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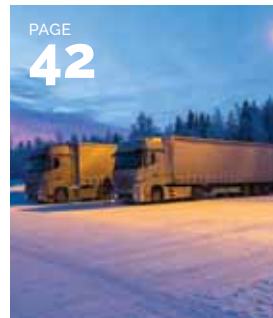
It was the only bakkie range to not offer an engine bigger than 2.0 litres, and is now the only one that offers a 3.0-litre V6 ... The Volkswagen Amarok has been to the gym.



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Truck Test 2017: **DONE AND DUSTED!**



Truck Test 2017 was utterly awesome! That's not just my opinion; it's shared by the participants in general



CHARLEEN CLARKE

The Truck Test programme concluded at a lunch in Johannesburg recently, where the highly anticipated results were announced. The lunch was extremely well attended; there wasn't a spare seat in the house!

Martin Dammann, director of TruckScience, did a superb job of explaining the results and how they were calculated. (Go to www.focusontransport.co.za to check them out.)

Guests were also treated to a video, which was specially

produced to mark the event (you'll find that at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywsGivpNTGU).

I'm delighted to tell you that the feedback from all the guests and participants in the event was



overwhelmingly positive. Here are just some of the comments we have received:

"Thank you for affording MAN Truck & Bus the opportunity to participate this year again. It is always a pleasure to work with you and your team. The event is world class and the organisation is most professional.

"Team MAN certainly achieved what we wanted this year, and are very happy with our results. Especially the TGS 26.480 6x4 >



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HOW MUCH
IT SAVES
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BLS result, which is most pleasing as the top performer in the interlink category. We will be extending our success story in this regard over the next months. We are proudly part of it all!" – Dave van Graan, head of special sales projects at MAN Truck & Bus South Africa.

"Thank you for allowing me to be a part of Truck Test 2017, I really appreciate everything you did to help promote my company and hope that I fulfilled

enjoyed being part of this test." – Chris Smith, general manager, commercial vehicles at Hyundai Automotive South Africa.

"Thanks for the marketing opportunity and well done." – Sid Beeton, divisional transport manager, One Sure.

"It was a pleasure to take part and we really enjoyed it this year. Looking forward to the next one!" – Dean Temlett, MAN support and projects manager at MAN Truck & Bus South Africa.

"Thank you for the opportunity to be part of the event again. Seems like it was a great success this year (as always)!" – Raymond Schulz, chief operating officer of Ctrack.

"Congratulations on a very successful truck run. It was great to be



your expectations. Here's hoping the next Truck Test will be even bigger and better!" – Geoffrey Campbell, director of Quantum Concept.

"The Truck Test continues to be a very good and worthwhile initiative and we are very glad to have been part of the 2017 test. We look forward to taking part in future tests. Thank you and the team at **FOCUS** for organising a wonderful test." – Elvis Mutseura, product marketing manager at Iveco South Africa.

"It was a pleasure providing the load and we will gladly look at assisting in future." – Steve Swanepoel, general manager: sales, marketing and technical support at Sephaku Cement.

"It was a big learning curve for us. We thoroughly

part of it!" – Morne Fourie, group tactical manager at Van Wettens.

"It remains a privilege to be associated with the Truck Test. Thank you for the opportunity. Looking forward to the next Truck Test" – Eugene van Niekerk, national business development manager at Ctrack.

"We appreciate the opportunity to have been involved. Congratulations on another successful test! All the credit must go to Loutjie on our side. Thanks Loutjie!!" – Tjaart van der Walt, branch manager at Afrit.

We really appreciate all these messages and the incredible support of the industry. Here's to the next one! **F**

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Risky BUSINESS

If we can practise risk management in the boardroom, we should also be able to do it when driving on the road



GAVIN MYERS

Have you heard of risk management? It's one of those ubiquitous corporate buzzwords in the safety, health, environment and quality (SHEQ) and occupational health and safety (OHS) spheres.

Wikipedia describes risk management as: "The identification, assessment and prioritisation of risks followed by coordinated and economical application of resources to minimise, monitor, and control the probability and/or impact of unfortunate events, or to maximise the realisation of opportunities."

That's quite a definition, but then, this is quite serious business... You get risk practitioners, risk auditors, risk analysts, risk assessors, risk advisors, et al – who all have the goal of ensuring a company's employees finish the work day incident free, so that they can go home to their families.

What happens then? After the inductions have been undertaken and the SHEQ officials have chalked up another successful day of "zero harm", and after the risk auditors/analysts/assessors have concluded their audits/analysis/assessments and submitted their recommendations on how to make the workplace even more OHS compliant, do all the company's employees take these skills and recommendations home with them?

Call me a cynic, but I think they get hung up with the hard hats and high-vis jackets – at least when it comes to the vast majority.

You see, this time last year I wrote about our trip to the annual Nampo Harvest Day, during which an inattentive driver came close to causing an accident with our vehicle on one of the very poor Free State roads. And those roads are extremely poor! At one point the GPS suggested routing us via a dirt road ... but I digress...

Heading out to Nampo 2017 (you can read Anlerie de Wet's report on page 22), any company's risk advisor would probably be displeased with the fact that its employees were to traverse them.

Negotiating the minefield of potholes, dips, bumps, missing or loose tar and poor patchwork (what little of it there was) required reduced speed, intense concentration and unwavering patience.

This did not stop countless drivers from speeding, losing patience and overtaking – in some cases, multiple vehicles at a time. Most of these drivers were in bakkies (one even had children bouncing around unstrapped) and quite a few were wearing corporate branding.

That's what made me wonder: if most companies today are so risk averse and try to instil a culture of "reduced risk" and "zero harm" in their employees, why do these employees forget all they have learnt when they leave the premises? Why do they feel it's acceptable to drive at more than 140 km/h on very poor rural roads with countless risks around them?

Hit a pothole, burst a tyre or lose control... Swerve at the last minute to miss said pothole and sideswipe the guy impatiently trying to overtake you... What about the farm animals, slow-moving trucks over a blind rise, tractors crossing from concealed side roads?

All these were present, real risks ... yet – as per our definition – there was no identification, assessment and prioritisation of risk, followed by coordinated application of resources to minimise, monitor and control the probability and/or impact of unfortunate events...

The "it'll never happen to me" mentality prevails. Maybe it's about time South African corporates expanded risk management to the roads. **F**



A TRUSTED PARTNER FOR AFRICA



The African Department of Sinotruk (Hong Kong) Company (CNHTC) is actively carrying out its "Innovation Promotion Year" strategy. Compared to last year, orders in the first quarter of 2017 increased by 88 percent, while the sales volume increased by 35 percent, breaking the sales record in the African market

Since 2015, African countries that rely heavily on crude oil exports have experienced an economic downturn as a result of the continued low price of oil. In addition, the social and economic conditions keep deteriorating in certain areas. This has led to shortages in foreign currency and a stagnation of infrastructure construction in many major African countries. When this happens, the market requirement for commercial vehicles shrinks and sales volumes stop increasing.

The CNHTC African Department has responded positively by consolidating relationships with dealers and key customers. In 2016, the market share of the CNHTC African Department increased with its heavy truck holding the biggest market share.

In 2017, the CNHTC African Department has focused on "market and order" and keeps improving its network to get new orders. Localisation has continued based on the market situation. Improving the quality of management and personnel are also priorities to ensure that the "Innovation Promotion Plan" is fully implemented.

EXPLORE POTENTIAL MARKETS AND UPGRADE SALES NETWORK

The company has developed strategies for different regional markets based on the national conditions and the degree of development of their heavy-truck industries.

In markets with well-developed sales networks, the aim is to first manage and optimise the existing sales and distribution networks and expand sales through marketing of "classic vehicles". At the same time, new products will be gradually introduced.

Second, special attention is paid to key customers to maintain good relationships and discuss in-depth

cooperation. Third, the company pays close attention to new market requirements, introduces new products on time and meets the demands of different customers. In markets with less-developed sales networks, CNHTC will continue to explore the market and promote its products using special marketing activities.

IMPROVE SERVICE QUALITY AND UPGRADE SPARE-PARTS NETWORK

Customer relations will be strengthened by ensuring efficient after-sales service and the convenient purchasing of parts and accessories. Central storerooms will be built in strategic areas to ensure an efficient supply of parts and accessories. Priorities include expansion of the dealer network, the promotion of strategic cooperation and ensuring adequate accessory reserves.

COMPREHENSIVE PROMOTION OF LOCALISATION HELPS CNHTC EARN A GOOD INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION

Production efficiencies are constantly being improved through the promotion of localisation in the African market and the present knocked-down (KD) assembly projects, as well as by using scientific and flexible management methods. At present, CNHTC vehicles can be assembled in bulk, which supports the strong sales growth of the African Division.

In most African countries CNHTC is in active contact with clients to mobilise their potential and create localised finance plans. With the help of improved material flow at important ports and creative financial cooperation with agencies, CNHTC aims to earn the trust of customers, establish a good reputation and enhance its standing as a major supplier to the African market.

MEDIUMS

getting along well



The medium commercial vehicle (MCV) segment has held its own so far this year, returning growth numbers in the first quarter. **FOCUS** explores the reasons for this performance and assesses the segment's prospects for the rest of 2017

Variety is the name of the game in the MCV segment, with an array of small trucks and large vans often competing for a similar audience. This melting pot of medium-weight magic is, however, not without its ups and downs.

According to Jaco Steenekamp, general manager: sales and marketing, Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA) Commercial Vehicles, the overall MCV market showed a decline of 19 percent in 2016, over 2015, making it the segment with the biggest deterioration last year.

Speaking from a van perspective, Steenekamp says: "The large-van segment of the MCV market showed the biggest decline, being 27 percent smaller than in 2015. One reason for this was difficulty in getting operating permits for 22-seater taxis."

Quarter one of 2017, however, saw the segment make a recovery, before taking a dive again in April (along with the rest of the new-vehicle market).

Martin Liebenberg, head of sales at Iveco South Africa, agrees: "We expected a normal decrease in April with all the public holidays, however, some of it is economically driven and there was a bigger decrease than usual."

Harry Makitla, product manager: Fuso Trucks

Southern Africa, adds: "One of the factors is our volatile political environment. There were a number of protests and this negatively affected market strength. When South Africa was downgraded to junk status our credit rating took a knock, which meant that fewer customers were likely to invest in new trucks."

It seems politics and economics will be the biggest influencers on the market this year. "We predicted a flat market at the beginning of the year," says Liebenberg. "There may be a short-term decline, depending on what happens politically – we've seen some impact from that already. Amazingly, the rand has kept some strength, so it's not terrible at the moment."

Makitla reports that the market may stabilise in the short to medium term. "As far as we can forecast, we see the market stabilising, which means there is potential for growth. As it was with quarter one, our economy is stabilising somewhat – albeit very slowly. We are confident that there will be some quarters where truck sales increase again," he says.

It seems customers are also latching onto the relative stability ... though not without some exceptions; such as in the 22-seater taxi market. In addition to the difficulty in getting operating permits,

as noted by Steenekamp, Liebenberg adds that obtaining finance is currently also not easy.

"Banks are risk-averse at the moment. For example, deposits required on taxis are now reaching 20 percent of the purchase price and a lot of clients just don't have the funds. There is also a cash-flow implication for their businesses. We need to find different ways of putting vehicles on the road," he explains.

Attitudes among large-van buyers seem to be a bit more positive, though. Steenekamp says the VW Crafter increased its segment share from 28 percent in 2015 to 30 percent in 2016. Liebenberg suggests that the Daily also saw an increase in sales, but the company is not resting on its laurels.

"We are watching the rand/euro exchange carefully, because that has quite a big impact on our sales – but there is more growth potential in the market," he reiterates.

Makitla suggests that Fuso experienced growth in both 2016 and the first quarter of 2017. He says, however, that truck buyers are closely monitoring market activity in the wake of uncertainty.

"They are holding onto their current vehicles for as long as possible. We are seeing that even customers who should replace their vehicles are being cautious and are rather taking a 'wait-and-see' approach," he says.

If there's one thing that is definitely unlikely to change, though, it would be customers' priorities. "Quality and reliability of products, value for money and best service support are key," says Makitla. "We also know that customers are learning that there is so much more to owning a truck than just the purchase price. They are realising that it is about total cost of ownership."

Steenekamp suggests that an aspect of the Crafter's growth during 2016 was the new standard service plan that VW introduced during the year. "Almost without exception, all customers in the large-van segment demand reliability and quality first and foremost, then a competitive cost of ownership, and then practicality and performance," he says.

Liebenberg concurs. "Speed is of the essence. For example, clients want to drop a vehicle for a service at short notice, so we have to accommodate them. Parts availability is also critical, as are running costs, which is what everyone watches in this segment. Many clients are even beginning to look at buybacks.

"More and more buyers also want comfort features such as speed control, air-conditioning and a radio; this plays a big role in this segment," he adds.

It also adds to the competitiveness between some very different types of vehicles in the melting pot that is the MCV segment... **F**

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Today's technology, **TOMORROW'S ENGINES**

GAVIN MYERS delves into drivetrain technology predictions to uncover the power behind vehicles of the future

For more than a century the internal combustion engine (ICE) has been the powertrain of choice for the world's road-based vehicles, but what might become of it in future?

Governments the world over continually implement ever stricter emissions legislation and incentivise the use of electric vehicles – especially in city centres

where pollution has become a touchy subject – while engine manufacturers endeavour to advance the development of powertrains running on alternative fuels, to the ire of the world's oil companies.

It's a sticky situation that places all ICE-powered vehicles at the centre of a tug-of-war between global warming, technological advancement, political points and profits.



In 2016, the European Road Transport Research Advisory Council (ERTRAC) published its 75-page report entitled: Future Light and Heavy Duty ICE Powertrain Technologies.

Covering all topics from the current European scenario to ICE technologies and the role of transmissions, the report makes for some interesting reading and could provide some clues as to the future of the ICE.

From ERTRAC's perspective, fossil-based fuels are expected to continue to dominate the energy pool for road transport until 2030, and, over an even longer period (2040+) the road-transport energy supply mix will be composed of four main parts: oil-based fuels, natural gas, renewable liquid fuels and electricity (produced mainly from renewables).

The heavy-duty vehicle market is expected to be dominated by the ICE until at least 2050; given the need for power and energy density for the propulsion of these vehicles (which is provided by liquid and gaseous fuels) and the widespread existing infrastructure.

