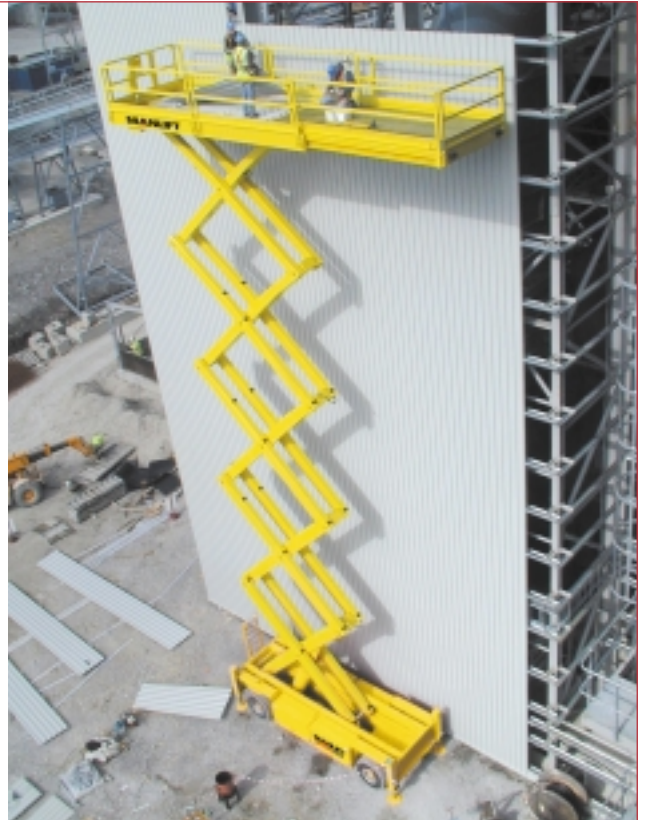


FACE TO FACE

An old name is back in style – Manlift is the new name of Manitowoc's platform business. **Tim Whiteman** spoke to Pierre-Yves Le Daëron at ARA about his plans for Grove Manlift, Liftlux and Toucan

Manitowoc's Manlift



Liftlux specialises in large scissor lifts



Frank Thierer (left) and Pierre-Yves Le Daëron of Manlift found visitors to the ARA show amazed by the size of the S8599 Liftlux platform

PART OF Manitowoc's rapid expansion over the last two years has been the acquisition of three well known manufacturers of powered access. With the Potain purchase came Liftlux while with Grove came the Manlift and Delta-Toucan products. Since then speculation has been rife about Manitowoc's plans for the AWP business and has encompassed everything from a possible complete sale of the access companies to the formation of a new superpower in the powered access world.

The question was complicated by the fact that Manitowoc itself had never previously had any involvement in the powered access sector. Its stated aim in purchasing Potain and then Grove was to become a global player in the crane market – the powered access companies came as part of the deal.

The ARA show in Anaheim, California was the recent venue for the launch of the new Manlift group which sees Manitowoc's powered access activities united under one management structure and given a single name: Manlift.

This new division is led by Pierre-Yves Le Daëron who reports directly to Glen Tellock, president of Manitowoc Crane Group. This separates Manlift companies from their previous parent crane companies and creates a new international player in the access business. Manlift has factories on both sides of the Atlantic and has a product range that includes Grove booms, Liftlux scissors, Delta platforms and former TKD booms. Production is split between Shady Grove in Pennsylvania, Dillingen in Germany's Saarland (on the Franco-German border) and Tonneins in the Bordeaux region of France. Bringing these cultures together will be a challenge but Le Daëron, who speaks French, German and English, is confident of overcoming this: "We have three cultures but very close product links and our sales personnel will be able to sell all the products".

Le Daëron is also confident that although the access market is currently in something of a trough: "the fundamentals are good". He adds that Manlift is profitable and has a good range – the only exception to this is the competitive articulated booms sector and this is "under investigation".

The future for Manlift is intriguing. Le Daëron believes that "the market is big enough for another big player" and says that Manlift could step into this role – this scenario would involve buying another manufacturer. Equally he sees a potential future based upon the group's existing success as a niche supplier – this would see Liftlux focussing on large scissors and large booms, Toucan building on its success in industrial markets and Grove specialising in large booms.

In the medium term Liftlux has finally crossed the Atlantic and its 26 metre platform height S8599 drew amazed looks from visitors to the ARA show. The unit has full ANSI approval and was the largest approved scissor lift platform ever shown in the US.

At the national level Le Daëron sees little change: "We are happy with the existing arrangement under which Russon is responsible for Liftlux, Blue Line for Toucan and Samuel Walker for Grove booms." C&A



Pierre-Yves Le Daëron sees a potential future based upon the group's existing success as a niche supplier which would see Liftlux focussing on large scissors, Toucan building on its success in industrial markets and Grove specialising in large booms