

IAPS specialises rental business

Earlier this year Height for Hire Scotland, IAPS' rental company in... Scotland, appointed Leigh Baker as its new director and changed its name to Specialized Access, signalling the company's new direction as well as to better reflect its product range. Ed Darwin travelled to its base in Wishaw to find out more.

APS was founded by Jim Daintith in 1987, and has been a selling new and used equipment in Scotland for many years, as well as providing service, maintenance and repairs. In 2008, Shane Paver, director of APS Scotland, created a small rental fleet to meet demand from customers who were looking for a complete package.

After a successful first year offering general boom and scissor lifts, Paver introduced a spider lift into the rental fleet. As a dealer for Hinowa and Ommelift, this served the dual purpose of helping increase awareness for these products, as well as encouraging sales through a 'try before you buy' approach.

Paver said: "Tracked booms are comparatively expensive compared to standard self-propelled machines, so rental companies were naturally cautious about investing. Hiring our machines enabled our rental customers to build up a customer base before they committed to purchasing one. It was a low risk way for them to fully understand the return of investment opportunities and test market the level of demand."

APS Scotland expanded its rental fleet further with the acquisition of Height for Hire in 2011, and to help differentiate its sales and rental operations placed all of its rental business under the Height for Hire name. Spider lifts proved popular with local authorities and maintenance companies and were frequently cross-hired by rental companies - including Pinnacle Platforms which was previously owned by Specialized Access' newly appointed director, Leigh Baker.

Baker started work in the tool and general rental industry before entering the access market in 2001. In 2008 he set up Lanarkshire-based Pinnacle Platforms which was later sold to Kimberly Access. After taking a couple of years out from the industry he returned and after some discussions with what is now IAPS, joined Height for Hire, taking a stake in the business. It was at this point the company renamed as Specialized Access.

Under his direction, the company is transforming itself from a general purpose platform rental business into a specialist supplier, offering spider lifts and truck mounts as well as other niche or hard-to-find aerial



The Specialized Access team: (L-R) Louise Gold, Bryan Rodgers, Jamie Palmer (crouching), Alec McLean and Leigh Baker

work platforms such as mast booms and Genie AWP's. This strategy also means that it does not compete head to head with IAPS' mainstream rental customers.

"Along with tracked booms our focus is to remain at the leading edge of specialist products that don't compete with conventional hire companies," said Baker. "We intend to grow the spider market in Scotland by raising awareness for their productivity and safety benefits. With compact dimensions, low ground pressures and the ability to work on uneven surfaces these booms truly offer an alternative to more common ways of working at height safely. For example the benefits over scaffolding can be that the job is completed quicker, without the mess and security risks and at a fraction of the price."

Its truck mounted fleet already includes telescopic and articulated models ranging from 14 to 52 metres while its spider lift fleet - topped by a 30 metre Ommelift 3000RBJ - has an average fleet age of two years. New machines include Hinowa spider lifts, CTE and Isoli truck mounts, Manitou mast booms and Versalift van mounts. Specialized Access is also offering training courses for these products, which will help raise further awareness of the niche products.

"Tracked and truck-mounted booms are the real problem-solvers of our industry, providing access to places other machines simply cannot reach. Contractors who hire these specialist machines rightly want assurances that they can also get specialist advice and support from genuine experts that they can trust."



Still part of IAPS, Specialized Access will now focus on providing niche products throughout Scotland



Specialized Access wants to compete with scaffolding companies rather than general scissor and boom lift rental companies



Specialized Access is also offering certified training courses from its location in Wishaw