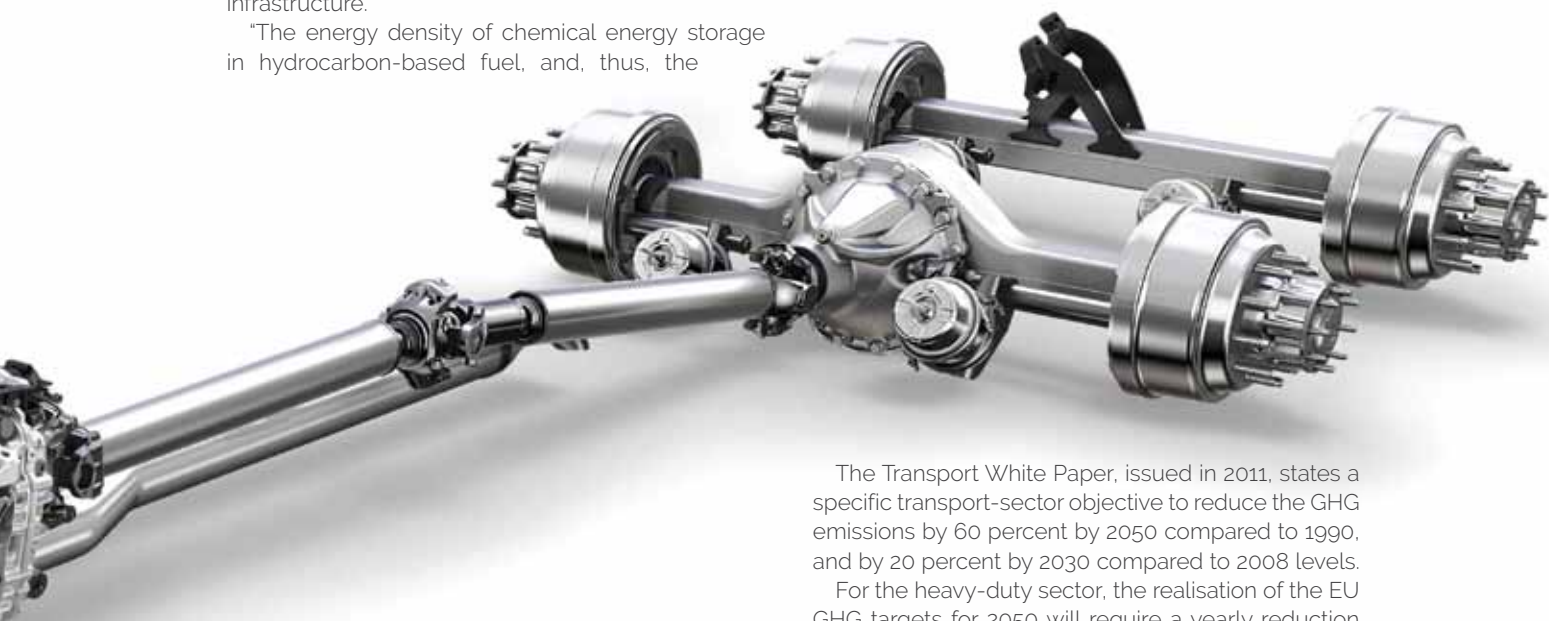
"The energy density of chemical energy storage in hydrocarbon-based fuel, and, thus, the

vehicle's range, will always be greater than that provided by electro-chemical storage," the report states.

With that in mind, the question is raised of how the ICE (in this case referring specifically to diesel) can be continually improved over the next 30-or-so years.

According to the report, the higher cost of diesel technology relative to petrol is primarily attributable to the cost of the combustion system technology (air handling, fuel injection, higher-pressure engine operation) and emission-control equipment. Overcoming the barriers will help maximise fuel economy, improve exhaust after-treatment system effectiveness and durability and reduce overall costs.

This will be even more pertinent when one considers that the European Union (EU) Climate and Energy Framework has stated an objective of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the EU from by 80 to 95 percent, by 2050, compared with 1990 levels.



While many of these considerations are expected to occur during the heavy-duty vehicle evolution, the load operation for the heavy-duty engine and its performance and efficiency will become more challenging.

The Transport White Paper, issued in 2011, states a specific transport-sector objective to reduce the GHG emissions by 60 percent by 2050 compared to 1990, and by 20 percent by 2030 compared to 2008 levels.

For the heavy-duty sector, the realisation of the EU GHG targets for 2050 will require a yearly reduction of CO₂ of at least three percent across the complete annual new heavy-duty vehicle fleet sales in the EU. To do so will require massive effort and increasing the efficiency of powertrains will be the name of the game.

So, how to improve the ICE and powertrain? ERTRAC quotes three steps:

1. Improving engine efficiency, particularly with regard to the properties of low-carbon fuels;
2. The use of low-carbon/near net-zero carbon fuels;
3. Electrification, including hybridisation (which requires highly efficient and ultra-clean ICEs that use renewable, low-carbon fuels).

Considering the inefficiencies of modern ICE powertrains (which the report elaborates on extensively), overall efficiency improvements



of between ten and 12 percent can be realised with compression-ignition engines (and about 15 percent for spark-ignition engines). How can this be achieved?

"Increasing ICE thermal efficiency and reducing heat and friction losses still represent important fields to recover and save energy. The role and use of advanced materials should not be underestimated here," the report notes.

"A specific pathway to a significant increase of powertrain efficiency lies in an unbiased reallocation of powertrain functions and redesign of powertrain architecture," the report adds.



All aspects of the powertrain, including internal combustion engines and transmissions, still offer much scope for improvement in efficiency.

Furthermore, when one considers that 70 percent of the combustion energy is converted to heat that is lost through the exhaust and cooling systems, the re-use of waste heat represents a great opportunity to improve the efficiency of the internal combustion engine. This is especially true in high-load operation and heavy-duty vehicle applications.

While many of these considerations are expected to occur during the heavy-duty vehicle evolution and/or as part of heavy-duty powertrain hybridisation, the load operation for the heavy-duty engine and its performance and efficiency will become more challenging.

"Efficiency measures are simply not sufficient," ERTAC says. "In addition, understanding the impacts of emerging fuel changes (for example, biofuels) is

critical and a large-scale introduction of alternative fuels is also necessary to accomplish a reduction of GHG emissions of the required magnitude."

To make this possible, diesel fuel will also need to evolve to third-generation biodiesel, in order to overcome current limitations in blending biodiesel in modern diesel engines.

"Current emission-reducing trends – in increasing the pressure of injection systems and the complexity of the after-treatment system, together with the durability requirement – demand bio/renewable diesel fuels that could be produced from vegetable oils, waste oils, sugars and biomass, using processes such as hydro treating (HVO), hydrogenation, sugar-to-diesel and Fischer-Tropsch (FT), for example.

"In parallel with 'conventional' advanced biodiesel fuels, new processes for sustainable bio-methanol production will also pave the way for a wider use of Dimethyl-Ether (DME – a synthetically produced alternative to diesel for use in specially designed compression-ignition engines) as well as, on the engine combustion side, advanced concepts for dual-fuel approaches.

"This could provide the solution to maintain diesel engine efficiency while introducing different kinds of alternative fuels. Looking further into the future, work is being done to explore the use of algae to produce liquid as well as gaseous biofuels," the report states.

Despite this article not looking at transmission and other driveline components as discussed in the report, it's clear that there is much to be considered if future GHG targets are to be met. In addition, the report suggests that vehicle aerodynamics, rolling resistance, optimised vehicle loading and diversity of vehicle operation need to be improved.

"The redesign requires novel transmissions and breaks with the off-the-shelf recombination of existing modules from non-hybrid powertrains into a hybrid powertrain. On the other hand, it offers the chance to provide

full powertrain functionality at reduced complexity and cost. The latter is of paramount importance for customer acceptance and fast market penetration of electrified powertrains," ERTAC says.

"All improvements in the ICE technology will have significant beneficial impacts on fuel consumption, on people and goods transport efficiency, on CO₂ output and on emissions reduction, with a wider use of low-carbon fuels (such as natural gas) and renewable fuels (advanced liquid biofuels and bio and synthetic methane), over a long period of time.

"These improvements, when integrated with the electrification of vehicles in the form of hybridisation, will maximise impact at the lowest cost," says ERTAC.

Here's looking forward to 30 more years of interesting ICE development. **F**

Allison Transmission Significant Savings in Fuel Costs... TC10 for Truck Tractors

New tractor transmission demonstrates major improvement over manual and automated manual transmissions.

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana, USA – Allison Transmission Holdings Inc. (NYSE: ALSN) announced that approximately 100 major fleets throughout the U.S., representing a variety of applications, have been using our TC10 transmission in real world duty cycles of the last two years. The better fuel economy, coupled with Allison's renowned reliability, durability and ease of operation makes the TC10 a powerful tool for improving fleet efficiency.

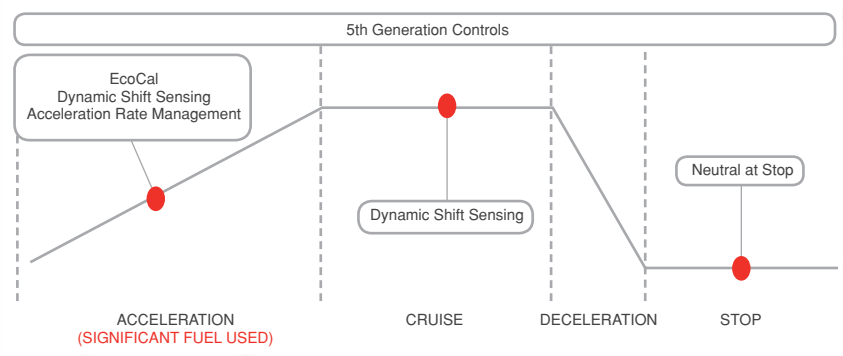
The TC10 is specifically designed for both city and highway tractor duty cycles and provides a blended architecture with full power shifts, a torque converter and a twin countershaft gear box. It is fully automatic and offers smooth, seamless shifting through 10 gear ranges. This optimizes acceleration and fuel economy, making this transmission especially ideal for distribution applications where a tractor-trailer splits its work cycle between city and highway conditions.

Overall, fleets adopting the TC10 and sharing data with Allison are reporting an average fuel economy improvement of 8.3 percent when compared to other transmission technologies. With FuelSense®, a unique package of software and electronic controls, the TC10 achieves the best fuel economy, regardless of driver experience or expertise. It shifts at just the right points to maintain vehicle performance and maximize fuel economy. Allison engineers focused on all aspects of the vehicle's operation to achieve the best integrated package.

When you factor in all of the life cycle costs, including the price of the vehicle, fuel and preventive maintenance – along with increased driver retention- an Allison Automatic-equipped vehicle costs less to operate than a competitively-equipped vehicle. Due to its ease of use, the TC10, like all Allison fully automatic transmissions, expands the size of the driver pool. Even experienced drivers benefit from more precise, safer handling and improved comfort. Fully automatic shifting reduces driver fatigue and keeps a driver's attention on the road.



FuelSense features improve tractor fuel economy





Playing its **PART**

ANLERIE DE WET looks at how parts manufacturers ensure their products are durable, of good quality and safe

Fanie Schoeman, GM of quality management and methods at Bosch, says: "Testing standards depend on the product type and/or market sector. However, for the automotive industry, the global standard is currently ISO 9001/TS 16949, which is set to change in 2018 to the revised International Automotive Task Force 16949 standard.

"Based on the global standard, all automotive part suppliers must be certificated and audited at least annually by this certification board. In South Africa the certification board is DQS South Africa."

Timothy Edwards, technical customer coordinator at GUD Holdings, says the company has a fully equipped laboratory at its manufacturing site in Prospecton, Durban, to make sure that all its sets of vehicle filters are up to standard.

"We are able to fully test our filters to ensure that they conform to vehicle manufacturers' specifications in terms of performance, life and efficiency, as well as build quality," says Edwards.

"Our laboratory processes are audited regularly

to ensure that we are compliant with International Organisation Standardisation (ISO) 9001, ISO 14001, as well as TS 16949 manufacturing procedures."

Schoeman says: "As a general rule, all products achieve 100 percent when tested on the manufacturing line. Testing can consist of several test processes depending on product type and agreed customer requirements. Testing conditions are agreed upon between Bosch and its customers."

Edwards says GUD has testing rigs for oil, air and fuel filters, which are capable of testing to ISO, Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), as well as Japanese Industrial Standard specifications.

"Random samples of our part types are selected as they move along the manufacturing process and are tested. In the filter development stage, each and every individual part is tested to ensure conformance to original equipment standards, prior to being released to production for series manufacturing," he notes.

Edwards says GUD also employs a method of continuous quality control from the time the raw

materials arrive at the factory, to the time the finished product is sent to the warehouse.

"In addition to this, first-off and last-off samples of every batch of parts are analysed to ensure that there is no deviation in the quality or specification during the manufacturing process," says Edwards.

"There are on-site measuring and testing stations at various points of manufacture, so that the parts can be analysed in real time. If any deviation is found, that batch is immediately placed on hold for further analysis.

"All our testing methods are governed by ISO standards, which is the international benchmark used by most leading filter manufacturers around the world. Testing of the part will include dimensional testing against the drawing. In-process testing will include filter integrity, for example, bubble testing to ISO 2942 and hydraulic pulse fatigue testing ISO 4548-5 according to sample plans," adds Edwards.

Other than meeting the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) specifications, GUD also meets the ISO standard prescribed for filters, such as ISO 4548 part 1 to 12 for oil filters, ISO 4020 and ISO 19438 for fuel filters and ISO 5011 for air filters.

Edwards says the company is currently preparing for the revised International Automotive Task Force (IATF) 16949 standard.

"These standards all provide the prescribed testing methods for testing of filters. Any stock that doesn't meet our quality standards is placed on hold and moved to a quarantine area, to prevent possible usage in the factory," explains Edwards.

"Further analysis is then done on the suspect product to determine the root cause of the problem and whether the stock can be reworked to match the intended quality standard, or if it would need to be scrapped."

Schoeman says at Bosch all products have at least one functional test and there are a few more specific tests based on product type and customer requirements.

"Testing is based on product design knowledge. Using the Failure Mode and Effect Analysis method, risks are determined that can influence product reliability. Testing specifications are then developed to reduce or eliminate any risks," says Schoeman.

If there are any quality problems with its products, Bosch has manufacturing quality gates that measure failure types picked up during each production phase.

