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DOUBLE-DECKER BUSES MAKE A COMEBACK

MAN INTRODUCES ITS LION'S CITY BUS!



NEW DAWN FOR THE TYRE WORLD

Skilling up to meet the challenges of digitisation

OEMS BRING BACK TRUST IN PRE-OWNED

Refurbishment programmes make old trucks 'new' again!

DAIMLER AND KAMAZ: NON-IDENTICAL TWINS

Joint venture promotes similarities – but fundamental differences remain

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Bribery, corruption and trafficking of wildlife among topics addressed

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TOYOTA: THE PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

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outh Africa's light commercial vehicle sector is a significant contributor to the country's economy, not only in terms of the number of minibuses and bakkies produced locally, but also in terms of the volumes of vehicles and parts exported to destinations in Africa and other areas of the world.

It's fitting, therefore, that Toyota South Africa Motors (TSAM) has decided to bolster facilities at its Durban plant to accommodate increased production of its Hiace Ses'fikile minibus taxi, as well as to set up an operation for exporting Hilux kits to Kenya.



ABOVE: Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Ebrahim Patel, and Andrew Kirby, CEO of Toyota South Africa Motors, with a local content enhanced Hiace Ses'fikile minibus taxi manufactured at Toyota's plant in Durban

At an event last month to mark the official launch of the new ventures, Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, described Durban as the heart of the continent's taxi industry, with more than 80 000 Hiaces produced at Toyota's factory since assembly began there in 2012. He added that if any nameplate deserved to serve as brand of choice for the people of KwaZulu-Natal, Toyota should top the list.

"If each of those taxis opened their doors to commuters right now, more than a million South Africans would be able to climb in," he said, praising the brand's decision to increase the amount of local content in the latest version of the Hiace from 38 to 44 percent.

"In line with the South African Automotive Masterplan, the government has ambitions to lift production of vehicles built in South Africa to 1.4-million units a year by 2035 –

representing one percent of global volumes. By then, the aim is to have increased the amount of local content in vehicles to 60 percent," he said.

Among the economic rewards for reaching those targets Patel listed a doubling of the number of employees in the automotive value chain. Currently, the sector directly employs about 350 000 people in KwaZulu-Natal alone, according to Andrew Kirby, CEO of TSAM.

In his address, Kirby said the Hiace plant represented a total investment of more than R1 billion – the most recent expansion accounting for R454 million, which has increased production capacity to 14 000 units a year, up 37 percent compared with the number originally assembled from semi knocked-down kits imported from Japan.

"In terms of turnover, South Africa's minibus-taxi industry

“

The Hiace plant represents a total investment of more than R1 billion – the most recent expansion, costing R454 million, has increased production capacity to 14 000 units a year.

represents a R90-billion a year business," he said. "Fifteen-million passengers a day use its services."

Kirby said an additional 80 jobs had been created following the latest development, which he described as a major vote of confidence in the capability of the South African automotive industry. In addition, another 20 people had been employed in a venture which sees knocked-down kits of Hilux bakkies exported to Kenya for assembly in that country.

"There's been a shift in industrialisation policies in several African countries," Kirby said. "South Africa is well positioned as a hub to support motor industry initiatives and develop trade links with other parts of the continent. We've invested about R20 million in building the 25 modules that are required for the Hilux project – all parts are supplied to Kenya in 580 boxes packed here at TSAM."

According to Kirby, the local economy and customers in Kenya stand to benefit from the initiative – the latter will be able to buy vehicles at a cheaper price than they are currently paying – while the Hiace project is expected to pump about R422 million annually into KwaZulu-Natal's coffers.

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DOUBLE-DECKERS MAKE A COMEBACK WITH MAN

MAN AUTOMOTIVE SOUTH AFRICA IS REACQUAINTING THE BUS INDUSTRY WITH A CLASSIC TWO-STOREY VEHICLE DESIGN THROUGH ITS SLEEK AND STYLISH LION'S CITY DOUBLE-DECKER BUS. MARISKA MORRIS REPORTS FROM THE UPPER DECK WITH A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Some designs make a comeback for the sake of nostalgia – think music on vinyl – while others return to offer a better product. Although the size of modern smartphones resemble the bulky block-like, hand-held phones from the 1970s, they offer a better product with increased screen size and improved technologies.

Similarly, MAN Automotive South Africa is introducing a more streamlined, optimised version of another design from the 1970s: double-decker buses. Widely used in South African cities some 50-odd years ago, these two-level buses are ideal for modern cities according to Phillip Kalil-Zackey, head of sales in the bus division of MAN Automotive South Africa.

"British Prime Minister Boris Johnson wanted bendy or articulated buses out of the city of London, because these trolleybuses cause gridlock. An articulated vehicle takes up a lot of space and is difficult to manoeuvre in South African cities where there is hardly any discipline," he explained at the 2019 Southern African Bus Operators Association (Saboa)

Conference where the new vehicle was launched.

Two-level buses take up less space and carry more passengers. The 12-m MAN Lion's City double-decker bus, for example, can easily carry 86 passengers plus three on fold-up seats. It has a total estimated carrying capacity of 143 passengers with the inclusion of standing passengers on any roads.

The 18-m rear-engine articulated buses can carry around 53 seated and a total of 110 passengers on bus rapid transit (BRT) routes where the dispensation for higher axle capacities is granted.

"The Lion's City double-decker bus has nothing special in length, but gains its advantage in height. It can legally take more passengers than an articulated bus," Kalil-Zackey said. Along with the additional passengers, the bus is also easier to drive in a city.

"The driver doesn't really feel the additional height on the 4.4-m tall bus, but the vehicle takes up less space on the road and the manoeuvrability is very good with its steer-

tag axle. The passenger also hardly feels any movement when sitting on the upper deck," Kalil-Zackey added. While reviving an old design, the MAN Lion's City double-decker bus is anything but old school.

Apart from the clean design, plush seating and "hardwood look" vinyl flooring, it has a Euro-5 engine with a complete aluminium structure, which makes the vehicle strong, but light.

"It is actually unbelievably strong," Kalil-Zackey explained. "The bus has already done a million kilometres on the MAN test track in Germany." Although the product is from a third-party relationship, it is branded as a MAN product – an unusual decision for the manufacturer.



"It is branded as a MAN product because it carries the full approval of MAN. Normally, we don't brand third-party products in this way, but the Lion's City double-decker bus was designed, styled and tested by MAN," Kalil-Zackey said.

The vehicle is equipped with all the safety features available, including an electronic stability programme (ESP), which supports the driver in critical driving situations. The bus can also be adapted or customised for a range of applications, such as sightseeing. The 268 kW (360 hp) Euro-5 engine doesn't require AdBlue and emits more than enough power to easily transport the additional passengers.

