

# HR17 Hybrid 4x4

**nifty**  
Innovations

The **HR17 Hybrid 4x4** is one of a new generation of environmentally conscious work platforms from **Niftylift**.

- Efficient, intelligent **Hybrid** power
- Zero emission electric-only mode
- Compact & low weight chassis
- Class leading working envelope
- SiOPS® & ToughCage as standard

The **HR17 Hybrid 4x4** embodies the very best of Niftylift's design philosophy, combining advanced and patented **Hybrid** power-source technology with capable 4-wheel-drive.

It delivers class leading reach performance from a compact, super-low-weight and manoeuvrable chassis.

With **SiOPS®** and **ToughCage** as standard, operators can work with confidence that their safety is paramount.

The **HR17 Hybrid 4x4** is the ultimate combination of performance, economy, and most importantly safety.



USE SMART PHONE Q R CODE READER

To learn more about the Nifty **HR17 Hybrid 4x4**, please visit our website.

To arrange a demo, please call us now on:

**+44 (0)1908 223456**



**niftylift.com**



# Obsessed with customer satisfaction

Jeremy Fish, managing director of Nationwide Platforms joined the company at the end of 2013 following the departure of Mike Potts and other senior managers a few months earlier. Prior to Nationwide, Fish had a six month stint as a consultant with Ainscough Cranes and spent nine years with generator rental company Aggreko. Six months into the new job, he is already implementing changes in a bid to become a more customer focussed business. A chartered marketer he is obsessed with customer satisfaction and American W Edwards Deming's view of management.

**'If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing.'**

W Edwards Deming

"I am extremely impressed in the way that Lavendon and Nationwide does certain things - the Tech X programme, its facilities, work processes, organisation, attention to detail and quality, from my view of 10 years in the rental industry, it is the best in its sector," he says. "I have already visited every single one of the 26 depots and although they are all different types and age of buildings they are organised and run in the same way which means lower operating costs, better quality, better service and agility."



Jeremy Fish



A large outdoor sculpture situated in a field next to the northbound carriageway of the M5 motorway, near Bridgwater in Somerset

But one of the most important areas he is involved with at the moment is rental rates. "It is in the industry's interest to improve rates. I see increased activity across the board - part of the cyclical recovery of key markets including construction - and as part of that recovery we are seeing increased rates which are still below what they were a number of years back. It is important that rental companies get the full value for the services they provide."

So is Nationwide, as market leader, prepared to lead the way?

"We have been increasing rates and that is needed to justify the continual investment and innovation," he says. "This year Nationwide is spending £25 million on new equipment (part of a £55 million total Lavendon spend). We are seeing strong growth in material handling attachments and continuing to invest in innovations in this area through Blue Sky, the attachment designer acquired in 2011."

"What we have seen when prices are cut to the bone, are machines not properly maintained, or lack of familiarisation training, documentation or support. This is not the service we provide or that our customers expect. To do all

these things the whole industry needs to obtain a decent return."

"Rental rates are still below those of five years ago even though they are recovering. We have to be competitive in everything we do but I still want to offer value such as tool box talks, advice on the right platform for the job, IPAF training, familiarisation training and one port of call for all technical issues that are dealt with promptly. Rates have to go up because costs - such as transport and labour - have increased. It is not sustainable for these costs to increase year on year and not be passed on. All that is compromised is the quality of service because of the reduced level of investment back into the business. Many of our customers - especially the bigger companies - are expecting supply chain costs to increase across the board, and this is a correction that is overdue especially as the market tightens up and picks up."

Fish is now introducing a new algorithm tool for spot hires (not fixed price contracts) - called 'Intelligent Pricing', part of an in-house designed and developed software package L-Vis, which like the airline industry fixes the price based on a number of criteria including utilisation and availability.

Nationwide has the largest access fleet in the UK with almost 12,000 platforms



"If machines are in short supply or the platform is needed at very short notice and this leads to increased in-house costs - rescheduling transport or additional engineers' time etc ... then the rental rate should be more. It is all about yield and asset management. Prices vary by only a few percent either way but I am keen to have the market understand that pricing for hire equipment does vary depending on various factors. The system is an algorithm on a computer screen that is used by every hire desk. It is easy to use and eliminates the temptation for staff to revert to local knowledge."

"A lot of time and money has been spent developing L-Vis over the past few years to make it simple to use, for customers to place orders and for hire desk operators to answer customer queries - for example it has real time equipment availability. We looked at external systems but what we have developed in-house is streets ahead. It is very easy to use and reduces training times, allowing people to focus on interaction with the customer and not get bogged down with the system detracting from the customer experience. The customer can ask any question relating to their order, equipment history, outstanding payments etc and all the information is available - no other system can deal with all these points as easily."

**Selecting the right machine**

Brand new customers are offered help with the selection of the machine and there is also a site survey option. The company has also developed its own App 'Product Selector' taking customers - in simple language - through how to choose the right platform for the job. An improved version is now in development and makes the order process simpler and is said to enhance the customers' experience.

**Satmetrix and NPS**

"One of the first things I have done is to implement a system called Satmetrix which results in a ratio called Net Promoter Score (NPS). It measures in simple terms, the proportion of customers which think a company does an excellent job, compared to those who think it is average or worse. Satmetrix benchmarks thousands of companies across the world to compare - using a single number - the levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty."