"After the second same failure, the operator stops the process and requests assistance from a line manager. If the failure is batch related, Bosch follows containment rules in the plant, in the transport flow and at customers to contain faulty parts and reduce risks," he concludes. **F**

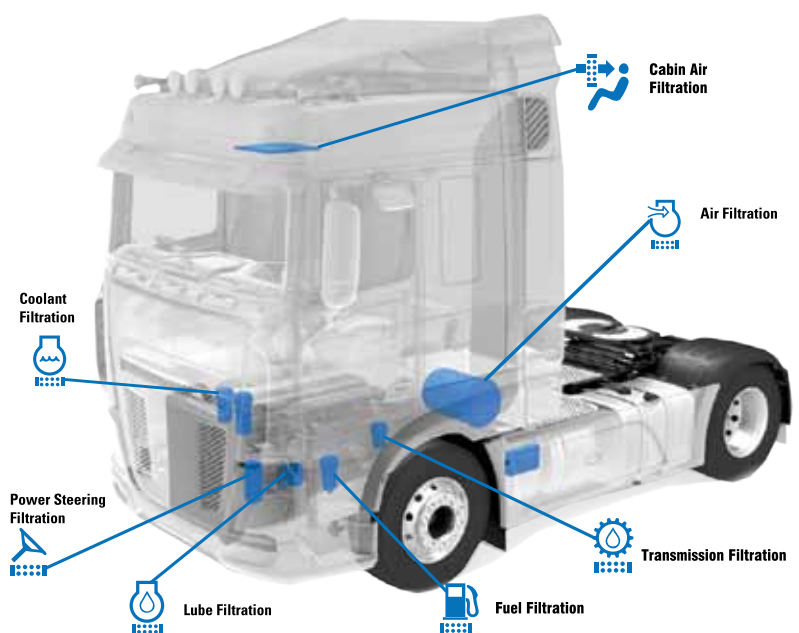
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CONSTRUCTING

the perfect vehicle

The South African economy may have been on a rollercoaster ride over the past few years, but that doesn't mean operators in the construction segment need to treat their vehicles in the same way, writes VIC OLIVER

Construction vehicles have to work hard and need to be inspected regularly, well maintained, correctly loaded and driven by well-trained drivers. This is the only way to ensure a high vehicle productivity rate and low operating cost in this harsh environment.

Construction vehicles are used in dusty, tough conditions and undertake short trips. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that they are inspected and serviced at regular intervals in accordance with the truck manufacturers' recommended maintenance schedules.

Driving these vehicles requires a specific set of skills, so drivers need to be well trained. For

example, they should be skilled at manoeuvring their vehicles safely in the limited space often found on construction sites, and should be able to ensure that they don't get stuck in mud on wet sites, or overturn on sites where the ground is unstable.

Drivers should also be trained to operate all the ancillary equipment that is fitted to their vehicles.

It is unfortunate that many of the construction vehicles that frequent our roads around the towns and cities are overloaded – especially the vehicles transporting sand and stone – and are contributing to the deterioration of the country's road infrastructure.

While overloading on the main national long-

distance routes is policed, little action seems to be taken against the overloaded vehicles that use the roads around the towns and cities.

A good example illustrating this problem is a 6x4 truck chassis fitted with the standard ten-cubic-metre capacity, end-tipping body – its maximum legal rating, when operating on any public road, is 25 700 kg. (This is also described as the V rating and is displayed on the vehicle data plate.)

To establish the estimated legal payload of a vehicle with a V rating of 25 700 kg, the tare mass of the truck chassis and the end-tipping body must be subtracted from the V rating.



Driving these vehicles requires a specific set of skills, so drivers need to be well trained.

Therefore V = 25 700 kg, minus estimated truck chassis tare mass = 8 600 kg, minus estimated body tare mass = 2 600 kg, gives us an estimated legal payload of 14 500 kg.

However, if the operator of the end tipper described above does not take into account the density of the material being loaded into the vehicle, he could load ten cubic meters of wet river sand with an estimated density of 2 000 kg per cubic metre, which would result in the vehicle being overloaded by 5 500 kg!

Note that the above calculation does not take into account the mass distribution of the vehicle, tyre size, manufacturer's maximum axle capacity, or gross vehicle rating. Therefore the actual legal rating could be less, depending on the specification of the truck.

Loose material falling off the back of construction vehicles and damaging other vehicles using the road is another problem that drivers and owners of these vehicles need to address. Drivers should also ensure that their vehicles are always clean and correctly loaded before they enter a public road.

Despite the tough economic times that the South African economy has experienced over the last couple of years, the sale of new and used construction vehicles has remained strong thanks to the ongoing demand for new houses, shopping centres, roads, electricity installations and water supply.

A well-maintained, professionally driven and correctly loaded construction vehicle will give the owner many years of trouble-free operation at minimal operating cost. **F**



One of this country's most respected commercial vehicle industry authorities, VIC OLIVER has been in this industry for over 50 years. Before joining the FOCUS team, he spent 15 years with Nissan Diesel (now UD Trucks), 11 years with Busaf and seven years with International. Do you have a comment or thought you would like to share based on this column? Visit www.focusontransport.co.za and have your say!

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NEW VEHICLE

FUSO constructs **ITS FUTURE**

Fuso has an objective to double its market share by 2020. The new FJ 26.280C construction vehicle is the first in a line of new products that will take it there. GAVIN MYERS reports



As competition within the South African truck market gets more intense, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are looking at ways to provide more diversity in their product lines, higher levels of service satisfaction and increased efficiencies in order to meet their stated objectives.

For Fuso, that is to double its market share by 2020, over that which it achieved in 2015.

"We are sustainably growing our Fuso business in South Africa," says Jasper Hafkamp, executive director Daimler Trucks & Buses Southern Africa. "We grew the brand's market share by almost three percent between 2014 and



2017 with the introduction of new products and services. We have a clear ambition to further develop and support the brand and would like to see a double-digit share as we reach 2020."

As Naeem Hassim, head of Fuso Trucks Southern Africa, adds: "We aim to build an aspirational brand with some unique selling points and our future looks bright."

Product expansion up to and beyond 2020 is a clear part of that plan, as is the ability to manufacture the vehicles sold in South Africa locally. Following the launch of the FA9 and FJ 16.230 distribution trucks, the company now has its sights set on the construction segment with the new FJ 26.280C. All three of these vehicles are sourced from the Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV) operation – but more on that later.

BUILT FOR CONSTRUCTION

The Fuso team is aware that the previously uncharted and highly competitive construction segment accounts for only ten percent of sales in the local new-truck market. However, the team is confident that the new FJ 26.280C is the right vehicle for the job. It has, after all, already been launched in 25 countries with more than 10 000 units sold to date.

"Our customers have asked for a construction vehicle, and we are filling that gap in our product portfolio," says Harry Makitla, product manager Fuso Trucks Southern Africa.

"The construction business is all about robustness and uptime, while offering value for money and economic efficiency. Pre-launch feedback from our customers has been positive," he adds.

The FJ 26.280C is a 6x4 chassis cab with inter-wheel and inter-axle differential locks, as well as hub-reduction axles. It has a 4.2-m-long wheelbase and 27,5-t gross vehicle mass. Only one chassis is sold, which can be configured as either a tipper or mixer.

The chassis features thicker and deeper long members,

while the cross members add additional strength. They are shot-peened and powder coated to increase surface strength and prevent corrosion.

Powering the vehicle is a 6.4-litre, Euro-3, direct-injection diesel engine. It produces 205 kW at 2 200 r/min and torque of 1 100 Nm between 1 200 and 1 600 r/min. A nine-speed transmission with a crawler gear provides flexibility to manage on- and off-road tasks. A power take-off (PTO) is a standard feature. Rear suspension is by way of a heavy-duty, multi-leaf bogie setup, while anti-roll bars are fitted front and rear.

The cab exterior is designed to be aerodynamic, to aid efficiency, and to enhance engine cooling to ensure reliability. On the inside, it features a fold-down bunk; three-way adjustable seats; a tilt and telescopically adjustable steering wheel; air-conditioning; and rear windows that open for ventilation.

"We have selected well-proven technology that improves efficiency and uptime. For example, the intelligent instrument cluster means aftermarket instruments and controls don't have to be retrofitted," Makitla explains.

Service intervals have been increased from 15 000 to 20 000 km.

LOCALLY BUILT

"Many operators will ask if this vehicle is ready for South Africa," smiles Felix Homburg, vice president operations, manufacturing and engineering at DICV.

"The FJ 26.280C has been tested in countries that have far more difficult conditions and worse infrastructure than South Africa; including Mexico, Chile, Dubai, India, Kenya and Indonesia. For example, in India, trucks are routinely heavily overloaded, while, in many other markets, fuel quality is worse than that found in South Africa. This is a well-tested product; it's ready for South Africa."

Ready for South Africa, and made here, too ... by the time you read this, the first FA and FJ models will have long rolled off the Mercedes-Benz South Africa assembly line in East London. With 50 years of commercial vehicle production under its belt, the plant has been producing Fuso products (sourced from Japan) since 2002.

In excess of R3 million has been invested into the plant to ensure it is ready for the increase in production.

According to Homburg, South Africa is expected to become the biggest volume market for completely knocked-down (CKD) production, although no forecasted figures can be quoted at the moment. Local content of the CKD units will be evaluated as production volumes ramp up.

Hafkamp concludes: "This is irrefutable proof that further reiterates our commitment to the southern African market, as part of our overarching brand growth plan.

"The construction industry is one of the key indicators for economic growth, and what better way to underline our intentions than by launching what will soon be an icon in this industry, the Fuso FJ 26-280C." **F**



MUSCLE UP

It was the only bakkie range to not offer an engine bigger than 2,0 litres, and is now the only one that offers a 3,0-litre V6 ... The Volkswagen Amarok has been to the gym, writes GAVIN MYERS



K, before anything else, here are the raw figures: one variable-geometry turbocharger, three litres, six cylinders, eight forward gears, 24 valves, 165 kW power and 550 Nm torque. Oh, and ten seconds of overboost ... during which time those figures jump to 180 kW and 580 Nm.

No doubt the new Amarok V6 now has some serious firepower. Hopefully it will dispel any (unfounded) market fears that this bakkie can't handle a tough job...

Would you believe, though, that despite all the misperceptions over the years, more than 29 000 Amaroks (single and double cab) have found homes in South Africa since 2010?

Buyers now have even more choice (despite the global discontinuation of the single cab), with five new models added to the range. Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA) expects to move more than 150 V6 units a month.

So what about this V6, then? It is an evolution of the 90° V6 VW Group engine used in Audi and Porsche products since 2014. For use in the Amarok, it's been adapted by way of a newly developed VGT turbocharger to give the engine smooth responsiveness under all load conditions and across the whole engine speed range.

It's also had frictional losses reduced by ten percent – thanks to a special cylinder-bore honing process and a newly developed package of piston rings with less downforce – which aids efficiency. It also features an optimised cooling system with two separate circuits and thinner walls for a shorter warm-up phase, which, in turn, saves fuel.

The result is a spread of power between 3 000 and 4 500 r/min and the arrival of peak torque from an early 1 400 r/min. VW claims the Amarok V6 will hit 100 km/h in just eight seconds and consume fuel at an average rate of 9,0 l/100 km – both impressive figures

for a double-cab bakkie. There's no doubt it's got the muscle and it sounds full of brawny but buttery-smooth goodness, too.

There so much muscle, in fact, that it has a towing capacity of 3,3 t and a payload of up to 1 010 kg (when fitted with the heavy-duty rear leaf springs). Oh, and it'll smoothly pull off on a 35° incline at the same time!

All V6 models are fitted exclusively with the quick-shifting, eight-speed automatic gearbox and 4Motion permanent all-wheel drive. On the road the V6's surge of power and torque is immediately noticeable when compared to the smaller-engined 2,0-litre TDI and BiTDI variants (which we were able to reacquire ourselves with on launch and which, in isolation, have never felt underendowed...). The driving experience is effortless and comfortable.

That stands when off-road, too, where a simple shift into the "special" gear-selection programme and activation of off-road mode allows the Amarok to tackle most rocky paths with aplomb. The rear differential can also be locked, while an electronic diff lock (EDL) is applied automatically to balance traction.

EDL is one of many electronic driver-assistance systems fitted to the Amarok. The latest models now also feature a post-collision braking system as part of the electronic stability control. This system automatically applies the vehicle's brakes after a collision to avoid follow-on collisions, or to reduce their severity.

What else is new? Well, in addition to the subtle sharpening up of the exterior (contained mainly in the front bumper, grille and headlights) it is the interior that benefits the most.

A completely redesigned dashboard, that does away with the old circle accents, lifts the Amarok's interior ambiance up a few notches to the point where it looks as though it's been lifted from one of the marque's more luxurious SUVs – only in looks, though; because it feels decidedly plastic and hollow.

Nonetheless, some welcome spec upgrades are included in the revised model range (comprising Comfortline, Highline, Highline Plus and Extreme levels of spec). These include items such as a 6.3-inch, touch-screen infotainment system (including navigation on upper-spec models), bi-xenon headlights, reversing camera and seat heating.

What does one pay for all this extra muscle? Well, a top-spec Amarok V6 Extreme will set you back R748 600 ...



while the cheapest V6, in Highline spec, will cost R665 700. The revised model range starts at R487 700, though, for the 2.0 TDI 4x2 manual Comfortline.

The Amarok range is backed up by a three-year/100 000 km manufacturer warranty, five-year/90 000 km Automotion service plan and six-year anti-corrosion warranty.

Is it worth the outlay for the V6? Well, in day-to-day driving the 2.0 BiTDI is on par with its rivals and perfectly adequate, yet it cannot match the smoothness and punch of the V6 (and is only marginally more fuel efficient). In fact, there is no other bakkie in this class that has an engine to match it. **F**

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The future: UNFOLDED



Grain SA pulled out all the stops to meet the expectations of the 2017 Nampo Harvest Day theme: "Unfold the Future". ANLERIE DE WET went to Bothaville, in the Free State, to see what the world-renowned agricultural exhibition had to offer

Toit Wessels, assistant manager of Nampo and marketing at Grain SA, says some positive changes were made to the exhibition this year in order for it to remain relevant to the agricultural industry. "Grain SA wants to ensure that Nampo is the agricultural sector's most relevant platform and marketplace for innovation, technology, information exchange and discussion.

"The expansions, innovations, 2017 theme and a brand-new Nampo logo confirm that the organisation is positive about the role of the Harvest Day in the future of agriculture," says Wessels.

With a colourful new logo and the determination to bring something new to the platform, the four-day exhibition, held from May 16 to 19, kicked-off with a couple of new records. Wessels says that there were 713 exhibitors this year – 28 more than the record high of 2016. This increase was made possible by

opening up exhibition spaces on the eastern side of the grounds.

