uses are using the interchangeable bucket and fork arrangement, with its quick release pins, to move sand or stone aggregate and also pallets with bricks, cement bags, boxes of tiles or stacks of reinforcing steel and shuttering for concrete work," Raygen says. "Then there are the less obvious uses like pouring concrete, moving six-metre shipping containers or waste skips and even roof trusses."

"We plan to fit a pedestrian cage on the forks to ensure the safety of people having to work at heights. Site safety is taken seriously on all our sites

and the JCB 540-170 Telehandler goes a long way to ensure those standards remain in place."

According to Raygen, they were very happy to see that a truly South African company such as Bell Equipment, with its large service footprint, had become the South African distributor for JCB equipment. This now gives them the option of getting their JCB 540-170 Telehandler serviced at either the Bell Equipment branch in Port Elizabeth or George, depending on which one is closest to the where the machine is deployed.

"From previous experience, we know that local plant hire companies in our immediate area don't offer telehandlers for hire and we're confident that, as it happened with our previous machine, our JCB Telehandler will earn additional revenue for us in that market, which is a bonus," Raygen adds. "We've always believed in being innovative and yes, we did move that couch into a third-floor apartment and lifted that swimming pool shell over a house using the 17-metre long boom on the previous machine."

Raygen is full of praise for the JCB 540-170 Telehandler's stability brought about by its mass of 12 tons and all-wheel drivetrain. Experience has taught them that the machine's 100-litre diesel tank is hard to empty as the machine runs very economically.

"We've worked with other telehandler brands in the past, but the JCB 540-170 Telehandler is an overall superior machine," he says.



BOMA BRAAI KIT



R2 100⁰⁰

COFFEE MUG



R60⁰⁰

THERMAL TUMBLER
METAL
BRONZE & GOLD



R130⁰⁰

TRUCKER CAMO GREEN-U-FLEX
NET BACK WITH ADJUSTABLE STRAP



R180⁰⁰

ROUND PEAK CAP - U-FLEX
GREY & BLACK



R200⁰⁰

SAFARI HATS
STONE
NAVY



R130⁰⁰

LEATHERMAN WAVE



R3 000⁰⁰

BELL TOOL
BLACK



R200⁰⁰

BILTONG CUTTER



R1 200⁰⁰

MENS CANVAS JACKET
OLIVE
SIZE: S - 5XL



R760⁰⁰

MENS K-WAY SOFTSHELL JACKET
BLACK
SIZE: L - 2XL



R1 090⁰⁰

LADIES K-WAY SOFTSHELL JACKET
BLACK
SIZE: L - 2XL



R1 090⁰⁰

KOBELCO EXCAVATOR SCALE MODEL



R2 700⁰⁰ Incl. VAT

MULTI-PUPOSE MAT
BAR MAT, GAMER MAT,
MOUSE PAD OR
DESK MAT



R250⁰⁰

LEATHER WALLET
BLACK



R560⁰⁰

JCB RAIN JACKET
BLACK & YELLOW
SIZE: S - 5XL



R450⁰⁰

JCB BOOTS
TAN
SIZE: 6 - 13



R1 866⁰⁰

JCB BOOTS
BROWN
SIZE: 6 - 13



R1 300⁰⁰

ADT B45E SCALE MODEL



R1 100⁰⁰

ADT B60E SCALE MODEL



R1 300⁰⁰

JCB 3CX SCALE MODEL



R1 400⁰⁰

BELTS
BLACK/BROWN
LEATHER STITCH/
BURNISHED



R270⁰⁰

VELDSKOEN
YELLOW
SIZE: 5 - 11



R960⁰⁰

FS3 PULL-UP BOOT STC
BROWN
SIZE: 6 - 13



R1 080⁰⁰

COOLER BOX
GREEN
45 LITRE



R2 300⁰⁰

COOLER BOX
BLUE
25 LITRE



R1 550⁰⁰

CAMP CHAIR



R1 300⁰⁰

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