"The bus has a catalytic converter, which cleans the bad carbons out of the exhaust," Kalil-Zackey noted. "With the higher torque, the fuel consumption on the Lion's City double-decker will outperform any other vehicles with an equivalent passenger-carrying capacity in a city application."

The improved fuel consumption also contributes to the lower total cost of ownership compared to running the traditional 18-m buses, or two "solo" buses. Kalil-Zackey pointed out: "Yes, the initial price is high because of the technology in the vehicle, but from a total cost of ownership point of view, there is only one driver, there are fewer wheels on the road, it provides better fuel consumption and cheaper licensing fees with the lighter vehicle (just over 14 t), which in turn equates to more passengers."

Over 1 000 units of the double-decker are already in operation in Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Australia and Dubai, United Arab Emirates. MAN believes there is a bright future for this bus in South Africa, which already has a history with this design.

Kalil-Zackey said: "South Africa was a traditional double-decker market in the 1970s. Every major city had these buses. Johannesburg still has these buses



today and wishes to remain a city with double-decker buses. There is definitely a future for this product. MAN simply took the initiative to introduce it. There needs to be a product that potential customers can touch and feel."

In addition to the Lion's City double-decker, MAN also launched its high-floor rear-engine city bus with a 238 kW (320 hp) Euro-5 engine, the RR9 19-320 model, at the Saboa Conference.

It is the second year that MAN has launched multiple products for the bus sector at Saboa despite a decline in the industry. While some might think it odd, MAN is looking to future trends.

"There has been a decline in the bus sector, but this is seasonal. I believe there will be an uptick in the new year," Kalil-Zackey predicted. When this uptick occurs, MAN will be ready with a host of stylish solutions for its clientele. **F**



MIKE FITZMAURICE is the CEO of the Federation of East and Southern Africa Road Transport Associations (Fesarta). He has 42 years of experience in the transport and logistics industry with several major companies in South Africa, as well as overseas exposure with some of the leading transport companies in six European countries. Since 2004 he has established and run Transport Logistics Consultants. In May 2015 he became CEO of Fesarta.

BORDER-POST PROCEDURES IN NEED OF AN OVERHAUL

BORDER CROSSINGS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA ARE FRAUGHT WITH DISASTER – AND SOUTH AFRICA IS NOT IMMUNE TO THE PROBABILITY OF FALLING VICTIM TO HIGH-RISK INCIDENTS

Safety and security at border posts along trade corridors in southern Africa pose significant risks for transporters. With widespread theft and pilfering from trucks that are stranded in long queues while waiting to cross from country to country, drivers say they are afraid to leave their vehicles unattended for any length of time.

The situation gets worse at night when, asleep in locked cabs to protect their safety, they are powerless to prevent the theft of items that are easily accessible from the outside of the truck, among them batteries, spare wheels and tarpaulins.

Life for a truck driver tasked with delivering goods across borders entails many anxious hours or even days of waiting in line for clearance to pass through, first the one side, then the other. After delivering the cargo and re-loading with a return consignment, the daunting prospect of transiting the border in reverse direction lies in store.

Vendors ply their trades up and down the line of trucks and often shanties spring up along the length of the queues to supply food, drink and even prostitutes to the waiting throng. Often, local delicacies are cooked on open fires, posing a significant safety risk to vehicles, cargoes and drivers – especially when tankers carrying petroleum products are in the queues.

Over the years there have been a

number of fire-related disasters which have claimed the lives of those waiting in line, along with their vehicles and cargoes.

In 2014, at Kasumbalesa, a collision between two tankers in the queue caused a fuel spillage, that spread to an area in which an open fire was being used for cooking purposes.



The ensuing fireball resulted in loss of life, injury and the destruction of 43 vehicles and their cargoes.

Last year, in a designated parking area at the Rusumo Border Post between Rwanda and Tanzania, a fully laden fuel tanker crashed into a line of trucks waiting to pass through the check point.

The explosion that followed claimed the life of the tanker driver and destroyed six vehicles and their cargoes. The nearest emergency services responders were 140 km away in Kigali. By the time the first of them arrived by way of military helicopter, all they could do was douse the smouldering remains of the vehicles with the fire buckets they had brought along for the purpose.

Also in 2019, on the outskirts of Morogoro in Tanzania, after being involved in a collision with a motorcycle, a petrol tanker rolled onto its side, spilling its contents. A crowd immediately converged on the scene

with buckets and containers to scoop up the fuel, which suddenly ignited. The tanker exploded, killing more than 70 people and injuring another 50. The tragedy could have been averted if first responders or emergency personnel had been on hand to disperse the crowd and secure the area to contain the spillage.

In Fesarta's view, it is high time governments and authorities at border posts within the southern African region take note of these kinds of dangers and implemented procedures aimed at making border crossings safe and efficient.

For instance, clearance of trucks carrying dangerous or hazardous goods, livestock or refrigerated products should be fast-tracked. Vehicle queues should be properly policed and protected. First responders to incidents should be stationed nearby and be properly equipped to deal with emergencies. These are just a few of the issues that need fixing – and for which Fesarta is striving.

And don't think South Africa is immune to these high-risk situations. Border posts such as Biet Bridge, Grobelarsbrug, Kopfontein and Skilpadshok are all vulnerable to the types of disasters that have afflicted Kasumbalesa, Rusumo and Morogoro. **F**

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WHO IS LIABLE WHEN CARGO CAUSES DAMAGE?

SINCE CARGO OWNERS CAN BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POTENTIAL OF DAMAGE OR LOSS THAT THEIR GOODS COULD CAUSE WHILE IN TRANSIT, THEY ARE ADVISED TO ESTABLISH EXACTLY WHAT THEIR INSURANCE POLICIES WILL (OR WON'T) COVER

Many cargo owners are aware of the risk of damage to, or loss of, their goods in transit and ensure that they have suitable insurance policies in place to cover possible mishaps. Most transporters also have liability insurance in place to cover their responsibility for cargoes that are lost or damaged while in their care.

However, sometimes a cargo, itself, causes damage to property belonging to a third party. For example, it can cause damage to ships, other cargo, containers, port facilities, vehicles, or road infrastructure. Who is liable for this damage and is it covered by insurance?

The issue of damage caused by cargo is most commonly seen in ocean transport when a fire occurs on board a vessel. Such fires are frequently caused by the incorrect declaration of containerised chemicals – such as calcium hypochlorite – which can cause severe damage to other cargo on board as well as to the ship itself.

A similar principle applies where goods transported by road cause damage to the vehicle transporting the cargo, or to goods owned by other parties – particularly in groupage

shipments. Equally, a cargo can cause damage to roads or the environment during transportation.

Where the damage to third party property occurs as a result of the fault of the transporter, the third party may have a claim against the transporter and the liability may be covered under the transporter's liability insurance.

