

Exeo adds new JCB 3CX Global units to its fleet

When a leading Western Cape-based civil construction company bought its first JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader some 18 years ago, little did the owners know that after 20 000 hours of diligent service, it would return almost 40% of its original value when sold out of hand.



"We did not realise it at the time but owning that JCB 3CX Sitemaster was almost like the marriage vow of 'till death do us part'", says Charles Cooks, Chief Operating Officer of Exeo Khokela Civil Engineering Construction (Pty) Ltd.

"When we decided to sell it at 20 000 hours, all that really needed attention were a couple of minor oil leaks, which points to JCB's excellent design and build and our solid maintenance regimes," adds Exeo Plant Manager, Warren Thomas.

Exeo Construction was founded in 1995 in Cape Town and after several joint venture projects, the company merged with Khokela Construction in 2004 and so the modern-day Exeo Khokela Civil Engineering Construction (Pty) Ltd was born, which is known in the local construction industry as Exeo. The company's core business is found in earthworks, pipelines, roads, concrete structures, and municipal infrastructure.

"The greater bulk of our civil construction projects are found in and around the Cape Peninsula and then we also venture as far afield as Beaufort-West, Knysna and Ladismith," Charles explains. "Working further afield becomes expensive in terms of moving people and equipment."

Exeo has completed many civil construction projects like water and wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, reservoirs, bridges, canals, and roads. The company also boasts successfully undertaking some unique projects like a sewer system on top of the Table Mountain World Heritage site and a hydro-power project in the Franschhoek mountains. Other unusual projects include desalination infrastructure, water pressure maintenance, harbour upgrade and seawall reconstruction and construction and maintenance of petrochemical infrastructure – a long list providing interesting reading.

Mention machines and Charles relates the story that despite being a civil construction company with a measured dependency on yellow machines, Exeo relied on only two older backhoe loaders during the first few years of the company's existence. These would regularly break down alternatively, which would necessitate a certain amount of scrambling to get at least one working.

"The real value of owning your own equipment became evident when we started buying and operating new equipment in the early years, much like our first JCB 3CX Backhoe Loader purchased around 2010," Charles says. "Each of our projects has a cost code and we hire our own equipment for a project, which brings a return on the investment."

"Added value and a decent return on the investment is a given as with careful operating and diligent maintenance regimes, we strive to get the maximum life out of machines, which our JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loaders have proved is possible time and again. We strive to get anything between 16 000 to 20 000 hours from a machine and equipment is assessed every year."

The different uses of the JCB 3CX Global machines are varied as Warren explains: "We've found that when trenching, something we do a lot of in infrastructure projects, the breakout force on the JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loader compares favourably with that of a 5-ton mini-excavator and even more so as our machines' dippers extend a further 1,2 metres beyond that of a normal machine. The front clamshell buckets handle most fill material easily when it comes to laying bedding for piping and backfilling trenches that contain water and other infrastructure."

Warren adds that they often add forks to the front buckets as these come in handy when moving pipes and pallets with building material.



André Jordaan, Bell Sales Representative (left) with Warren Thomas, Exeo Plant Manager (centre), and Charles Cooks, Exeo COO.



"There are not many equipment suppliers that can maintain competitive pricing consistently over time but our experience with Bell Equipment as the South African distributors for JCB equipment, has proved that this can be done," Charles explains. "We've found that when buying two JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loaders in the latter part of 2021 and a total of three in 2022, they were all priced the same, which is a real bonus."

"And let it be known that our newest JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loaders were bought because of the positive experience we had with the older machines," he says. "Average fuel consumption of between six and eight litres an hour also fits well into our cost structures."

Most people are aware of the water challenges the city of Cape Town has faced in the recent past and Exeo's latest JCB 3CX Global Backhoe Loader was

taken straight to an aquifer project the city was constructing to help manage water storage for the future.

Both Charles and Warren have high praise for the technical support they receive from Kobus van Zyl and his team of mechanics and parts specialists at Bell Equipment in Cape Town. They agree that with good response times, services can be timeously booked and

with the commonality of many parts, supply issues are not a factor.

Bell Equipment Sales Representative, André Jordaan, mentions an interesting fact when he says that he has recently received signed orders for seven new JCB Global Backhoe Loaders with Exeo as a reference. Such is the power of word-of-mouth from a credible source for a quality product.