"We doubled the number of international exhibitors this year from six to 12, of which the Canadian, British, Russian and Brazilian exhibitors were new additions. Returning international exhibitors included those from Portugal, Israel, Argentina, France, Poland and the United States.

"We believe the new international exhibitors added greatly to the increase in visitors this year. In total we had 78 648 visitors, which is 3 532 more than last year," says Wessels.

Nampo's respected *Nation in Conversation* agri-talkshow returned once again to provide a platform for discussion about the agricultural industry. The first round-table discussion, held on the evening of May 16, was hosted by well-known *Carte Blanche* host, Derek Watts on the subject of Agriculture – a positive outlook.



However, it was the women's programme – which returned to Nampo with a bang after an absence of two years – that received the most interest at Nampo, says Wessels. "The women's programme started up a lot of conversation at the show and on social media, especially the session on Women in Agriculture," says Wessels.

Suzanne Paxton, a presenter from Radio

Sonder Grense (RSG), hosted the Women in Agriculture panel consisting of: Lindie Stroebel, from the Produce Marketing Association; Liesel Foster, from Dr LA Foster Boerdery; and Gloria Serobe from Wiphold.

Lindie Stroebel grew up on a farm and says farming is in her blood. "When I did psychometric tests after school I was told that if I was a boy I would be perfect for



farming. I never saw myself as being different from men in any aspect. We are all equal and I think it lies in how you see yourself.

"If you want to succeed in business as a woman, you need to understand your topic and speak, not as a woman in your environment, but as a person who understands her environment," says Stroebe.

The *Nation in Conversation* discussion that proved to be an emotional topic for many Nampo visitors was

agriculture, focused on the technological advances in the industry.

Landbou Weekblad editor, Chris Burgess, hosted the discussion with Jaco Beyers of John Deere; Martin van Zyl of Senwes; Pieter Smit of Monsanto; Etienne Schoeman, MD of Graslandand; and Dirk Strydom of Grain SA.

Beyers says: "John Deere has spent about R1,6 billion on research since 2016. We want to make sure we

have the latest technology in our machines to give the producer the best advantage. An example is the use of sensors. A few years ago, sensors were used as warning devices, now they are used to detect, and even repair, technical issues and provide advice on our machines."

Van Zyl says: "Senwes decided to sell a full



the one entitled: The true effects of land grabs without compensation. Bruce Whitfield, host of 702/Cape Talk's *The Money Show*, facilitated the first session with guests Francois Strydom, Senwes Group CEO; Pierre Venter, from the Banking Association of South Africa; John Purchase, Agbiz CEO; and Mpumelelo Mkhabela from Ntambose Konsult.

In his emotive opening statement Mpumelelo proclaimed: "Government has failed. A target of 30 percent of land was set for redistribution in 1994, which has not been achieved. Now a lot of emotional statements are being made, like redistribution without compensation.

Strydom says: "Agri business needs to stick to its business principles. That way it will remain successful and, by implication, black empowerment would be part of the business principle of success. I believe that every sector of business is open to partnerships, but it's the politicians who are creating divisions."

"The agricultural sector has debt amounting to about R145 billion. If farms are taken away without compensation I think the banks would be able to survive, but South Africa will see a collapse and fall in food security," says Venter.

The *Nation in Conversation* discussion entitled: The role of technology, soil health and advisors in



solution to the client and not just products. We have a 24-hour helpdesk to assist with technical issues relating to machinery."

Another big crowd pleaser was the 4x4 track. "The newly upgraded 4x4 obstacle course drew a lot of interest and was enjoyed by the leading automotive manufacturers and Nampo visitors, especially 4x4 and motorcycle enthusiasts," says Wessels.

It is safe to say that the 51st Nampo Harvest Day was a massive success. Jannie de Villiers, CEO of Grain SA says: "Although the success of the event is important, it is more important that Nampo remains the place where the agricultural family can get to know one another better, and where new partnerships and friendships can be forged." **F**

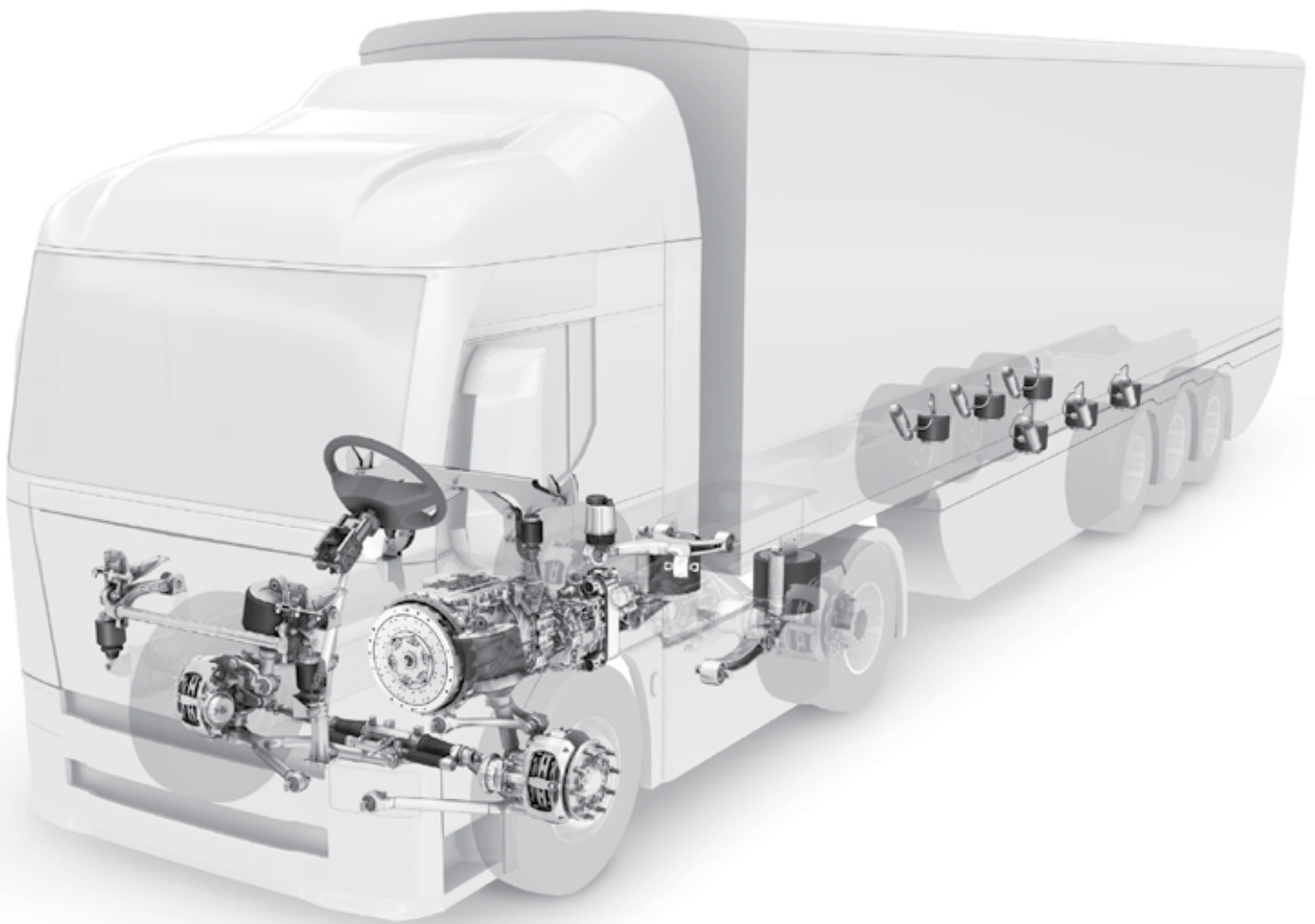
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MOTION AND MOBILITY





Building relationships **ON TRUST**

Martin Liebenberg, head of sales at Iveco South Africa, says that in the agricultural sector relationships have always been based on trust

“This is why when they call, we answer,” says Liebenberg. Iveco has been present at Nampo every year for the last seven years. “We are here for one reason, and that’s to build relationships in the agricultural industry. We have vehicles placed in the market specifically for farmers,” says Liebenberg.

“Farming activity has supported our dealerships countrywide over the years. When talking to the customers at our stand at Nampo, we have realised how loyal they are and how they have grown with us as a brand.”

Liebenberg says it is important for Iveco to support the farming community by showing it what it has to offer and what its products can do.

This year, Iveco showcased several products that impressed visitors at Nampo. “We had the Iveco 682 with the cattle carrier, which is adjustable and multi-functional. The dividers and the side railings can be moved to turn it into a flatbed.

“It has a 14-t payload for non-cattle transport. This gives farmers the opportunity to carry a variety of loads from cattle and bales to feed. Last year we showcased a rubber mat that prevents cattle from slipping, and now everyone wants one,” says Liebenberg.

“Many farmers have started transport and construction businesses on the side after buying vehicles to move their products,” explains Liebenberg. This is why Iveco decided to make changes to meet the agricultural industry’s needs.

Liebenberg says: “We didn’t have a vehicle (like the Iveco 682) that could be utilised for construction. So, last year we started production of 12-cube tippers. Then we brought in the water tankers, and in the next few months we will bring in a mixer. The Iveco 682 with all its segmentations is very reasonably priced.”

Iveco’s flagship vehicle, the Stralis 480 – the same vehicle used in this year’s Truck Test – attracted a lot of attention at Nampo.

“Everyone is talking about it. Everyone has read about it and seen the results from Truck Test. We

go to clients and show them the results in writing. Independent tests have proved that it has really good fuel consumption," boasts Liebenberg.

Another truck that drew attention to Iveco's stand at Nampo was the Trakker single reduction. "It has the same engine as the Stralis, but has steel suspension and higher attack angles. The Trakker is more suited to on- and off-road applications, whereas the Stralis is a highway vehicle.

"For farmers who want to go more off-road, the Trakker is a more attractive vehicle. Its specifications make it more suited to agricultural applications. We are happy with the Trakker's results from Truck Test,"

says Liebenberg.

He explains that Nampo is a great opportunity to chat to the farmers, hear how they are doing and what more Iveco can do for them.

"We have dealerships in the main centres around the country, but we go the extra mile with our mobile services. We also accommodate the customers by customising their vehicles to suit their business needs," says Liebenberg.

Liebenberg says the Iveco team enjoys Nampo immensely, even in tough times. "Last year things were difficult, it was really dry and the farmers weren't buying, but this year we sold the Iveco 682 with a



ABOVE: Clockwise from left; the Dakar-spec Petronas De Rooy Iveco Trakker was a crowd puller, while the Stralis 480 and 682 models were two stand favourites.

LEFT: There were other interesting exhibits on the Iveco stand, such as this cutaway engine.

cattle carrier and the water tanker in the first two days of Nampo.

"Even though we only come to Nampo to network, we still seem to sell vehicles, because the customers like what they see and they trust us, and that's what matters to them. We believe that our customers deserve nothing less than the best service, and that's what we give them," concludes Liebenberg. **F**

MAN'S

one-stop shop



More than 23 years ago MAN Truck & Bus debuted at Nampo on stand 194 with camping chairs and a few trucks. Throughout the years, MAN has become a one-stop shop for customers from the agricultural sector and remained loyal to stand 194

Neels Holtzhausen, area sales manager at MAN Truck & Bus, says all regular visitors to Nampo know MAN is at stand 194. "Year after year people come to see us, as we have all our professionals here at once. The sales staff and the truck and trailer builders are all here to answer customers' questions and give some expert advice," he says.

Dave van Graan, head of special sales projects at MAN Truck & Bus, says: "We are moving forward with better and more efficient products. We therefore need to advise our customers accordingly, and help them improve their business."

Van Graan explains that MAN has continuously supported Nampo, as it is one of the biggest agricultural shows of its kind. "With such a large number of big local, regional and international visitors, we just have to be there."

Holtzhausen says: "Without agriculture, the country's economy will be compromised, so MAN provides special services – from tailor-made transport solutions to hands-on after-sales support – for this important sector. We offer various funding solutions via MAN Financial Services, too."

“

With such a large number of big local, regional and international visitors, we just have to be there.



Along with these special services, MAN displayed several vehicles at Nampo this year that cater to the needs of the agricultural industry.

The VW 19.320 4x2 BL received a lot of interest at Nampo with its high-roof sleeper cab and 320 horsepower. "This vehicle is in a class of its own in terms of livestock transport. It's an all-purpose type of vehicle, with a body that has been specially designed to carry cattle – its floors prevent cattle from slipping and its roof is designed to prevent cattle from wanting jump out.

"The partitions are removable and the sides can be taken off to turn it into a flat-deck truck. It features quality steel and body work. It's a nice, versatile farming solution," says Van Graan.

"Although it is mainly a livestock carrier, its 320 horsepower gives it the capability to operate in medium- to long-haul operations, pulling up to 45 t and a three-axle drawbar trailer. It has electronically controlled air-suspension, which provides stability for carrying cattle. We have a number of them made in different configurations available for customers."

The TopUsed 26.440 6x4 BLS was clearly visible at the MAN stand with its three-star seal of quality. "This is a very affordable option compared to a new equivalent vehicle. It is typically used in the agricultural industry as a medium- to long-haul semi-trailer solution.

"Falling under the three-star category, it means the vehicle is four years old or less, and we've done bumper-to-bumper refurbishments. It's prepared to a standard where we can issue a one-year factory warranty," explains van Graan.

Alternatively, an MAN two-star TopUsed vehicle is optically and mechanically checked, and given a sound bill of health, where all small dents are fixed and electronics are in good working order. With a one-star vehicle technical checks are still undertaken, but for the most part the vehicle is sold as is.

"We offer full repair and maintenance contracts and service plans suited to customer needs. Specialists are available in every MAN branch and privately owned service centre, to make sure our customers receive the best possible service," says Van Graan.

MAN's Euro-5 flagship – the TGS 26.540 6x4 BLS XLX – received a lot of attention at the show. "It is MAN's highest horsepower long-haul truck for southern Africa with all the available safety features. It is ideal for the

agricultural export industry. With its high horsepower and torque, average speeds and fuel efficiency are optimised, which means farmers can get produce to export harbours and markets safely, economically and quickly," says Van Graan.

MAN also had two CLA models at Nampo – a 15.220 4x2 BB chassis with a crane and a 26.280 6x4 BB tipper. "These vehicles are German engineered, made in India and customised in South Africa. They are a best-in-class value offering for the budget sector," says Van Graan.