However, where damage is caused by the fault of the cargo owner,

caused to his or her goods – but which, exceptional circumstances apart, do not cover the cargo owner's liability to third parties.

One issue with cargo liability insurance is that it can be prohibitively expensive. In the case of cargo insurance, the marine cargo insurer knows that, if there is damage to the insured cargo, the extent of the insurer's exposure is limited to roughly the value of the cargo.



then the third party may look to the cargo owner to recover losses or, alternatively, the transporter may look to the cargo owner to make good the claim. Additionally, some pollution legislation imposes liability on various parties in the logistics chain irrespective of whether damage caused was their fault.

Many cargo owners incorrectly assume that their marine insurance policy covers them against the possibility of being held liable if their cargo causes damage to the property of another. Most cargo is insured under Institute Cargo Clauses, which cover a cargo owner for damage

However, a cargo liability insurer could face claims amounting to millions of rand in the event that the insured goods cause damage to a ship or other cargo. Because potential exposure is high, the premium for liability insurance may be sufficiently expensive for cargo owners to think it is uneconomical.

Cargo owners need to be aware that they can be held responsible for the potential of damage or loss that their goods could cause to port property, vessels, or to other goods in transit or in port. In this respect it is wise for them to know exactly what their insurance policies will (or won't) cover. **F**



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CARE IS THE KEY TO VEHICLE LONGEVITY

MAXIMISE THE LIFE OF YOUR TRUCK AND REAP THE ECONOMIC REWARDS

In the tough economic environment in which today's road transport owners operate, it has become essential to extract the full lifespan potential from a vehicle at the lowest possible maintenance cost in order to retain a healthy profit margin and remain competitive.

In order to do so, transport operators need to avoid expensive repairs to, or replacement of, major components such as engines, transmissions and drivetrains. Although it might sound like a daunting prospect, it is readily achievable, since today's modern trucks are highly durable and capable of obtaining high, trouble-free mileage, provided that they are well maintained and correctly driven.

Engines and other major components don't fail suddenly. There are usually tell-tale signs that warn drivers and workshop mechanics of a pending malfunction, but, due to a don't-care attitude, or simply a lack of understanding of the damage that can occur, some drivers do not report a fluid leak, a lack of power or any other tell-tale signs that indicate a possible, pending failure.

Many mechanics also lack care and will carry out a service or repair, following only the instructions on the job card, but will not spend an extra few minutes looking for warning signs that could indicate the imminent failure of another component.

Over the years, interviews with prominent and respected road-transport operators who have been successful in extracting the full

potential from their trucks – without incurring high maintenance costs – indicate that drivers play a very important part in the process of caring for the vehicle.

Equally, some operators have indicated that, by educating drivers and working to change attitudes

- Tyre replacement intervals were extended;
- Brake linings and driveline components such as clutches, gearboxes and prop shafts lasted longer;
- Customers were happy, since their goods were delivered on time;



and mindsets, while also improving skill sets, maintenance costs have been minimised and productivity increased.

To motivate and change the attitude of drivers, most of these successful operators looked to increase the frequency of their driver training programmes, implementing policies that compel all drivers to undergo initial driver training courses – usually lasting for about two weeks – plus yearly refresher courses.

Once the drivers had been trained, motivated and rewarded with a fair and liveable salary, the following benefits were immediately apparent:

- Vehicle maintenance costs were reduced;
- Accident rates were cut;
- Expensive roadside breakdowns were reduced;

- Drivers were happy and showed more courtesy to other road users; and
- The image of each of the companies involved was improved.

The next factor that helped to reduce costs and maximise the economic lifespan of the fleet was preventative maintenance. As regular **FOCUS** readers – and certainly regular readers of this column – know, well-planned preventative maintenance helps to extend the life of a vehicle by keeping it in premium condition and, in most cases, negating the need for any rebuild.

Lastly, keeping all the trucks in the fleet clean was said to have a positive effect on driver attitudes, helping to promote a company's image as well as aiding the vehicle's longevity. **F**



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VAUGHAN MOSTERT lectured on public transport issues at the University of Johannesburg for nearly thirty years. Through Hopping Off, Mostert leaves readers with some food for thought as he continues his push for change in the local public transport industry.

GRETA AND THE PROFESSOR

OVER THE YEARS, THROUGH MISMANAGEMENT AND NEGLECT, SOUTH AFRICA HAS ALLOWED ITS PUBLIC-TRANSPORT SERVICES TO WASTE AWAY. SO, WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH GRETA AND THE PROFESSOR? VAUGHAN MOSTERT EXPLAINS

Most people have probably heard of Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old climate activist from Sweden, who has been skipping school on Fridays. She pops up at international forums, such as the World Economic Forum, to warn us of impending climate catastrophe. She has even met the Pope and has written a little book, titled *No One is Too Small to Make a Difference*. A few months ago, she sailed across the Atlantic to New York in a yacht to address the United Nations.

Not everyone supports her views – indeed strong opposition to them is inevitable when so many industries are dependent on the status quo for their existence.

One particular criticism of her, however, appears astonishing. It could have originated from the boss of a coal mine, but instead came from an academic. It was published in the London *Sunday Times* of September 1, written by Professor Niall Ferguson, a historian at Stanford, the number two university in the United States.

Ferguson starts his attack by reminding us that 600 years ago children were sacrificed to the gods. Now the roles have been reversed, he argues. Children are demanding sacrifices from us! What a cheek they have!

It then gets personal: "The pigtailed ... the unsmiling stare ... she has struggled with mental-health conditions ... and

obsessive-compulsive disorder." Ferguson quotes from page 24 of her book: "I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I feel every day." He suggests that this is not the "voice of science" but rather the voice of a "millenarian cult leader".

He has a point – Greta admits that she has Asperger's syndrome – but then I would like to ask the professor exactly what the "voice of science" has to say on the topic.

I don't share his complacent view that "we shall adapt, taking advantage of technological innovations that will gradually improve how we generate and store electrical power and ward off flood waters". I've heard all that before. My problem is his use of the word "gradually", which, in my opinion, is code for "do nothing".



I was a year younger than Greta when I wrote my first letter to a newspaper editor, in 1963. It was a criticism of the Durban City Council's decision to scrap its trolleybus fleet. To cut a long story short, that letter was ignored, although I seem to recall people dismissively saying "stick around kid, and wait for batteries to improve".

Nearly six decades later, I'm still "gradually" waiting. Not only have we "gradually" done nothing – we have allowed public transport to waste away by mismanagement and neglect. In the meanwhile we have built a great deal of new infrastructure that is not going to cope very well with the energy problems that lie ahead.

Unlike Greta, I care little about greenhouse emissions or climate change. I would rather write about the way we waste energy in transport due to the underperformance of public transport and the resulting over-reliance on cars. So, I'll leave Greta and other teenagers worldwide to sort it out with people like the professor.

