

L to R: Roger Brown, Bob Wilkerson, Ward Bushnell and Jacques Catinot

FACE TO FACE

What does the Terex purchase of Genie mean to customers? That's the question that Tim Whiteman put to Genie's founders Roger Brown, Bob Wilkerson and Ward Bushnell.



# Genie's future

BOB WILKERSON, president of Genie, is a quietly spoken man who considers his words carefully. Asked what changes have followed from Terex's purchase of Genie in the second half of last year, he pauses for a moment before replying: "Very limited", then adds "certainly there has been no change to the management structures which we believe is good news".

His words are echoed by fellow founder and vice president Roger Brown: "The most important thing about the Terex take over is that the way we interact with customers has not changed – our customers are speaking to the same people at the same locations. Genie has always laid great emphasis on the fact that it is a "people company" and it is the employees that make it so special."

This emphasis looks set to continue after the Terex take over. "We are one of five stand-alone divisions within Terex and there have been very limited changes since the take over," says Wilkerson. The main changes affecting Europe seem to have been the discontinuation of the Terex line of aerial platforms, the Genie take over of parts distribution for the former Terex line, the launch of the Genie telescopic handlers and the consolidation of some duplicated activities, mainly in finance and administration.

So what was the point of the takeover? The answer to this question lies in the future says Wilkerson. "Our goal is to be the clear number one in this business." He and his colleagues decided that they wanted the company to be bigger as "we felt this would give our customers security" and concluded that it would be better to be part of a bigger corporation rather than trying to create an independent global company.

The future lies in maximising the obvious synergies that exist between Genie and some parts of Terex. The first visible result of this is the launch of the Genie range of telescopic handlers in Europe. These are built by the Terexlift factory at Perugia in Italy but are a "fully Genie product" with full Genie support says Ward Bushnell, vice president and co-founder. So what could come next? A Terex excavator sold by Genie?

"No" is the clear answer with the comment that Genie is only looking at products that develop the existing activities of its current customers. Also in the future is the question of whether Genie might use some of Terex's excess manufacturing capacity in Europe – "not at the moment" is the clear answer here with Brown adding that a detailed evaluation has been conducted, which concluded that although there is capacity and that manufacturing could start quickly, "it would not be appropriate to make that investment now".

Turning to recent re-organisations within Europe, Bushnell says that the company had too many parts and distribution centres which is why the German parts operation was pulled back into the UK "which is very efficient". However, he stresses that German customers are still visited by the same people and still talk to the same people on the phone.

Asked about the difficult times facing much of Europe's access industry, Wilkerson is clear that "I am still optimistic about the potential for growth in Europe. We will continue to take a local approach with local employees and always aim to be not necessarily the largest, but certainly the best".

C&A