"The CLA models are ideal for the agricultural industry as they have technology from the tried-and-tested MAN M/F2000 together with certain TG components. They are robust and simple to operate as a game-moving platform truck with a crane. They can also be used as a tipper truck for multiple tipping applications."

Holtzhausen says: "By having the right people and the right products for the agricultural sector in one place, MAN's presence at Nampo over the decades has given customers a one-stop shop for all their agricultural needs. As a result of being at Nampo MAN has often sold vehicles a couple of weeks, or even months later." **F**



Committed to AGRICULTURE



Engen, the lifelong brand sponsor of the biggest agricultural expo in Africa, came to the table once again to make this year's Nampo a roaring success

John Kennedy, lubricants business manager at Engen, says: "We have been involved with Nampo for over 27 years, even dating back to the show's precursor, which was known as the Sampie Oesdag."

Kennedy explains that Engen has always found it worthwhile to support Nampo, as it represents the best one-stop shop for the company to meet its major mechanised customers in the agricultural sector.

"Our presence at Nampo reflects our commitment and involvement in the agricultural sector in South Africa. It provides an opportunity for us to showcase new products and technologies, as well as our promotions and community projects within this sector. This year we highlighted our continued involvement with the South African Federation of Vintage Tractors and Engine Clubs (Savtec) in the Engine Restoration Challenge," Kennedy enthuses.

"Over the years the agricultural sector has supported Engen. Through the growth in our loyal customer base and new customers, we have been blessed with annual increases in market share in both lubricants and fuels," says Kennedy.

With the support Engen has received from this sector, it has been able to give back to the agricultural community. "We are a corporate member of the Agricultural Business Chamber (Agbiz), which is a voluntary, dynamic and influential association of agribusinesses operating in South and southern Africa. Together with our business partners in this sector, we are involved in community and social upliftment projects.

"Last year, we donated R1 million to the Drought Relief Fund. We also provide training and awareness on our products to numerous cooperatives and offer extensive channels to markets within this very important sector," says Kennedy.

Kennedy says the drought had a major effect on sales of Engen's fuels and lubricants over the last two years. "The drought has had a massive impact on spending within this sector. Business confidence levels have been at an all-time low. In essence, the negative effect of the drought will only start easing when the current summer grain crop has been harvested and the farmers receive their first payments," he notes.



To strengthen its support to the agricultural sector, Engen has 37 sales and distribution companies and 12 Engen Oil centres around the country, with its products available at numerous cooperatives, such as Hinterland Fuels, GWK and OVK.

"The expectations and demands of the agricultural sector are similar to those found in the road-freight sector in that agricultural equipment is at the heart of the farming operation and reliability, performance and availability of the



ABOVE: More than 20 Engen staff from various divisions were on hand during Nampo.

LEFT: Engen has supported the Nampo show for more than 27 years.



Engen's products include its comprehensive Dieselube range, Cooltec, Agritrac, Agrifluid, Gearlubes, Air1 AdBlue and Dynamic Diesel. "Our Agrifluid and Agritrac products were developed specifically for the agricultural sector as universal and multifunctional lubricants respectively," Kennedy says.

equipment are of paramount importance.

"Although the agricultural sector has many commonalities with the commercial sector, modern agricultural equipment requires specific lubricants as per the requirements of the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)," explains Kennedy.

"The products must adhere to specific properties, performance characteristics and specifications as universal and multi-functional lubricants. To remain competitive Engen needs to meet and exceed these specifications," says Kennedy.

Besides senior management, this year Engen had a team of more than 20 staff present during the entire week of Nampo. The team comprised lubes/fuel staff, marketing staff and technical advisors to make sure that customers were attended to by the right experts.

"What we enjoy most about Nampo is the opportunity to meet and engage with customers, partners and key stakeholders within the agricultural industry. Most importantly, we are very proud to be associated with Nampo," concludes Kennedy. **F**

A van-full of VERSATILITY



A van is not the first vehicle that comes to mind when discussing the needs of the agricultural industry. However, Mercedes-Benz has a van for every season and every reason

Judging by the interest gathered by the Vito, V-Class and Sprinter on the Mercedes-Benz stand at Nampo each year, the idea that vans are made only for inner-city work is simply not true. The name of the game, when it comes to Mercedes-Benz Vans, is versatility.

"Mercedes-Benz Vans offers such a wide, versatile range of vans that are engineered to take on any task – they are made to carry a load. This is something even the agricultural sector picks up on," explains Vusumzi Vusani, product and marketing manager, Mercedes-Benz Vans Southern Africa.

"The suspension systems are designed to respond to the road surface, while managing the weight the van can carry. This provides comfort for the occupants and stable handling for the driver. As commercial vehicles, the Mercedes-Benz van range is built for toughness, durability and quality ... Dirt roads? No problem!" Vusani quips.

Mercedes-Benz was so confident that, to demonstrate the ability of its vans, it offered **FOCUS** the use of a Vito 116 Tourer Select; an eight-seater people mover that shows off the Vito's versatility.

With its 2,2-litre, four-cylinder diesel engine, that produces 120 kW and 380 Nm, the Vito gobbled up the miles between Johannesburg and Bothaville with aplomb – loads of torque made overtaking a cinch and the six-speed manual gearbox brought overall fuel consumption down to a very reasonable 7,7 l/100 km during our time with the vehicle.

Anybody who has visited Nampo will know that the (tarred) roads around Bothaville are probably best described as "poor" ... potholed, pockmarked, patched, and practically dirt in some sections. The Vito managed to maintain impressive occupant comfort while being light enough on its feet to dance around some of the more demanding obstacles.

"The Vito range boasts safety features such as Electronic Stability Control and AttentionASSIST, which helps keep the driver alert. The vans are designed to keep their occupants and loads safe," Vusani says.

They're also designed to work... Along with the five Tourer models, the Vito range consists of three Panel Van options and two Mixto variants.

Vusani gives us an overview: "One can say that the Vito Panel Van is eager to take on any task – it's

made for loading with a three-metre load length and up to six cubic metres of volume. It also has more than 1 000 kg payload. It is easy to load, due to dual-side sliding doors and the option of either a lifting tailgate or double rear doors that open to 270°. The loading floor is low and flat, which makes it easy to load up to three pallets.

"This vehicle is great for local delivery routes, such as distributing crates of fruit. It keeps the goods neat, clean and safe," he says.



there is no van like it," Vusani exclaims.

Available as either an eight or seven seater, the V-Class emphasises safety, standard equipment and prestige.

"Yes, farmers need work vehicles, but, traditionally, the family vehicle is a Mercedes-Benz and the V-Class fits the role perfectly. You can see this just by the number of people who take to the demo unit on the stand," Vusani says.

Regardless of vehicle, one aspect of modern-day motoring that cannot be ignored is the need for efficiency. Mercedes-Benz Vans has addressed this across the range.

In the case of the Vito, for example, the range starts with the front-wheel drive 111 Panel Van, which places economy and ease of maintenance at the fore – especially considering the (up to) 40 000 km service intervals. All vehicles come with standard service plans that can be extended to full maintenance plans.

The Vito 114 and 119, and V-Class V200 and V250,

The Mixto offers the most versatility in the range, with the ability to transport up to six passengers as well as cargo in its sealed-off cargo hold (with three cubic-metre volume) that can accommodate a pallet.

"This dual-role vehicle can be used as a family vehicle away from work (it's great for those with an active lifestyle) and as safe and comfortable transport for staff when on the clock. Wooden floors can be fitted as an option to both the Panel Van and Mixto load compartments when the vans will have to handle extra use and abuse," Vusani adds.

Use and abuse is something the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter is not afraid of either, especially in rugged 4x4 guise. This large, rough and tough vehicle attracted loads of attention at Nampo 2017, and it's easy to understand why.

"It's like a Unimog van," says Vusani. "This vehicle goes anywhere with selectable or permanent all-wheel drive (which includes three diff locks) and four-cylinder or V6 powerplants.

"Yet it's easy to access the cab because it's not overly high. It's very versatile and can be adapted to different needs: buyers can customise it to any application and it comes in three- and five-tonne variants," Vusani says.

Then of course there is the flagship Mercedes-Benz van; the V-Class. "This vehicle is all about luxury;



variants also take environmental friendliness a step further with their Euro-6 engines.

"When you buy a Mercedes-Benz van, you buy peace of mind," says Vusani. "Buying a Vito means that you don't have to buy a van and fit a canopy; buying a Sprinter means that you don't have to buy a truck and fit a body. Extras, maintenance, cost per kilometre; it's a complete package," he adds.

Now that's versatility. **F**

A first of **ITS KIND**



Mercedes-Benz is gearing up to launch its very first premium double-cab bakkie and the visitors at Nampo this year couldn't hide their excitement

The two different concepts for Mercedes-Benz X-Class bakkie were displayed to Nampo visitors though a virtual reality preview.

Mpumelelo Zulu, X-Class project leader at Mercedes-Benz South Africa (MBSA), says visitors were very impressed with the preview and MBSA has already received several enquiries from people wanting to stay informed about its launch.

"This bakkie is part of Mercedes-Benz's 'going global' strategy. We have a strong presence in luxury cars, vans and trucks, but we also want to be noticeable in the pickup segment," says Zulu.

"Nowadays, a bakkie is much more than a workhorse – it is more utilitarian but has creature comforts that customers are used to in other vehicles. So, now we are going to move into the double-cab segment with the X-Class."

Zulu explains that the two concept designs of the X-Class displayed the different sides of the bakkie, which are separated only by customised accessories in order to fit the customer's on- and off-road needs.

Zulu says the reason why South Africa will be a major target market for the X-Class is because the country sells more than 100 000 bakkies annually.

"There are two unique selling points for the X-Class. First, it will be bringing a premium vehicle

to the double-cab segment. Second, customers will be getting the Mercedes-Benz experience of luxury that no one else can offer. It's the first of its kind," says Zulu.

Zulu says MBSA was pleased to be able to show the X-Class to its customers in the agricultural sector, who are a big part of its target market. "The X-Class is especially equipped for farm work and farm family life. It's versatile in the sense that it will be able to carry sheep and bales, but you can still get the whole family to church in luxury.

"With the right accessories this vehicle will be at home on dirt terrain. It can pull a 1,1-t payload, and has a towing capacity of 3,5 t. At Nampo we were able to get some good insights into the accessories that our customers prefer when going off road, and we know we will be able to accommodate those needs," says Zulu.

Zulu says: "It was also important for us to be present at Nampo for the families that have versatile lives. The X-Class will work hard and play hard together with its owners.

"Customers will be able to go off road without having to worry about the suspension and getting the vehicle scratched, while they will also be able to get from the office and home safely and in style."

The X-Class will be launched internationally in a couple of months and in South Africa in the first



quarter of 2018. "Decisions on pricing have not yet been made and we don't yet have a market-share target.

"People think because it is such a luxury vehicle it will cost R1 million, but this is not the case. It will look like a million bucks, but it will be competitively

plant in Cordoba, Argentina, will produce for Latin America.

Zulu says: "The X-Class will be tested in different environments and temperatures. It will need to achieve one million kilometres, as all of our vehicles do, before going onto the road. Testing



ABOVE LEFT: Visitors to the Mercedes-Benz stand at Nampo 2017 were able to experience the X-Class with a virtual audio/visual exhibit.

ABOVE RIGHT: Mercedes-Benz promises the X-Class will deliver new levels of sophistication in the luxury-bakkie segment.



priced. We want to go above and beyond what our competitors are offering," says Zulu.

The X-Class will be produced in two plants. The one in Barcelona, Spain, will produce the vehicle for Europe, South Africa and Australia and the

has already started in South Africa and other countries.

"We are looking forward to the next Nampo, when the X-Class will be here to knock the agricultural community off its feet." **F**



SMILE, you're on camera

Spurred on by the need for drivers to prove their innocence in "crash-for-cash" scams, dashcam video footage has become an internet phenomenon, showing (most of the time) how badly people drive. GAVIN MYERS takes a look at the basics of in-cab camera equipment

A representative from DashcamSA, which has been providing the South African market with high-quality dashcams since 2012, says that 2016 returned the largest growth in the local dashcam market – largely due to the popularity of social media.

The recent trend is due to an active effort by motorists to secure themselves and their vehicles in preparation for any incidents that may take place during their everyday travels. The trend among corporates and fleet owners is increasing, too.

"Corporates are always the first to understand the benefits of having dashcams in their vehicles. This is not only to protect the company, but the drivers as well," the company says.

These benefits include clear, concise and unedited footage of an incident to play back to determine the wrongful party, as well as to assist police, vehicle and medical insurance companies and the legal system with a complete evaluation of an incident.

"In the event of a hit-and-run accident, for example, it's possible that the driver would not take down any details in the panic of the moment; such as the fleeing vehicle's make, colour and number plate. However, all of those details will be available if recorded on camera."

Certain models of dashcams will display the speed at which the vehicle was travelling; which is helpful to show if any speed limits were broken moments before an impact.

Furthermore, there is a learning opportunity, as viewing footage of any incident can bring awareness to what the eye might miss. Dashcams with a GPS logger can also assist in viewing routes taken by drivers and this information can be used to decrease travel time or fuel costs.

"Drivers who are aware they are being recorded are more likely to drive more safely and obey the rules. This is most noticeable in company vehicles with a dashcam installed," says DashcamSA.

What features should a good-quality dashcam offer? It's not so much what one can see, but what's inside that counts... "A good quality dashcam should provide reliable loop recording and should be manufactured using only genuine parts and chipsets to ensure the longest lifespan of the unit. Poor-quality units often cannot handle the constant recording of footage and can have a lifespan of only a few weeks," notes DashcamSA.

Other features a good dashcam should include are: high definition video quality, G-sensor capability, date and time stamp, adequate storage space (it should accept a minimum 32 GB SD memory card), easy-to-use software and customisable settings. Additional features could include dual lenses, a rear-view camera or a GPS logger.

The final consideration is whether there are any legal implications to fitting a dashcam. The representative brings to light an article on businesstech.co.za in which Jeff Osborne, head of Gumtree Automotive and former CEO of the RMI, states that there is no law clarifying the validity or legality of dashcams in South Africa and, in general, one can legally record anything that happens on public roads.

He further states that the degree to which the video evidence will be allowed in court will depend on the discretion of the court.