I would rather focus on what the academic world needs to do about how it teaches public transport. Every university – Stanford could consider taking the lead here – should prescribe a textbook called *Transport Revolutions*, written in 2010 by two Canadian researchers Gilbert and Perl.

To the best of my knowledge, it is the only book written so far that spells out in sufficient detail how major world players should respond

to the coming scarcity and cost of energy in all its forms. By responding to their suggestions now, we will avoid problems later.

Viewpoints in the book could be applied to a wide range of disciplines, including the arts. It is as close to the "voice of science" as anything I have read and, despite being 10 years old, belongs on every MBA programme. If it isn't there, I'd like to know why not. I prescribed it for my undergraduate class at the University of Johannesburg in 2012/13, but it was removed after I retired.

We shall adapt! We shall adapt! Yeah, right, like the frog in the pot of boiling water... **F**



From left: Mr Jacques Vorster (Agent), Mr Boikhutso Masipa.

“Jacques is always there for us.” Boikhutso Masipa

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FACE TO FACE

FACE TO FACE WITH BANDAG'S JOHN LASKARIDES



IF THERE IS ONE MAN WHO IS A REAL ICON OF THE TYRE INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA, IT'S JOHN LASKARIDES, THE CEO OF BANDAG. CHARLEEN CLARKE WENT FACE TO FACE WITH HIM



First up, where does the Bandag name come from?

The global company was formed in 1957, when an American businessman by the name of Roy Carver purchased the rights to a revolutionary precured retreading process from its German inventor, Bernard Anton Novak. The name Bandag comes from his original company, **Bernhard Anton Novak Darmstadt AG**.

Today, Bandag is a global company with 15 production facilities on five continents. It produces retreading equipment and more than 275 tread designs and sizes. It also provides services to trucking fleets worldwide. The company has over 1 700 dealers in more than 100 countries worldwide, which sell almost nine-million truck and bus tyres each year.

Please tell us about your career and how you came to be involved in Bandag. For how many years have you been involved in the tyre industry?

In 1979, I graduated from the University of the Witwatersrand as a civil engineer and spent my first 14 years in construction and with Total SA as chief engineer, fleet executive and distribution director, including an expatriation to Paris.

I was then head-hunted by Bandag USA to head the Bandag South Africa operation and joined the company in February 1999 as managing director. We undertook dramatic and painful changes as the need to transform the organisation was evident even then, with the advent of threats from both within the industry and external threats imposed by cheap tyres.

How have the tyre and retreading industries changed over the years?

They have evolved dramatically both globally and locally. The new-tyre industry has recognised that retreading is a necessary part of its service offering, although fundamentally its very existence is defined by the ability to sell its next new tyre. The new-tyre manufacturers together own some 65 percent of the retreading industry worldwide.

The advent of cheaper new tyres – somewhat unfairly characterised as “Chinese tyres” – has accelerated the need for new tyre companies to be “seen” to be retreading. Yet they still focus on selling their next new tyre, often to the detriment of the fleet and the transporter. The retreading industry has shrunk over the years for these reasons.

Does this situation apply specifically to South Africa?

In South Africa, a combination of local political factors and the lack of investment on the part of local manufacturers, specifically when it comes to truck tyres, has resulted in a situation where 64 percent of all truck tyres sold in South Africa are imported in some form or another. A significant portion of these tyres are imported and sold by the local new-tyre manufacturers themselves.

Coupled to this is the fact that the transporters themselves face many threats. These include a shrinking economy,

which is very close to being awarded junk status; an erratic environment where input costs are regulated and beyond any influence; negative sentiment reflected by consumers, who do not have the disposable income to generate growth in the economy; the consolidation of fleets; and a shrinking transport industry.

All of this has resulted in transporters arresting costs and reverting back to their core business of transporting goods. Accordingly, many transport operators have appointed providers for support services, such as tyres and maintenance.

It is in this space that Bandag SA operates and I'm happy to say that, despite the nature of the shrinking industry, we continue to grow, and we innovate with our customers' needs in mind. Practically speaking, we provide transporters with independent advice based on tyre-management data, without a vested interest in any new tyre company.

We currently have the performance and failure information of over 460 000 truck tyres. Transporters are given the best advice on which tyres are best suited to specific applications. In some instances, long-standing clients give us the mandate to fit that tyre entirely at our discretion.

Most importantly, our Bandag network of independent dealers has remained loyal and committed. We continue to innovate and make all those developments available to our manufacturing Bandag franchisees and our Bandag Truck Services (BTS) dealers. Together, we cover the national fleet through Bandag's National Fleet Programme, whereby the fleet is serviced in the same way nationally. Our network also services the larger private fleets with single depots, adhering to the same standards.

Transport operators appear to be more price sensitive than ever before. How do you persuade them to “shop” with Bandag? Is price often the determining factor, or is there more to it? Can you differentiate via customer service, for instance?

In essence, our selling points are the performance of our products, coupled with our management of all things tyre related within a fleet. The combination of tyre maintenance and tyre performance relates to a cost that the transporter incurs, and it is the management of that cost that determines our relationship with that transporter. It is these savings that the fleet gains as a result of the management and care of those tyres.

You will see that I have not mentioned price at all. The package determines the relationship and not the unit price of either the new tyre or the retread. Unlike some of our competitors, we award all the savings to our fleet customers – the onus is on us to produce those savings and, as long as we continue to do so, customers and suppliers operate optimally in their own and respective core businesses.

Our national fleet business – through which we service blue-chip transporters, and by extension our retreading business – continues to grow. We have had double-digit

growth for some nine years. More importantly, our dealers throughout the country are also growing.

As far as pricing goes, our dealers do have the competitive tools and products available to them to enable them to compete locally in their areas. This is a combination of lesser compound products, rebate incentives, tyre-management software developed for the smaller user, asset-management software and a 24-hour breakdown centre at which any truck can be serviced.

We do understand that pricing at these levels is more sensitive, but our dealers have and use those tools to the benefit of smaller, private fleets based in their areas.

Sales of retreads have dropped over the last few years. How has this impacted on your business?

As I mentioned in my response to the previous question, we engineered the company to become a tyre-management solution supplier that also happens to be a retreader. That does not imply that we need to sacrifice quality, and thereby tyre performance, to compete on a transactional "price basis".

The performance of the tyre is the determinant, and the performance of the retread determines the saving to the transporter while delivering growth to us as a tyre company. Our vision is always non-transactional, and we are superbly placed to avail ourselves of short-term opportunities and long-term relationships.

We remain true to a strategy developed many years ago when we acquired the company, and while we continue to innovate and develop products that deliver value – as opposed to only focusing on price – we believe that we will continue to thrive and grow.

In this context, one hopes that the government can finally proceed with the much-vaunted Economic Recovery Plan, as that will serve the micro-economic indicators so desperately needed by our country.

