

Solid base helps Terex loaders

The UK has for some time been one of strongest markets for Terex Atlas, now known as the Loader Crane Division of Terex. The company is widely acknowledged as the market leader, thanks to a strong base with builders' merchants. General sales manager Lee Maynard, spoke to Cranes & Access about the market and the business and how he is facing up to it.

Cranes & Access: In recent years the UK has been the largest market for Terex/Atlas - has it not? Is this still the case and why?

Lee Maynard: It is certainly true that historically Terex has been strong in the UK and remains so. However, it is a major player in Germany and is enjoying fast-growing sales in the Middle East. No company can afford to be complacent and we are no exception. Our success is down to our commitment to the UK. We believe it has a great deal to do with the fact that customers are dealing direct with the manufacturer on all fronts - sales, service, spares and training.

C&A: In spite of all this, sales have surely dropped substantially - with some companies reporting declines of 60 percent or more. What sort of reductions have you seen and what steps has the company taken to remain in the black?

LM: We don't for a minute claim to be immune from the current economic climate. The commercial sector remains challenging, but we are continuing to do solid business in other sectors - for example, the military. We are currently fitting TLC240.2E's to 33 specialist 6x6 off-road Iveco Trakkers for ALC, and undertaking trials to supply a further 71 TLC105.2's on the same chassis for the Self Loading Dump Truck (SLDT) project. One deliberate step we've taken, not just this year and last but over several years, is to invest in the scope and quality of our after-sales service. With fewer orders around, it's helping us to win business from new customers.

C&A: How is the Terex loader crane order book holding up?

LM: Here in the UK we're maintaining and developing market share but, not surprisingly, there are fewer orders around to be won. We remain strong in the builders' merchants sector and continue to enjoy solid sales in the



The first of a new range, the Terex 380.3 A3

grab loading and plant industry. The military business is also holding up, while sales to local authorities and the utilities also remain healthy. We pride ourselves on the long term relationships and close rapport we have with our customers - a fact substantiated and reflected in our order book by the number of referrals we receive and repeat business.

C&A: When do you see the current slow down turning the corner and beginning to pick up?

LM: There is some evidence to suggest that the market is stabilising but how reliable that evidence is



Lee Maynard

remains to be seen. As a company we have certainly witnessed an increase in the number of enquiries received and quotations submitted. Whether these materialise into orders this year or next, or perhaps not at all, is a question that is still to be answered.

C&A: While times like this are a challenge it can also create opportunities. How is Terex responding to the changed market conditions in the UK loader crane industry?

LM: For our part, we're working harder to support and communicate with our customer base so that we remain the preferred supplier as and when new business arises. We continue to invest in our after sales service and

grow our field service operation while enhancing its effectiveness by introducing a purpose-designed call tracking system. It prompts our service controllers to take specific action and communicate with customers at predetermined points in the call handling process. It's an invaluable tool in helping maximise our first time fix rates on site.

Alongside this we've made maintenance and repair contracts an integral part of the business at a time when more and more companies are understandably taking a critical look at whole-of-life costs.

C&A: You've talked about service, but what's happening on the product side?

LM: We recently delivered the first of a new generation of cranes, a 380.3 A3, to a plant hire specialist in the north east. It's the first of in a range of .3 models designed to take into account the requirements of European standard EN 12999. The new models incorporate a rated capacity limiter that monitors the position of the stabilisers, helping reduce the risks resulting from stabiliser misuse.

The new cranes can be configured to work with either a straightforward legs-in/legs-out arrangement, or as a fully variable system where capacity is determined by the degree of deployment of the stabiliser extensions. The range also offers a more user-friendly tilting stabiliser system, increasingly important as emissions control equipment on trucks gets more complex, leaving less room for the stabilisers.

C&A: So what of the future? What are your aims and objectives?

LM: The aim of Terex, and Atlas before it, is to build on its heritage of offering choice, quality, value and service to customers. We believe that offer is the best it's ever been, given the current team and the new products.



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