"It's no secret that South Africa ranks as one of the most dangerous countries in which to drive. We hope to contribute to the safety of our roads as more people become aware that their actions, and those of others, are being recorded..." **F**

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The HACK TRUCK



Reinhard Windbichler makes short work of branches, trunks and tree tops. His mission, says FLORIAN ENGEL from Austria's leading commercial vehicle magazine, *1Truck*, is to produce woodchips... His truck: A very special Mercedes-Benz Arocs 3363

In Austria's Brixental valley, just a few kilometers west of the Tyrolean skiing town Kitzbühel, high up on the Sonnberg, Windbichler powers through the forest with his "wood terminator", from the traditional Austrian manufacturer Mus-Max. Wild branches, trunks and peaks have become wedged and interlocked; they cannot escape the steel gripping jaws of Windbichler's crane.

Trunk after trunk, branch after branch, a continuous stream of wood goes into the wood chipper on the Arocs 3363, and what is fed forwards over the intake roller of the Mus-Max, comes back at high speed a few seconds later as wood chips.

According to the manufacturer, the highly effective blade and knife system can fill up to 200 shovel tractors per hour, which corresponds to approximately four to five truck containers.

"This is a real workhorse," says company manager Adam Aigner. "Once on the run, there is no stopping it!"

SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT

The Mus-Max chopper – which has a feed width of 114 cm and a feed height of 75 cm – is powered directly by the auxiliary drive of the 15,6-litre truck engine with a single cooled reversing gearbox. "The competition usually makes use of three transmissions, but this always involves cooling problems and is often less efficient," says Aigner.

Windbichler sits like a battle pilot in the driver's seat of his machine. With tight, fluid movements he controls the intake with a foot pedal, via two joysticks and gripper arms. On the left, a display provides information on speed, feed speed and working time. The wood-hacker in front of him shakes the truck again and again, but not even the strongest of trees can stop the "wood terminator".

THE EX-FARMER

The machine has something in common with Aigner: the bigger the challenge, the stronger his action. In the midst of the economic recession, he was faced with



the decision to either give up his job as a farmer, or to "eat grass" as a result of the ever-falling milk prices.

In the spring of 2007, he placed an "ex" before his professional designation, combined his Fendt 930 Vario with a wood chopper and entered the wood-chip production business.

Two years later, Aigner bought his first truck – a used Actros. Today, the fleet includes seven units. He plays a hands-on role in his company – in the daily business as well as in the conversion of the vehicles.

We ask whether the new Actros model is also converted by the company. "Of course," says Aigner, grinning. "Why should I spend a lot of money on the set-up and conversion if we can do it ourselves? We now have the experience of three such modifications." Sounds logical.

OWN CONSTRUCTION

When doing the conversion, the bulk of the back wall, the bed and the right-side wall are all removed and



Windbichler sits like a battle pilot in the driver's seat of his machine.



replaced with electronic components and a camera. The passenger seat is turned, a crane is placed behind the driver's cab and some protective panels are placed around the wood-chipper.

"Twelve-millimetre-thick aircraft glass allows perfect visibility and provides dust-free work and noise protection in all weather conditions," confirms Windbichler. The truck took six weeks to convert.

FINGERTIP FEELING

The machine has been in operation for 26 minutes, but the wood pile next to the forest road is barely recognisable. The driver fine-tunes the joysticks with his fingertips and tries to master the last remnants



with crane and gripper. There are still some trunks and a few branches.

A colleague supports Windbichler and throws some remnants on the heap, so that all wood finds its way into the hacker. Windbichler finally fills two containers with wood chips. While his colleague cleans the hacker's table and the pick-up roll of wood remnants, he takes his tablet from the front of the truck.

"I've saved all the orders, including the routes, which saves me a lot of time in the mountains," he explains. It is well known that time is money – especially in the wood-chip business – and even more so recently, since violent storm damage in Bavaria hiked the prices.


Just goes to show, it's always the right time for the next mission. **F**

As regular readers of **FOCUS** know, this magazine has been appointed an associate member of the International Truck of the Year (IToY)! **FOCUS** is the sole South African magazine to have joined this prestigious body. One of the advantages of this association is access to exclusive articles, specially written for **FOCUS** by ITOY jury members. This is one such article.



RUSSIAN TRUCKERS

struggle to compete with rail



Poor infrastructure and reduced transport costs for rail are making it difficult for Russian trucking companies to remain competitive when transporting containers. MARISKA MORRIS explores

As the Russian Federation recovers from its economic stagnation in 2015, domestic container shipments in Russia are projected to grow by 15 percent this year. The trucking industry will, however, have to find innovative ways to remain competitive – especially as it competes with rail transport for market share.

During the economic stagnation in 2015, the transport of containers by truck fell 27 percent. Rail

container transport, however, grew by 0.5 percent. In the same year, the state-owned Russian Railways (RZD) reduced transport costs on key routes, such as Moscow to Novorossiysk, by 20 percent.

RZD announced further plans to cut shipping costs to compete with the trucking industry last year. These included investing in new infrastructure to reduce transit times, offering personal managers to important clients, the introduction of a web toll (which allows clients to order complex transport services

online) and the possible introduction of high-speed container trains.

However, by the end of 2016, freight rates for container shipments transported by rail increased by 15 percent. In an article for the *Journal of Commerce*, Russian correspondent and journalist Eugene Gerden comments that these increases are believed to be a way to fund the RZD's investment programme as the government cuts back on spending.



Transporting containers by rail still remains more cost effective than by road, notes Ilynyr Yazov, spokesperson for Cargo-Freight, a leading trucking company in Russia.

Gerden quotes Yazov who says: "The price for transporting containers by rail ranges from 70 000 rubles (R16 341) to 80 000 rubles (R18 675) per container, which is significantly lower than trucking, which starts at 120 000 rubles (R28 013) for the shortest routes."

Max Chernyavsky, journalist at the Russian publication *Autoreview*, echoes Yazov's statement, commenting that rail is cheaper when travelling more than 2 000 km. This is mostly due to good railways and poor road conditions.

"The Soviet Union traditionally developed very good railways. The road conditions in Siberia are not ideal. Conditions are very similar to those found in the Australian outback, but with long winters and bad infrastructure," Chernyavsky says.

The cost of transporting goods by road are set to increase as heavy trucks are charged toll fees per kilometre with the new toll-collection system, Platon, which was rolled out in 2015. Truck drivers are, however, protesting the system. Chernyavsky notes that what are known as "gipsy" drivers and outdated regulations are also limiting the industry.

"The main problem is the 'gipsy' truck owners and drivers who drive very old trucks. They lower their prices to beat those of the big freight companies. Another big issue is outdated rules – especially concerning weight. In Europe, container rigs have special permits for the axle loads. In Russia, there aren't any permits," Chernyavsky notes.

"The general dimensions of trucks in Russia are no

more than 20 m with a weight of no more than 40 t. A special commission, which includes trade unions, the ministry of transport, experts and big players, is starting a serious dialogue on the industry," he says.

In order to remain competitive, trucking companies have turned to consolidating and expanding their services. Small and medium-sized trucking companies are the most affected by the consolidation process. These companies, which have fleets of up to 50 trucks, make up nearly 90 percent of the Russian trucking industry.

Several companies specialising in container cargo declared bankruptcy in 2016. Many of these were bought by larger companies. The industry has also expanded its business to service door-to-door delivery and to allow deferred payments, while many businesses have revised their pricing policies.

Trucking companies seem to have recovered from the drastic decline in 2015 with an increase of six percent in container transport during 2016. While rail increased by only 5,6 percent, it still remains the leader in the container transport industry and transports 55 to 60

percent of containers.

The trucking industry might regain some market share with its new strategies, but the entire container transport industry is under threat. According to Gerden, the projected 15 to 20 percent growth in domestic container shipments could be undermined by the lack of infrastructure and equipment.

"The growth in Russia's overland container trade has shifted industry focus to infrastructure, which is ill-suited to rapid growth," Gerden says. Only five percent of Russian rail stations can handle containers with a gross mass of 20 to 30 t. The infrastructure will need to improve drastically.

"Using more containers in Russia would help cut transport costs, which currently make up 15 percent of shippers' overall budgets," Gerden comments. Shipping companies operating in western countries allocate only eight percent of their budgets to transport costs.

Deliveries are also delayed by an underdeveloped infrastructure, along with a population spread over nine time zones. Same-day delivery is not possible when operating from a central location in Russia. This is especially frustrating to western shipping companies that are accustomed to shorter delivery times.

Eric Poulet, director of supply chain at the Russian division of the French bricks-and-mortar retailer Leroy Merlin, notes that the company expects deliveries at the eastern edge of Russia to take up to a month.

While Russia needs to continue to invest in better infrastructure, road transport companies need to reduce transport costs to remain competitive and take advantage of the recovering economy and booming container industry. **F**

Let there be LIGHT!



What difference does light make to a truck driver – if any? CHARLEEN CLARKE reports on an utterly fascinating research project that recently took place in Finland



Have you driven on the N3 or N1 at night recently? If so, you will have noticed something: a steady stream of lights, many emanating from trucks. As we all know, a truck driver's job is not a 08:00 to 17:00 gig; many drivers spend endless hours behind the wheel at night. (Some would argue too many...)

As such, the lighting in a truck can truly impact on the driver. After all, the cab is his office. How would you like to sit in an office with terrible lighting?

Lighting is, in fact, probably one of the least appreciated – but most needed – aspects of life. We don't give a great deal of thought to it – provided we aren't actually suffering from a lack of light. And yet light dictates how life on earth is organised.

Among other factors, the shift from day to night and

back again provides structure as a short-term time cycle, as do the changing seasons. As humans have evolved, a number of internal clocks have adapted to these circumstances and help to synchronise our circadian rhythms. What is particularly important in this context is regular switching between day and night.

For many years, scientists have been researching the complex relationships between the availability of biologically effective light and the physical and mental states of human beings. Various related health problems have been defined. One of the most common is seasonal affective disorder (commonly referred to as SAD).

A lack of light is a serious problem for many people in the countries of Northern Europe, for example, where it barely gets light during the winter months, and this can result in poor mood, reduced

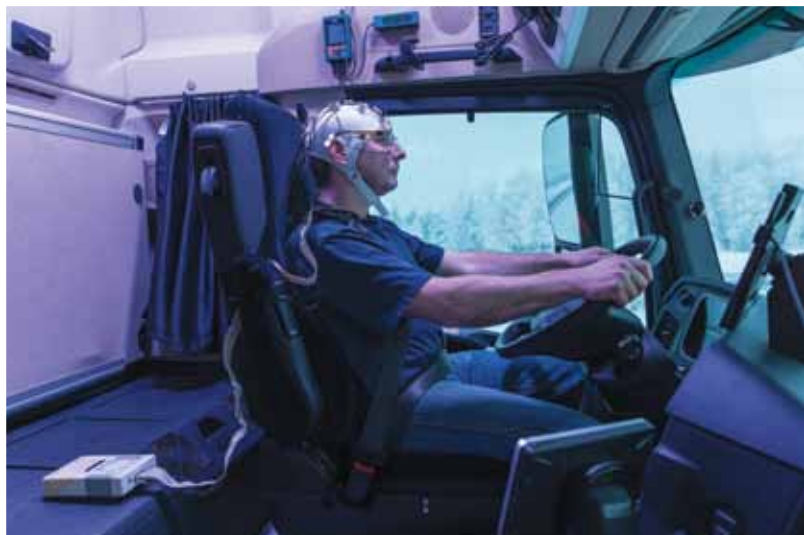


ABOVE RIGHT: Sophisticated experiments have proved the positive effects of biologically effective light in a truck cab.

RIGHT: Standard lighting in a cab compared to Daylight+.

there, the truckers alternated between driving for one week in a truck cab with conventional lighting and for another week in a cab with a Daylight+ module that provides additional daylight while driving and during breaks.

Siegfried Rothe, from the Daimler's research department, headed the project, and he tells **FOCUS**



performance and a lack of motivation. Light therapy is a standard method of treating these symptoms medically and combating them successfully.

With this as a background, a research team recently ventured to Finland and simulated two typical working weeks for truckers in Rovaniemi's polar light. Once

that he had a clear working hypothesis: that an application of biologically effective light with a wavelength of between 460 and 490 nanometres has positive effects. "As such, we designed a sophisticated series of experiments to test this hypothesis," he explains.





The test found that drivers with more daylight in the cab drove more economically.

The idea for Daylight+ arose during the course of a series of experiments at the sleep lab at the University of Regensburg. Rothe is involved in numerous projects to help improve working and living conditions for truck drivers and thereby improve the image of this occupation.

He subsequently determined that, due primarily to the outline shape of a conventional truck cab, only a comparatively low percentage of natural daylight reaches the driver's light receptors.

"This finding prompted me to think about potential solutions. The results of an initial series of experiments with engineers from the test drive department were unambiguous. The subjective condition of all test subjects improved significantly under the influence of an additional dose of light, regardless of the time of day. Another finding proved surprising: the test found that drivers with more daylight in the cab drove more economically," Rothe reveals.

During the experiments in Rovaniemi, the test subjects were only ever compared against themselves. The experiments examined how a driver's performance changes when he or she is exposed to additional biologically effective daylight under clearly defined conditions. The extra dose of light took three forms involving different intensities:

- Steady light while driving, whereby the intensity was adjusted to the exterior light level.
- An intense light shower of maximum intensity during the tests before and after driving.
- Light while reclined, likewise of maximum intensity, during breaks while the driver relaxes in his or her seat, which has been positioned for a power nap.

During the night, the test subjects slept in a normally darkened truck. For the test drivers, these experiments in the Arctic Circle were a tough test of their capabilities.

The team documented the test results with support from co-researcher Dr Michael Schrauf and the use of electroencephalography (EEG), electrocardiography (ECG) and electrooculography (EOG) and other physiological measurements, as well as saliva samples (to ascertain levels of the sleep hormone melatonin).

Mental state and professional performance, which are closely related, were examined using standardised psychological test procedures (sustained attention and reaction tests on the computer) and by recording vehicle data through the FleetBoard telematics system.

At the end of the two-week cycles, the individual drivers were interviewed, having previously recorded their subjective impressions.

Richard Schneider and Philippe Strasser (two truck test drivers for Daimler) spent time in the Arctic Circle at the darkest time of the year, just before the winter solstice. Both of them separately expressed enthusiasm for Daylight+. The drivers consistently reported that they perceived the space inside the cab to be considerably more pleasant with the additional light fitting.

"When designing the series of tests, we hadn't even considered that the space might appear larger," admits Rothe. Now that the actual experiment is over, the real work is starting – Rothe estimates that it will take several months to sift through all data from the experiments conducted in the Arctic Circle.