You have rebranded. Why? Please explain what you're offering with "Built for Better". What's in it for transport operators?

The rebranding has taken place as a result of the awarding of a licence for the next 15 years by our licensor, Bridgestone Bandag. Please allow me to backtrack for a moment chronologically. The management buy-out (MBO) of Bandag South Africa occurred in November 2004, and the acquisition of Bandag International by Bridgestone North America followed in December 2006.

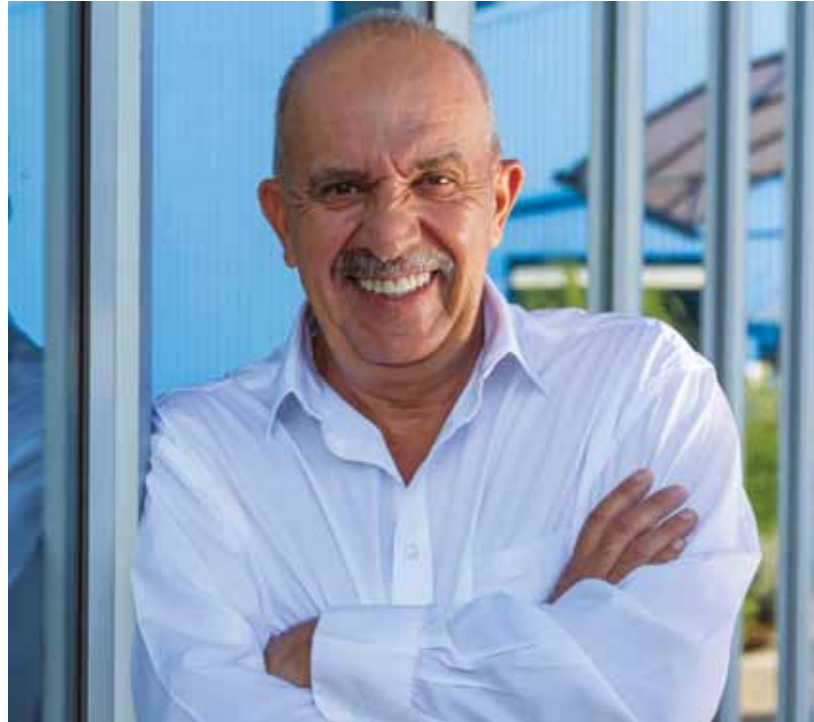
At the time, Bandag South Africa was a bit of an exception – because we already had a licence agreement in place with Bandag, which expires in December this year. Now, we have been awarded another 15-year licence by Bridgestone Bandag, and I dare say this happened against all expectations.

Simultaneously, our licensor was rebranding the international Bandag portion of its business along the same lines as we were doing in South Africa. Accordingly, we decided to launch our new branding together with the announcement of the 15-year licence extension.

In terms of our new "Built for Better" branding, we are offering transport operators access to all the innovations and new products from within the Bridgestone Bandag

stable, and these will vest exclusively within Bandag Southern Africa.

Our independent nature is what allows us to deliver on the "Built for Better" promise. While we're able to leverage global research and development, we have not lost focus of the needs and demands of the local market.



What would you list as your biggest achievements in your time Bandag?

My biggest achievement is not in the management by objectives of 2004, nor in the extension of the licence agreement. It's also not related to the growth of our company; it is in the creation of a proudly South African company that continues to employ people – our employment numbers have grown annually since 2004. Furthermore, it's in the fact that we're wholly invested in, and bullish about, the future of our country, irrespective of whatever challenges that brings.

Finally, you have been Mr Bandag for longer than I can remember! It seems as though that there was never a time that John Laskarides was not synonymous with Bandag and, in fact, the tyre industry in South Africa. Will you always be with Bandag, or do you plan to go fishing one day?

I am particularly proud of the Bandag team that I have created; stakeholders and shareholders alike. Laurent Colrat, Jonathan David, Monal Naik and Brian Clarke have been with me since those heady days in 2004. I have moved into the echelon of CEO while Laurent is now the managing director – he's running the company.

I am charged with running the externalities of Bandag and identifying further opportunities within the stable and in related ventures. Thus, I have no time for fishing – but I always find time for golf! **F**



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Truck and bus owners are under constant pressure to deliver the best possible service on time and at the best price. Therefore, they have to choose quality products and maintenance services at the lowest prices. However, an increasing cost per kilometre (CPK) exposes them to lower quality products, ultimately leading to compromised safety.

A visit to a Michelin Truck Service Centre (MTSC) will allay all the fears of the truck or bus owner!

At an MTSC you'll be met by highly-skilled staff who will ensure that your vehicle is given a full safety assessment, including checks on brakes and suspension parts. This is made possible by top quality equipment – from truck tyre fitting machines, to wheel alignment systems that can be found at all MTSC dealerships. Value added services on offer at the MTSC dealerships include batteries and lubricants.

An MTSC is a one-stop-shop that allows you, the customer, to get the most out of the time your vehicle is off the road.

You can find an MTSC dealership in South Africa as well as in other countries around the world, including India, Thailand and Saudi Arabia.

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CHALLENGES OF A BRAVE NEW WORLD

TYRE COMPANIES ARE CHANGING, AND CORPORATE EXECUTIVES AND THOSE ON THE SHOP FLOOR ARE ACQUIRING NEW SKILLS TO MEET A VARIETY OF CHALLENGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE DAWN OF THE DIGITAL AGE

Various trends are inexorably driving profound changes in the way that tyre manufacturers operate – and the kinds of skills they demand of their employees. Corporate executives and machine operators alike face tough challenges in the face of increasing digitisation, according to Bridgestone South Africa.

Sensors, artificial intelligence, machine learning and related technologies – backed by the limitless computer power of the cloud – mean machines are getting smarter and capable of greater levels of autonomous action. For those on the shop floor, work focus is beginning to shift away from jobs involving manual dexterity to those which require cognitive and trouble-shooting skills.

For those in executive positions, management is beginning to encompass work processes that are more connected, with increasingly diverse work environments that often extend to many countries. In this respect, the ability to manage cross-skilled teams from different cultures and backgrounds is becoming essential.

"Whereas executives once learned how to acquire information, now they need to know how to identify the data that matters – and how to translate it into actionable business insights. These are changes that require some radical rethinking about what executives do and what skills

they need. The same revolution is changing the way that employees work on the manufacturing shop floor," says a statement issued by the company.

Bridgestone has already begun rolling out smart factories in Europe, and the company's facilities in the rest of the world are scheduled to follow. In this new world, machine operators will no longer be required to physically operate equipment or participate in the "heavy lifting" that is an inevitable part of the manufacturing process. Rather, their work will rely much more on how to operate computers – and even write code!