Every new Nationwide customer is asked to complete the survey at the end of the hire, with repeat customers completing no more than one form every 90 days. Questions include are they happy with the service/product, are they likely to recommend to a colleague, delivery time, can anything be improved, comparison against competitors, the equipment, value for money etc.

"The system went live at Nationwide Platforms in April and it provides a single figure that can help us to predict the company's growth. Now we are measuring customer loyalty and satisfaction at the end of every hire, rather than having a one off survey once a year and the feedback drives improvements," says Fish. "Everything Nationwide does from this moment on will be based on the way customers score the company. Everyone can rant and rave over customer service but now we have some real metrics using an independent third party. Customers respond directly to Satmetrix and the figures cannot be altered."

In the first weeks there were 150 replies but that figure is expected to escalate rapidly.

"The entire business will use this data every single month so we will



NEC refurb



Birmingham depot



Heathrow airport



have an NPS score for each region and I will be discussing the figure with regional directors and how to improve it. Because each response is logged we can also see how equipment performs and this will in the future influence purchasing decisions."

"It is all about customer relationship management, providing a good service improving on what you are doing, asking for feedback and not being defensive about it, then adopting it into the business and continually improving. We used to survey 100 customers once a year and then pat ourselves on the back if it was good. This new system goes much further and asks have we done the best we can for each hire. This is part of the value added service I am trying to install in the company and it will be my legacy."

**Wider range?**

Nationwide already has the largest access fleet in the UK with nearly 12,000 platforms, but is it looking to expand the range of equipment - such as telehandlers or spiderlifts - to provide a greater choice for the customer?

"We could do with a more varied fleet but at the moment we see more demand for articulated booms such as the Genie Z45 and bigger diesel scissors. Rates are not good for large booms and will have to

improve to get back to decent levels".

"Rather than just looking at increasing rental rates I would rather be seen to give better value," he says. "We are always looking to save costs for customers. For example if a customer says they need 50 platforms on a contract we may be able to reduce that number through a service called Managed Services which helps customers manage machine utilisation. I am astounded how many platforms sit around on site not in use. Our solution may save the customer money as well as giving us a better rate - it is a win win situation all around. It is a turnkey service where the customer hands the machine selection, training, compliance, reporting etc to us. We have a number of customers where this is very successful."

**W Edwards Deming**

Fish is a huge fan of American statistician and quality guru W Edwards Deming - probably best known for his Statistical Product Quality Administration which is widely credited with being the inspiration for what has become known as the Japanese post-war economic miracle. Deming's 14 points of management outline the quality basics of a business such as variation is a killer. Applied to a rental company this means fewer



Truck mounted platforms being used for broadcasting



Bristol depot



manufacturers and models, easing maintenance, training and improving leverage with the supplier.

"I am from the school of minimised variation in everything," says Fish. "However having said that we will look at the best equipment for the job and will not change just for the sake of it."

"Ultimately for each item of equipment, it is the return on capital employed - are you making money - rather than how utilised the equipment is," he says. "I didn't realise how much there is in hiring an access platform. My rental background is generators and there is nothing more dangerous than high voltage electricity, but when you come to platforms and working at height I think many customers are far too complacent and too many will buy/rent on price without looking further into the equipment and service they get from the company supplying it."

### Recent changes

Fish has made a few appointments including new sales and marketing director Jeremy Jowett from Harsco. "Jowett's role is to make changes to provide better sales coverage and account management and get sales people closer to customers," says Fish. "Our customer service is only as good as the people we employ and so I have appointed a new HR director Steve Lynas. I am personally passionate about people development, training, growth."

"I have a saying: "We spend most of our life at work and sleeping so it pays to have fun at work, and invest in a good mattress". I want people to enjoy, be engaged and fulfilled at work so they can offer the best customer service. This is why we have the Lavendon Academy - in 2013 we provided almost 2,000 employee training days, 1,210 e-learning sessions, we have 78 different e-learning courses and a comprehensive apprentice programme - with about 30 apprentices. The in-house feedback is fantastic."

"Being a hands-on manager I need to know what my customers are saying. I read every single Satmatrix reply and if a customer has an issue with anything at all I am happy to meet anytime anywhere and discuss the matter - it is the only way to know what is going on and have your finger on the pulse. At the end of the day we are a plant hire business. We buy equipment and rent it out when the customer wants it, get it to site on time, make sure it is reliable, then take it off site and invoice. That is what we do. We just need to keep it simple and not overcomplicate things."



York Racecourse



Refurbishing the NEC



## HOLLAND LIFT

innovation at great height

### EASYLUBE GREASING SYSTEM

automatic lubrication of multiple key points

Holland Lift innovates at great height. A tradition that has made us a market leader for 30 years. Our latest scissor lift comes with a parallel hybrid drive system. It is a green machine that meets all your needs:

- Hybrid powered
- Suitable for both indoor and outdoor use
- 27,5 meter working height (90 ft.)
- 1,000 kg lifting capacity (2,204 lbs)
- Drives at full height with maximum load
- Low fuel consumption
- Enables emission-free operation without sacrificing performance

**Holland Lift International bv**  
 Anodeweg 1  
 NL-1627 LJ Hoorn  
 The Netherlands  
 t: +31 (0) 229 28 55 55  
 e: info@hollandlift.com  
 www.hollandlift.com