"Only then we will be able to make a recommendation as to whether the test findings should advisably lead to changes in the design of cab lighting," he tells **FOCUS**.

One thing is certain, though: the findings should certainly shed some light on the matter... (Sorry, we just couldn't resist that.) **F**



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GLOBAL FOCUS NEWS

MAKING THAT CONNEXXION

Ard Romers, director VDL Bus & Coach Nederland, wants his company to be the top specialist in the field of e-mobility. A lofty goal, perhaps, but VDL Bus & Coach and the Dutch public transport company Connexxion are celebrating the largest order for electric buses in the company's history, as well as the largest electric bus fleet in Europe.

The order includes 100 Citea SLFA electric buses as well as 18 VDL Futura FDD2 buses, making this the first time that double-deck buses will be used for public transport in the Netherlands.

The 100 electric Citeas will be deployed for the bus lines serving the greater Schiphol area and on bus rapid transit lines within the concession area.

The demanding schedule will require the buses to operate 24-hours per day, and each bus will be driven more than 100 000 km per year.

Meanwhile, the need for transport on the rapid transit lines between Haarlem and Amsterdam South is so great that the decision has been taken to use 86-seat VDL Futura double-deck coaches.

The door construction will be adapted to the demands of public transport and to optimise the flow of passengers. Displays on the outside show where free seats are still available.



IVECO MADRID TAKES GOLD

The Iveco commercial vehicle manufacturing facility in Madrid, Spain, has become the company's first site to achieve Gold status in the World Class Manufacturing (WCM) programme. It is now the highest-ranking facility in terms of manufacturing excellence among the company's 64 global manufacturing facilities.

WCM is one of the global manufacturing industry's highest standards for the integrated management of manufacturing plants and processes. Based on continuous improvement, it is designed to eliminate waste and loss from the production process. To certify improvements, a system of periodic third-party audits evaluates all of the WCM pillars, forming an overall score for each plant.

With this WCM audit, the site achieved the best results in its 71-year history. Improvements include

CO₂ emissions being reduced by 53 percent per vehicle manufactured and 99 percent of waste being recycled.

A number of these improvements were made possible due to collaboration of site employees who provided feedback through the WCM suggestions programme.

The New Stralis – in diesel (XP) and alternative-power natural-gas (NP) versions – and Trakker products are manufactured in Madrid. Up to 300 000 different versions of these models can be produced.

Last year, the site was recognised with a first prize Excellence award by The Kaizen Institute in the System of Continuous Improvement category.



CUMMINS AND EATON POWER UP

A new 50/50 joint venture between Cummins and Eaton – Eaton Cummins Automated Transmission Technologies – is allowing the two parties to expand their partnership in vehicle powertrains.

Since 2013, Cummins and Eaton have partnered in the development of a range of SmartAdvantage powertrain systems for heavy-duty trucks, which combine Cummins diesel engines with Eaton transmissions.

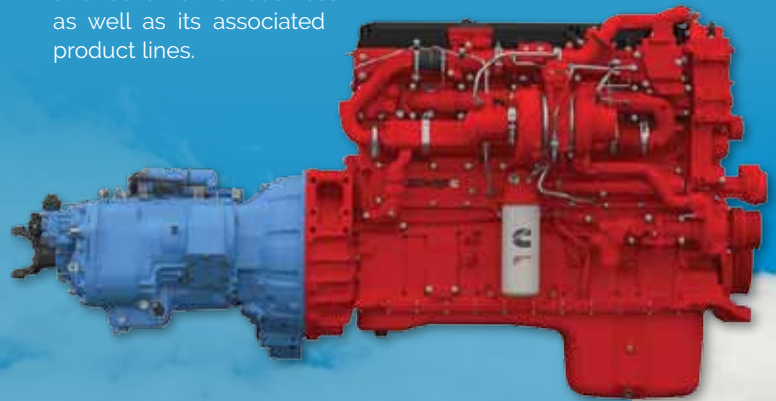
The aim of the global joint venture is to provide customers with transmission technologies and solutions that deliver best-in-class fuel efficiency, performance and uptime, while leveraging the global service and support networks of both companies.

The joint venture will design, assemble, sell and support all future medium and heavy-duty automated transmissions for the commercial-vehicle market.

The Precision and next-generation, heavy-duty automated transmissions will be part of the joint venture. In addition, it will market and support Eaton's current generation of automated heavy-duty transmissions to original equipment manufacturers in North America.

The new joint venture is subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions. The parties expect the transaction to close in the third quarter.

Eaton's Vehicle Group will retain its global manual-transmission and clutch business, as well as its current-generation, medium- and heavy-duty automated-transmission business outside of North America. It will also retain its global aftermarket light-duty transmission, agricultural transmission and automotive business as well as its associated product lines.



Let's make our roads safer, our fleets more efficient, and our drivers more accountable

A driver monitoring service helps drivers to become more aware of their driving style. If drivers know that other road users have an easy way to report their actions, they are more aware, considerate and safer whilst behind the wheel. Driving behaviour thus improves, with vehicles involved in fewer accidents, and drivers involved in fewer traffic infringements, therefore saving the business money.

Introducing the [MiX ReportMyDriving](#) fleet monitoring service that allows the motoring public to report the driving behaviour of a company's drivers, resulting in safer drivers. [Studies](#) indicate a host of benefits linked to a driver monitoring service, including a 52% reduction in accident related costs, and 20% fewer accidents in vehicles displaying safety hotline stickers.

MiX ReportMyDriving is an affordable and efficient driver monitoring service. It assists fleet owners to improve their driver's behaviour through the feedback of other motorists. Your drivers will be more considerate on the road because they know that other road users can report them. It helps drivers to become more aware of their driving style. Driving behaviour thus improves, with vehicles involved in fewer accidents and drivers involved in fewer traffic infringements.

MiX ReportMyDriving helps to identify high risk drivers that require additional training and/or counselling. Recognition can be given to good drivers. Driver and fleet profiling enables training and safety processes to be enhanced. This helps you to manage and mitigate your business' on-road risk, reduces business expenses relating to accidents, insurance, and fleet maintenance.

By displaying the MiX ReportMyDriving sticker, you show that you take your risk management responsibilities seriously. It helps to protect your company's brand and enhance your public image. It improves the safety of your fleet and drivers on the road.

How does it work?

- ✓ All calls to report an incident are routed to the 24/7 MiX Journey Management Centre and the details are captured into our database.
- ✓ Calls are answered by trained security officers. All calls are recorded and logged for quality control and verification purposes.
- ✓ The nominated manager will be notified of the incident.
- ✓ A report is generated which includes all available details from any linked MiX solutions, including driver IDs, location information and video footage.
- ✓ Managers are then in the position to intervene and engage drivers based on the facts.
- ✓ The outsourced service is far more transparent and effective than when matters are handled internally.

The success of the MiX ReportMyDriving programme is based on a combination of factors, including the simple, yet effective placement of safety hotline stickers on vehicles, the 24/7 MiX Journey Management Centre that operates the hotline, and the incident investigation process that follows. Once an incident is reported via the hotline 0861580580 or www.reportmydriving.co.za, a driver's manager is notified of the incident and receives a system-generated report.



Additional vehicle and driver data will be used to investigate the driving incident if the client also has a [MiX Fleet Manager](#) solution in place. The telematics information can determine which driver identification tag was used for the vehicle involved in a reported incident, thus confirming the responsible driver. The telematics data will also confirm that the vehicle was at the reported location, and provide additional information such as the speed at which the vehicle was travelling at the time. If a [MiX Vision](#) in-cab video solution is in place, the video and audio footage at the time of the reported incident will provide additional information to analyse the event in detail.

For more information email info@reportmydriving.co.za, phone 0861 580 580 or visit www.reportmydriving.co.za.

A hand is shown from the wrist up, palm facing up, holding a globe. The globe is composed of a grid of small dots, with the continents of North and South America visible in a darker shade. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue sky with white clouds.

We've got you covered

As a leading global provider of driver safety, fleet management and vehicle tracking solutions, MiX Telematics is mindful of the fact that safety is an ongoing process. We design and deliver a combination of consultancy, training and monitoring tools for the effective management of your drivers' safety. Our customers benefit through:

- ✓ Improved driver behaviour
- ✓ Reduced accidents
- ✓ Effective driver and vehicle management
- ✓ Boosted safety

To find out more or arrange a consultation, contact us at fleetsa@mixtelematics.com.

SCANIA'S WELL-OILED MACHINE

Customer uptime is the number-one goal of any vehicle supplier, and ensuring customers get the right parts when they need them is a priority.

So, what do you do, as a vehicle original equipment manufacturer (OEM), when a customer's truck has had its propshaft stolen while parked up at a border awaiting its turn at customs? If you're Scania South Africa, you load a replacement part into a vehicle and drive it to the stricken vehicle to get it mobile again.

The name of the parts-logistics game is reducing customer downtime. This is the mantra that guides Gerard Lenting, area manager: parts logistics at Scania South Africa.



"The demands placed on us from our dealers are based on their customers' requirements. Our focus is uptime for the end customer and whatever we do is always to benefit that," Lenting says.

Lenting manages the 7 500-m² South African parts logistics warehouse, which is one of six regional parts centres. It supplies the sub-Saharan African region, which has 28 local dealers – including four in Namibia, four in Botswana as well as some in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi.

"The warehouse team is trained to think about the end customer whenever they have to make a decision. The pressure can be high, because the truck is our customer's business and the longer it stands the more revenue is lost," Lenting says.

"We deliver same-day emergency orders and stock parts to a total of 42 sites. An average of 800 lines are picked from our warehouse daily," Lenting says.

Scania's main global parts warehouse is located in Opglabbeek, Belgium. It's a mammoth 24-hour operation that stocks 120 000 part numbers under 130 000 m². It is manned by 450 workers and supplies 99,5 percent of stock with numerous sea and air freight shipments.



Just last year, Lenting spent five months getting to know this operation ahead of his promotion to parts logistics area manager – not that he was underqualified in any way, as he started his career at Scania in 2004 and has worked in various roles exclusively within parts logistics for the past 13 years.

"Logistics is never the same. There can be various challenges to overcome because there are so many facets within the supply chain. It excites me. Scania's core values: customer first, respect for the individual and elimination of waste, tie into how I operate as a person. Within that I try to demonstrate to the team how it's possible to grow within logistics," he says.

"I remind our warehouse staff that, whatever they do, they're not just 'pickers' ... our warehouse has long surpassed being a traditional warehouse; it's a well-oiled machine."

This well-oiled machine averages a productivity rating of 7,2 points, which is very close to its target of 7,5. Daily "pulse" meetings between Lenting and his staff ensure everything keeps running on track.

"Our parts strategy in distribution is to focus on shorter lead times. That means getting the right part to the dealer within 12 to 24 hours, which results in less stock holding at dealers and less downtime for customers. The aim is to streamline the process between ourselves and dealers," says Lenting. "We will do whatever is needed to get the customer back on the road."

And it doesn't matter if that means driving a propshaft to a far-out border post, following the example of colleagues in Belgium, or coordinating a well-oiled parts-logistics machine.

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SALES REPORT FOR APRIL 2017

Note: For the time being, Great Wall Motors SA (GWM) and Mercedes-Benz SA (MBSA) will only report aggregated sales data. The GWM SA and MBSA commercial vehicle market split volumes are estimates based on historical trends and forecasting techniques. No GWM figures were disclosed for April. Associated Motor Holdings (AMH) and Amalgamated Automobile Distributors (AAD) is now Motus Corporation, and continues to disclose aggregated figures.

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 10 592
Fiat Group	46
Ford Motor Company	2 097
GMSA	1 845
JMC	25
Mahindra	127
Mazda South Africa	19
Mitsubishi	34
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	14
Motus Corporation	348
Nissan	2 189
Peugeot	2
Renault	4
Tata	63
Toyota	3 331
Volkswagen SA	448
Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 562
Ford Motor Company	5
GMSA	137
Iveco	52
JMC	12
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	127
Motus Corporation	7
Tata	35
Toyota	115
Volkswagen SA	72
Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 368
FAW	61
GMSA	80
Iveco	6
MAN	33
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	40
Tata	41
Toyota	49
Volvo Group Southern Africa	58
Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 897
Babcock DAF	19
FAW	16
GMSA	40
Iveco	26
MAN	81
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	233
Powerstar	29
Scania	186
Tata	3
Toyota	28
Volvo Group Southern Africa	236
Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 72
Iveco	9
MAN	24
Mercedes-Benz SA – estimate	13
Scania	31
Tata	1
Volvo Group Southern Africa	7

*Source: National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa).

MAN ON A GROWTH PATH

In the really tough market context resulting from recent political and macro-economic developments, MAN Truck & Bus has shown impressive year-on-year market-share growth in the first quarter of 2017.

In the over 8,5-t gross vehicle mass (GVM), heavy-truck and bus market the company managed to chalk up an 18,5-percent growth in absolute volumes, which equates to a market-share growth of 1,5 percent.

In the over 8,5-t truck market, the company is enjoying changing fortunes through a massive 20-percent volume growth compared to last year. This equates to a 1,5 percent increase in this very competitive space.

"Thanks to a growing acceptance of our CLA 15,220 chassis in the eight-tonne payload distribution segment, we have grown our 8,5 to 16-t share to just on five percent," says Eren Gunduz, head of the Truck Division at MAN.

"With a volume growth of some 60 units compared to last year, market acceptance of our TGS EfficientLine long-haul vehicles is certainly growing strongly. The recent **FOCUS** Truck Test 2017 results will simply add to this positive momentum," explains Gunduz.

Elaborating on the bus and coach segment, Markus Geyer, managing director of MAN Truck & Bus Southern Africa, states: "We are absolutely delighted to maintain the market leadership in the bus and coach sector. We will see a variety of wonderful new products introduced locally in 2017, including the RR4 luxury coach chassis with Neobus coachwork, some exciting updates to our existing range of MAN bodies, as well as Volkswagen product enhancements."

The company grew its year-on-year volumes in this segment by 12 percent, resulting in a four-percent growth in market share to 32,4 percent.

"Clearly the total bus market is under some pressure, and we predict a smaller, yet more competitive, passenger-transport supply environment in 2017," adds head of MAN Bus, Philip Kalil-Zackey. "In this demanding market, we are extending ourselves as a team to expand our product offerings and be even closer to our customers."