"For example, an operator used to have to manually set a new tyre size on the production line. Now a smart machine will automatically pick up the new size from a barcode as the product begins its manufacturing journey, and make the necessary adjustments along the line to produce a tyre that adheres to the new specifications.

"The operator's job will be to understand the process at a very deep level, and be able to troubleshoot any problems that occur," the statement says. "In general, automation will increase greatly, and all new skills will be related to making automation more successful."

The statement adds that Bridgestone South Africa is at the beginning of a new journey at its Brits factory, having invested in some digital and smart equipment in order to compete globally. "One of the outward signs of the



which began with Apollo 11 and which continues with this silica experiment in microgravity."

He says the company's in-space evaluation, which began in July, is being conducted through an agreement with the United States' National Laboratory, which has a cooperative agreement with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to fully utilise the orbiting space station's lab by conducting innovative science and technology experiments capable of benefiting life on Earth.

Astronauts aboard the ISS are conducting the Goodyear-prepared silica experiment while the company's scientists on earth are simultaneously carrying out similar research. The results of the two experiments will be compared once the samples aboard the space station – frozen for the journey back – have been returned.

Another global tyre

change is that machine operators are now known as equipment owners to indicate their new role as overseers of the process rather than one of its moving parts.

"They have to meet a whole new set of demands relating to problem-solving on the job. They also need to take over some of the maintenance needed to ensure that their equipment remains in working order for longer," the statement says. "Both executives and shop-floor workers face a common challenge, one that might be their toughest: unlearning the old way of doing things in order to position themselves for this brave new world."

Equally challenging for tyre companies is the issue of continually improving the performance of products in order to meet intensifying consumer demands. Goodyear, for instance, recently initiated a project involving the International Space Station (ISS), in which the formation of particles of silica – a commonly used material in tyres – is being researched in a microgravity environment to evaluate whether there are any benefits.

"In the past, Goodyear has quite literally gone to the moon and back to take tyre performance to new levels for consumers," says Chris Helsel, Goodyear's chief technology officer. "Space exploration has served as inspiration for so much innovation, and we at Goodyear are proud of our legacy of participation,

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“

Machine operators will no longer be required to physically operate equipment or participate in the “heavy lifting”.

manufacturer, Continental, is equally involved in developing strategies to meet the demands of a changing world. From introducing the first-generation anti-lock braking system (ABS) to pioneering automated driving and networked communication between vehicles, the company has set its sights on automotive safety – tyre technology being just one part of a future that aims to reduce and ultimately eliminate road accident injuries and deaths.

As a partner to the Global New Car Assessment Programme's (NCAP's) #StopTheCrash, Continental plays an

active role in supporting education regarding road safety and the benefits of modern safety systems; its unified approach forming the core of its Vision Zero initiative.

Earlier this year, Continental Tyre South Africa took part in the first road safety event of its kind to be held in Africa, in which a series of crash-avoidance technologies in support of the United Nations (UN) Global Goals and the Decade of Action for Road Safety were demonstrated at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit at Midrand. The event placed a special focus on the life-saving benefits of electronic stability control (ESC), autonomous emergency braking (AEB) and ABS.

“The technologies promoted by #StopTheCrash have the potential to save thousands of lives every year and the UN has developed international standards to help encourage countries around the world to mandate these life-saving technologies,” says Shaun Uys, managing director of Continental Tyre South Africa.

“As one of the world's tyre leaders and a pioneer in automotive technologies, this unique event was a perfect fit for Continental, reinforcing our commitment to driving safety through producing tyres with best-in-class braking performance, and producing a comprehensive suite of active safety features that assist drivers in avoiding a collision.”

Uys describes Continental as a pioneer when it comes to designing, developing and implementing innovative technologies that enhance driver and vehicle safety, pointing out that at this year's Frankfurt Motor Show (IAA), it introduced Conti CARE – a system

consisting of a networked web of wheel and tyre technology to provide a means of tyre management.

The system features sensors that are built into tyre casings, generating and continuously evaluating data concerning tread depth, possible damage, temperature and actively adjusting pressures by means of centrifugal pumps carried the wheels. The technology keeps tyre pressures constantly within an ideal range and helps achieve a sustainable drop in the vehicle's CO₂ emissions.

“Continental is more than just a tyre company, though,” Uys reiterates. “Globally, its aim is to develop pioneering technologies and services for sustainable and connected mobility of people and their goods. Through continuous investment in research and development, it makes major contributions to safe, cost-effective and ecologically efficient mobility, offering efficient, intelligent and affordable solutions for vehicles, machines, traffic and transportation.” **F**

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*Source: 2019 Global tyre rankings by Tire Business magazine based on 2018 tyre sales.



BRIDGESTONE



WRAPS OFF!

THE RECENT FUTUROAD EXPO, CO-LOCATED WITH AUTOMECHANIKA JOHANNESBURG, SAW THE LAUNCH OF A NUMBER OF NEW TRUCKS FROM CHINESE, JAPANESE, KOREAN AND INDIAN MANUFACTURERS. WYNTER MURDOCH AND MARISKA MORRIS ATTENDED THE EVENTS

ABOVE AND BELOW, LEFT:

The Tata stand at Futuroad included a display of three of the latest variants in the Ultra range – the Ultra Plus 1418 (above), the Ultra 1014 and the Ultra 814 AMT. On show, too, was the brand's Prima race truck (below, left), which is powered by a Cummins ISLe engine that delivers 275 kW. A road-going version, the Prima 4938.S, was also featured, along with Prima tippers in the form of the 2528.K and 3338.K





FAR LEFT: The halo model in Powerstar's FT range – the FT10 – made its debut at Futuroad. Due to come to market in the first quarter of next year, the derivative – developed jointly with Foton – is powered by a 6,7-litre Cummins engine that is said to produce 201 kW. Transmission is through a ZF gearbox

LEFT: Announcing the arrival of UD's all-new Quon, Gert Swanepoel, managing director of UD Southern Africa, described the vehicle as "bringing trucking's future forward". The model – updated for the first time since its original launch in 2004 – is said to incorporate technologies aimed at improving drivability, fuel efficiency and environmental friendliness, as well as safety



ABOVE: Trucks on the FAW stand included truck tractors, freight carriers, tippers and mixers, among them latest models in the J5N range which are said to boast state-of-the-art technologies and management systems aimed at improving driver comfort, safety and fuel efficiency

LEFT AND RIGHT: The newest version of Korean truck manufacturer Daewoo's Maximus KL3TX 6x4 truck tractor (left), starred at the show's official relaunch of the brand, along with recently released editions of 6x4 heavyweights in the Novus range – including the K7CEF (right), the K5DEF and the K5MVF



OEMS PUT BACK TRUST IN PRE-OWNED

THERE IS NO NEED TO COMPROMISE ON PERFORMANCE WHEN BUYING A SECOND-HAND VEHICLE THANKS TO THE COMPREHENSIVE REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS (OEMS). MARISKA MORRIS REPORTS

Purchasing a pre-owned vehicle can be a good choice for a transport operator on a tight budget. However, traditionally, this came with some trade-offs. Generally, a used vehicle comes without a warranty, service plan or, in some cases, a service history. There is also no way for the buyer to know for sure whether the vehicle was used for its intended application.