ADDRESSING THE TRUCK DRIVER SHORTAGE

James McKenzie, executive for human resources at Barloworld Transport, says the road-freight industry faces a huge challenge: "Only about seven out of every 100 drivers meet our criteria. An estimated 40 percent of professional drivers in South Africa are also operating illegally with fraudulent or expired professional drivers permits (PrDPs)."

In response to this Barloworld Transport has founded the accredited Barloworld Transport Academy. As it is a registered FET College, employees receive formal recognition for the training they complete in the form of a National Certificate in Professional Driving (NQF3).

"Each new driver who joins Barloworld Transport completes a three-week professional driving course through the Academy, which also offers continuous development for existing employees. We also have 140 unemployed people on various funded Academy programmes at the moment and another 100 are currently enrolling," McKenzie explains.

McKenzie says interest in becoming a truck driver is growing among women. "We received over 1 000 applications to fill just 60 spots. Our aim is that, by 2020, 25 percent of our drivers will be women."

To further its efforts, Barloworld Transport has also partnered with a technical high school in Pietermaritzburg where ten matriculants have been enrolled into a school leavers' programme.



DOES YOUR DRIVER HAVE THE RIGHT LICENCE?

According to Morné Stoltz, head of Business Insurance at MiWay, if a business transports people, ordinary goods or dangerous goods, it is critical that its driver/s have a professional driver's permit (PrDP).

"Without it, your insurance will not provide cover and you risk damaging liability claims," he warns.

"One of the basic conditions of any vehicle insurance policy is that the driver has the relevant qualification. When it comes to the conveyance of people and goods, it is essential that the driver has a PrDP or the insurance cover will be denied," Stoltz adds.

This requirement extends to the likes of Uber and taxi drivers. Without the PrDP the driver, passengers, vehicle and goods would not be covered in the event of an accident.

To obtain a PrDP, which replaces the old public driver's permit, an individual must meet certain criteria. Applicants need to have a normal driving licence and be certified medically fit by a doctor. They might also need to have been certified by an approved training body for certain types of vehicles. They must not have been convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol, or of reckless or negligent driving, within the past five years. The application needs to be registered with the police, who will also take fingerprints.

"Another important issue for business owners to note is that fraud is a significant challenge. Fake PrDPs are rife. Agencies exist who will provide assurance that a permit is genuine, or the business itself must make enquiries.

"The best advice I can give to any business involved in transportation is to make sure its drivers have a PrDP, and know when each one expires. There is no grace period as there is with a normal driver's licence, so validity lapses immediately on expiry, and this would mean any insurance cover would also be compromised," Stoltz concludes.

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Addressing the METRORAIL CRISIS



In the final instalment of our exposé on public transport in Cape Town, MARISKA MORRIS discusses the Metrorail system, which is plagued by poor infrastructure, faulty electronics and crime

Approximately two million South Africans board Metrorail trains daily. It is the most popular mode of public transport in Cape Town with 750 000 commuters making use of the service each day. It is also considered the cheapest mode of transport, according to the 2013 National Travel Survey.

The survey estimates that private transport costs a household R8 835 per month on average, while public transport costs R1 919. A monthly train ticket is priced anywhere between R140 and R360 depending on distance. The low cost of these tickets is possible as a result of large state subsidies.

The Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (Prasa) – the body responsible for Metrorail – received an estimated R3,5 billion in state subsidies in the 2015/16 financial year. Despite this, the system is outdated and plagued with crime.

PRASA'S ATTEMPT AT IMPROVEMENT

Prasa has invested R172 billion into modernising the rail systems. Part of this investment was allocated to acquiring new passenger carriages. In 2012, Prasa's long-distance travel provider, Shosholoza Meyl, awarded Swifambo Rail Leasing a R3,5-billion tender to provide new carriages.

Swifambo Rail Leasing approached the Spanish train manufacturer, Vossloh España, to assist in building 70 new locomotives. However, when the first 13 new locomotives arrived from Spain in 2015, the carriages were too high. They ran the risk of damaging overhead cables and were deemed unsuitable for use on South African railways.

Prasa filed a civil claim against Swifambo Rail Leasing, requesting the company to pay back the R2,6 billion it had already been paid. Prasa also stipulated

that the 13 faulty locomotives should be taken back. Swifambo Rail Leasing filed an affidavit shortly after the civil claim, which stated that the company was "technically insolvent".

Prasa also awarded a R59-billion tender to Gibela to provide 600 new trains for short-distance travel. Twenty of these trains were to be imported from Brazil and the remaining 580 will be built in South Africa. The company is currently constructing a R1-billion facility at Dunnottar in Ekurhuleni where the manufacture of the new carriages is expected to start later this year.

While the first of the trains imported from Brazil are currently being tested in Pretoria, Capetonians will have to wait until 2019 for new passenger carriages, despite being the most rail-dependent city in the country in terms of public transport. In the same year, the Western Cape Metrorail service will receive a R1,8-million facelift including signal and station upgrades.

Metrorail predicts that the new set of passenger carriages will "start to dominate by 2027". Metrorail will have to think of other innovative approaches to improve services in the meantime – especially in the wake of the growing popularity of the MyCiTi bus rapid transit system.

METRORAIL'S COMPETITOR

Associate Professor Marianne Vanderschuren, a public transport specialist at the University of Cape Town, says that every mode of public transport is important. In low-density areas, such as Atlantis, she believes it is important to have lightweight vehicles, while more infrastructure-heavy transport, such as rail, is ideal for densely populated areas such as Bellville.

"Where you have a huge number of commuters, it doesn't make sense to have a hundred minibus taxis. We should do everything we can to make sure that the



rail system and carriages are maintained, and that the railway continues to be utilised," Vanderschuren notes.

She comments that the existing rail system should be improved rather than implementing new bus systems to meet the demand.

The City of Cape Town is currently in phase two of the MyCiTi system roll-out, which will see a new bus route between Mitchells Plain and Claremont, as well as a route between Khayelitsha and Wynberg. There are plans for this route to be fully operational by 2020.

This is also one of the busiest routes for Metrorail along with the northbound train to Bellville.

The success of the MyCiTi is very evident with an average of about 68 000 passengers per weekday. Much of the success of the MyCiTi system has to do with the quality of its service.

The Transport and Urban Development Authority estimates that MyCiTi buses have a 92 percent on-time arrival.

Metrorail's services do not match this figure, however. In 2014, on average, trains were on time only 60 percent of the time. The Southern Line was the most successful with 72 percent of trains on time in the afternoon.

The worst performer was the Central Line between Khayelitsha and Chris Hani. The morning train was on time only 48 percent of the time. To remain competitive, Metrorail needs to address the service delivery, as well as crime.

FIGHTING CRIME TO KEEP COMMUTERS

Veteran train commuters warn against travelling in empty carriages or during the off-peak hours, as these are often where and when robberies take place. Most regular train commuters have a story to tell of being the victim of, or having witnessed, a robbery.

One non-governmental organisation (NGO) is trying to give voice to commuters' concerns. Public Transport Voice is challenging Metrorail with safety and security as the main concern. The NGO was launched in May 2016 in response to Metrorail's annual price hikes scheduled for July 2016. Previous hikes were between 50 cents and R2 with monthly ticket hikes as high as R38. Metrorail has not implemented these hikes yet, but the NGO still plans to continue to fight for better public transport.

Co-founder Zingisani Nkanjeni says there are plans to take the minister of transport and Prasa to the Equality Court to demand accessible infrastructure, acceleration of infrastructure developments and the deployment of police to improve safety at train stations.

Currently, Metrorail deploys security personnel to "predetermined priority areas", which are identified at a weekly meeting between Metrorail Protective Services and the South African Police Service (SAPS), says Daphne Kayster from Metrorail. The decision of where

to deploy personnel is based on security intelligence and reported incidents.

To help address the lack of available security personnel, Metrorail and the Western Cape Department of Community Safety deployed successful participants from the Chrysalis empowerment training programme at various stations. The Chrysalis Academy is an initiative established by the Western Cape Provincial Cabinet in response to the high crime rates in the province.

The programme offers young people a three-month empowerment training course. After successfully completing the course, participants are placed in work opportunities. Approximately 190 students



complete the course every three months and those placed at Metrorail stations assist in monitoring illegal entries.

The first group, deployed in April 2015, was placed at Belville, Tygerberg and Parow stations. Since the initiative was launched, there has been a

37-percent decline in robberies, a 77-percent decline in assaults and an 85-percent decline in pickpocketing. Fare revenue also increased with fewer people boarding trains illegally.

In August 2016, another group was assigned to the Southern Line. Despite the success of the programme, the limited number of potential employees becoming available from this initiative remains a challenge for the Department of Community Safety.

"There are various stakeholders competing for the allocation of those who have successfully completed the Chrysalis course," the Department says. Many are placed at internships in various other government departments.

Better security is thus far the only visible improvement in the Metrorail system in the Western Cape. With a decade to go before all Capetonians can enjoy new carriages, Metrorail might want to consider additional ways to improve the system and keep the lights on. Thousands of South Africans depend on it. **F**



Let's do it for those **18 KIDS...**

April 21 was just another day in the lives of millions of public transport users in South Africa, but for the families of 18 schoolchildren and two adults who died in the taxi inferno near Bronkhorstspuit, the memory of that day will never end

As an unscathed user of public transport for well over 60 years, my deepest sympathy goes out to those families.

To our shame, such tragedies have become commonplace in South Africa, but, to his credit, the Gauteng MEC for Education, Panyaza Lesufi, showed up on the same day and called it a "national disaster".

A few days later the Minister of Transport, Joe Maswanganyi, accompanied by dignitaries such as Baleka Mbete and Edna Molewa, repeated similar sentiments (although they were also scolded for politicising the event). There was even a minute of silence.

This is not the time to have a dig at the taxi industry. It could have happened to anybody. In March 1985, 42 children drowned when a municipal bus drove into the Westdene dam in Johannesburg. Looking at an old photograph of the incident, an ominous portent of the 2017 disaster was that the bus carried a bright yellow advert for Lion Matches.

Do we have what it takes to stop these disasters? The evidence is not encouraging. I'd rather start with a dig at the VIP convoy system, and am willing to bet that the dignitaries who took part in the memorial service arrived in separate VIP convoys, probably consisting of more than two vehicles each, travelling way over the speed limit.

Each item of hardware making up these convoys probably costs as much as several classrooms for a school. The dozens of policemen making up the VIP

units could also be fighting crime elsewhere.

Yes, I know that it is not the job of the South African Police Service to control traffic, but the VIP system has started a precedent. It would be interesting to see a class action court case testing the interpretation of the Road Traffic Act, which allows people engaged in "civil protection" to exceed the speed limit.

I would rather see a policeman (yes, perhaps only one will be necessary) on a motorcycle (yes, not even a car) escorting a convoy of Putco buses travelling on the M1 from Soweto to Sandton each weekday morning and the other way in the afternoon.

The same policeman (or woman) could even make two round trips during each peak period. We can pretend that there is a big conference in Sandton and that the president needs to get through. The cars could simply be muscled out of the way. If fully loaded minibus taxis want to join the bus convoy, they would be welcome.

That will go some way towards proving that we are serious about public transport.

As this column has repeatedly pointed out, poor transport arrangements are hurting the economy. It should be high on our radar, but isn't. So, it comes as a mild surprise to read (*Business Day*, May 5) that the Competition Commission (CC) is planning to launch an inquiry into the subsidies paid to public transport. The project has apparently been triggered by complaints that Uber is being favoured in terms of transport regulation, but will go further:

The inquiry will be very big and complex and ➤

it is estimated that it will take about two years to complete.

It shouldn't take that long. Then along comes a wobble:

The results of the inquiry would feed into the many transport plans being developed by spheres of government and drive the adoption of efficient public transport systems.

That's a joke. What "transport plans" are they talking about? Gauteng certainly doesn't have one! Fortunately, there may still be hope for the inquiry, which will also apparently look at the subsidies provided to buses and rail including the Gautrain.

I see this as a welcome slap in the face of the national Department of Transport. For years it has been wasting time with projects like the National

Transport Master Plan, which has been no more than a job-creation exercise for armies of consultants and the printing industry.

However, I wonder whether the CC has the resources to do a proper job. Will it look at the subsidy paid to the motor assembly industry, which contributes to the underpricing of cars?

Will it also look at the low rate of tax on fuel, which leads to a perception of low costs on the part of car users? Fuel should cost around 50 cents more per litre. This would raise R10 billion, which alone would be enough to solve the minibus-taxi "problem". These car subsidies are more than those paid to public transport.

If the CC does a good job, we can dedicate it to the memory of those 18 children who lost their lives on April 21. **F**



Vaughan Mostert lectured on public transport issues at the University of Johannesburg for nearly thirty years. Through Hopping Off, Mostert leaves readers with some parting food for thought as he continues his push for change in the local public transport industry.

BUS STOPS

GREYHOUND DOUBLES UP

Following more than three years of development (including numerous unforeseen project delays and minor redesigns) with MAN Truck & Bus and Neobus Brazil, Greyhound, a division of Unitrans, has received eight double-deck MAN RR9 coaches for use in its long-distance fleet.

The bodies have been produced by Neobus Brazil and are the operation's first double-deck products for right-hand drive markets. Accommodating 60 passengers, the new Greyhound Dreamline features "all the bells and whistles", says head of bus at MAN Truck & Bus South Africa, Philip Kalil-Zackey. Some of these features include TVs, air-conditioning, Wi-Fi, toilets, a kitchenette, and memory-foam seats.

It also boasts four-channel selection for entertainment, seats that recline to 150°, USB charging points, laptop plug points in business class, and GPS-activated displays with information and ads pertaining to the next stop.

"This is the latest, flagship MAN chassis," says Kalil-Zackey. "It features a 358 kW (480 hp), 2 350 Nm, Euro-5 engine with Selective Catalytic Reduction; a 12-speed automated transmission; an active-steering tag axle that allows vehicle



length of up to 15 m (the vehicle measures 14,5-m long); and numerous advanced driver-assistance technologies."

These technologies include electronic stability programme, radar-guided adaptive cruise control, emergency brake assist and lane guard, as standard.

According to Kalil-Zackey and MD of MAN Truck & Bus South Africa, Markus Geyer, the MAN RR9 has returned promising fuel consumption, thanks in part to the high-torque engine, and tyre life performance, which bodes well for the vehicle's total cost of operation.



VIGIL CAMERA (V-CAM)

The VIGIL CAMERA (V-CAM) onboard camera solution provides real-time monitoring and video evidence of vehicle and driver activity from any location by logging on to the web-based software platform or by utilising the easy-to-use mobile application.

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