Several OEMs are, however, changing the pre-owned market with extensive refurbishment programmes aimed at ensuring a quality product from a trusted source.

Through MAN TopUsed, transport operators can purchase used vehicles that have undergone extensive checks and some refurbishments. Dave van Graan, head of special sales projects at MAN Automotive South Africa, says: "MAN TopUsed trades in vehicles of varied utilisations and applications.

"We could sell one-year-old demonstration units with under 100 000 km, or ten-year-old vehicles that are about to enter their fourth economic life cycle." The range offered by MAN

TopUsed includes trucks, vans, buses and trailers that can all be viewed on the TopUsed website.

"We evaluate every vehicle on merit and do what is needed to ensure a trouble-free next-application life. Our thorough life checks and vehicle return conditions ensure that we know every MAN vehicle very well," Van Graan explains.

In addition to strict vehicle return conditions, MAN also conducts thorough checks when

TruckStore



accepting a vehicle and again before the vehicle is sold. This helps to determine which technical refurbishments are required.

"In the case of a long-haul vehicle that comes back after its first economic life of three years, or 540 000 km, and has been on the MAN Service Care and various maintenance or repair programmes, for example, we find that there is very little to do. They can seamlessly start their next economic cycle," Van Graan notes.

"If the end of the natural normal expected life of the major vehicle components is imminent, MAN TopUsed would authorise refurbishments of those components – engine, transmission, propshafts and rear-drive axles – to the extent where we can guarantee their next economic life and support repairs with a factory-backed warranty together with a range of repair and maintenance contracts," he adds.

Thus, the used vehicle will come with many of the benefits of a new vehicle at a very affordable price. "Our customers get a vehicle that has been technically tracked by the OEM since birth. We know exactly where it operated and what work has been done on it," Van Graan explains.

"Once prepared for resale, the MAN TopUsed vehicle is supplied with all of the company values and support that is expected from a global manufacturer. For us at TopUsed, the main benefit involves trust and support with integrity – a value-add on which one can't really put a price," he concludes.

TruckStore, a division of Daimler Trucks and Buses Southern Africa, offers a range of refurbished, used vehicles to choose from that are divided into three categories, which indicate the level of testing and refurbishments.

Annelie van Rooyen, manager of sales and operations at TruckStore, explains: "Trucks in the bronze category, for example, receive only a technical inspection and basic cleaning. In the silver category, the vehicles undergo refurbishment and are less than six years old.

"In the gold category, all the vehicles receive a technical inspection with repairs, services and refurbishments carried out. These vehicles are less than four years old and come with a manufacturer's warranty."

While TruckStore performs extensive quality inspections to ensure the vehicle is in good mechanical condition, it also stocks vehicles of all ages, mileages and conditions to meet different clients' needs and budgets.

"The most important thing is transparency. Customers should be given a variety of options, but always make an informed buying decision. We consider ourselves as a trusted used-truck partner," Van Rooyen says.

"Customers can rest assured knowing that when they purchase a truck from TruckStore, they will have full transparency on its condition. They know exactly what they are buying. It is also essential that we provide value to our clients. It is therefore important that our customers get the right advice and buy the right vehicles for their application," she adds.

In addition to ensuring the vehicle is mechanically sound, TruckStore also promises a vehicle that is presentable. Van Rooyen elaborates: "The initial inspection is critical to establishing the refurbishments required. Each vehicle is unique and, therefore, the process of getting it to a sellable condition will differ.

"Even though the main focus is ensuring that the vehicle is mechanically sound, it is also important to make sure that, even though it's a used vehicle, it is clean, presentable and meets the customer's expectations."

Even on a smaller budget, transport operators can still purchase a trustworthy and reliable vehicle with the added benefit of a maintenance plan or warranty through OEM refurbishment plans. Pre-owned doesn't have to equal compromise. **F**



FIATA WRAPS UP SUCCESSFUL WORLD CONGRESS

BRIBERY, CORRUPTION AND THE ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING OF WILDLIFE WERE AMONG THE TOPICS DISCUSSED

World experts representing the logistics and freight forwarding industry recently concluded their annual international convention in Cape Town. The five-day International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA) World Congress 2019 saw a full house of members gathered in the city's International Convention Centre to discuss the challenges and issues facing the industry.

Established in 1926, with its headquarters in Switzerland, FIATA is the world's largest transport and logistics organisation. It represents about 40 000 forwarding and logistics companies, which employ about four-million people in 150 countries.

The Congress was opened by FIATA's outgoing president, Babar Badat, who said the event – which was co-hosted by the South African Association of Freight Forwarders (SAAFF) – would be used as a platform to reset the organisation to ensure that it maintained a high level of relevancy for its members in a rapidly changing world of logistics.

Badat said FIATA was working hard to ensure that the industry and its various elements became more attractive to new entrants, especially young people. To this end, a special day was set aside at the congress for the sole purpose of focusing on the views of newcomers to the industry.

Basil Pietersen, chairman of SAAFF, was nominated unopposed to succeed Badat as FIATA's president. He will preside over next year's World Congress, which will be

hosted in Busan, South Korea.

In a keynote address, Edward Kieswetter, head of South Africa's Revenue Service (SARS), encouraged the country's freight forwarding industry to collaborate with revenue collection agencies such as SARS to ultimately achieve economic growth and reduce the high levels of poverty in the country. "SARS remains committed to serve this higher purpose, and we invite all stakeholders to join us in this quest," Kieswetter told delegates.

In a presentation entitled The Future of Global Logistics and Supply Chain: Drones and Air Mobility, Professor Wesley Harris, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) department of aeronautics, said the use of drones offered opportunities for change and progress within the logistics sector.

While he acknowledged that the technology also had its challenges, he noted that, if properly instrumented, the opportunities provided by drones were abundant and included speedy collection of data at significantly reduced cost. "In this day and age, you need high-quality and high-volume data in order to compete in the industry. In this regard, FIATA needs to become a mechanism for learning and sharing expertise," he said.

The Association's acting director general, Stephen Morris, said it would draw on the outcomes of various panel discussions and presentations delivered at the Congress to put key issues in an international context aimed at further developing and growing the industry.

Acknowledging that it had a significant role to play in



ABOVE LEFT: Basil Pietersen, FIATA's new president will preside over the next World congress, to be held in South Korea



ABOVE RIGHT: Babar Badat, outgoing president presented the opening address at the congress

helping to combat the illegal global trade in wildlife, FIATA signed a memorandum of understanding at the congress with specialist environmental organisation TRAFFIC to advance awareness and capacity-building efforts among its members to prevent the trafficking of fauna and flora.

The organisation announced that it had developed in partnership with TRAFFIC – with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Wildlife Trafficking Response Assessment and Priority Setting (Wildlife TRAPS) Project – a three-hour digital video course which was available free of charge to members through the FIATA Logistics Academy.



Wildlife trafficking pushes species towards extinction, robs countries of their natural resources and impacts local revenues. These crimes fuel corruption and enrich criminal organisations, too.

"Freight forwarders have the ability to be game-changers in preventing the exploitation of their businesses by wildlife traffickers. Awareness and training are critical and our new digital course makes it easy for freight forwarders to become part of the solution," said Issa Baluch, head of FIATA's Logistics Academy.

Monica Zavagli, representing TRAFFIC, said wildlife trafficking was a global crisis that impacted the integrity of transport supply chains. "We're thrilled that this new course will empower freight forwarders around the world to easily and freely access critical information on the prevention of illegal wildlife trade," she said.

According to Zavagli, illegal trafficking of wildlife represented the world's fourth largest black market and

impacted more than 7 000 species of animals and plants. "Wildlife trafficking pushes species towards extinction, robs countries of their natural resources, and impacts local revenues," she said. "These crimes fuel corruption and enrich criminal organisations, too."

On the subject of corruption and bribery, FIATA released a best-practices paper aimed at addressing the challenges in international freight forwarding and logistics. The paper provides practitioners with advice regarding internal control measures effective in the prevention of bribery, and suggests cooperative measures with other stakeholders to prevent it.

According to information released at the congress, much of the world's economy remained heavily burdened by corruption. "As a sector deeply involved in cross-border trade and frequently interacting with public officials, the international logistics and freight forwarding industry has a relatively high risk of exposure to corruption or bribery," said a statement.

Richard Gluck, chair of FIATA's advisory body on legal matters, said member companies had requested a guide to combat the scourge. "This best-practices paper, developed with support from FIATA's Customs Affairs Institute, emphasises the significance of establishing and implementing a systematic anti-bribery policy in individual enterprises, with a strong leadership commitment against bribery behaviour.

"It recommends adoption of clear rules on sensitive issues like gift-giving, facilitation payments and employment of third-party service providers. Recommended processes to deal with bribery solicitations from public officials are also included to help members in such situations."

In his comments, Badat said fighting against corruption and bribery was critical to creating a level playing field for the logistics and freight forwarding industry, and to lower costs of trade for the supply chain. "No one can win this fight on their own. FIATA will continue to work with all stakeholders and strive for a better business environment for the industry," he said. **F**

NON-IDENTICAL TWINS



A NEW CAB FACTORY – RESULTING FROM THE JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN THE DAIMLER GROUP AND KAMAZ – HAS OPENED IN CHELNY, TATARSTAN. GIANENRICO GRIFFINI VISITED THE NEW FACTORY IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION



With a production capacity of 55 000 units a year, the new factory in Chelny will manufacture Actros and Arocs cabs, in addition to the cabs for the Russian manufacturer's new truck ranges.

German technology has joined forces with Italian design at the facility, which has a production capacity of 55 000 units a year when fully operational. It required an investment of €200 million (about R3.3 billion).

The Chelny factory has 700 employees and will manufacture the Mercedes-Benz Actros and Arocs cabs sold in the Russian Federation, in addition to new-generation Kamaz lorry cabs based on the same basic structure of the German models.

The Turin company, Torino Design, will be designing the exterior and interior of cabs for trucks used for distribution, long-haul operations and quarry/construction site activities. It will also be developing the engineering solutions, which include tolerances and assembly sequences for all components.

The new facility occupies an area of 59 600 m² on the historic Kamaz production premises. It has 120 robotic workstations designed for sheet welding and assembly operations and a high-tech painting department, created by the specialist German company Dürr. 3D printers have also been installed for the production of plastic spare parts.

OUTLOOK FOR GROWTH

More than 500 articulated trucks were used to transport the equipment for the new facility from Europe to Chelny. The production site works closely with the Mercedes-Benz facility in Wörth, Germany, and represents another step in the global expansion of the Daimler Group.

Furthermore, it demonstrates the desire of the German manufacturer to develop a partnership with Kamaz, the undisputed leader in heavy-goods vehicles in the Russian Federation, to target the domestic market, which is receptive to positive developments in terms of the growth of sales volumes.

This has been in spite of uncertainties relating to the economy (the growth of gross domestic product for this year was revised downwards to 1.4 percent), fluctuations in the euro/ruble exchange rate (one euro is currently worth 72 rubles, but in February 2016 it reached 88 rubles) and high bank interest rates on loans for purchasing capital goods, which is now around 10 percent a year for customers with good credit ratings.

By opening the cab factory, the Daimler Group has also increased the localised production of components for the latest-generation Actros and Arocs vehicles, introduced in Russia in October of last year.

At the moment, more than 150 vehicle components come from suppliers based in the Russian Federation,



who are required to guarantee the same quality standards as their German and Western European counterparts.

The decision to localise production was linked to the need to avoid import duties, which would make the vehicles less financially appealing to Russian hauliers.

SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES

While the cab structure is the same for the Actros and new Kamaz 54901 vehicles (also known as K5), there are substantial differences to the external line, interior and elements of the driveline.

In the case of the Kamaz 54901, the engine is a six-cylinder in-line Liebherr model with a capacity of 12 litres. The strategic deal between the Russian manufacturer and the German company to develop a new family of 400 to 700 hp (300 to 522 kW) engines was signed in 2014, and production commenced with the first units in Chelny in March 2016. The gearbox is an automatic ZF TraXon 12-speed model.

The decision to have different drivelines differentiates the two different truck ranges in the domestic Russian market, avoiding range overlaps or situations of direct competition.

Since the joint venture was established in 2009, Daimler Kamaz Rus has assembled over 30 000 Mercedes-Benz and Mitsubishi Fuso trucks in Chelny and has sold them in the Russian

TRUCKS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian market for vehicles over 3,5 t grew last year by three percent compared to 2017. Overall, almost 81 000 trucks were put on the roads, 38 000 of which were produced by national manufacturers, and approximately 42 500 of which were Western European makes.

Kamaz had the largest market share in 2018, a situation which continues today. In second place was Gaz, followed by Scania, Volvo Trucks, MAN and Mercedes-Benz.

The top-selling model last year was the Kamaz 43118 6x6 (more than 6 500 units), testifying to the difficult operating conditions for vehicles operating in the Russian Federation. Another Kamaz vehicle, the 6x4 65115, took third place (5 545 units), behind the mid-range Gazon Next 4x2 (6 168 vehicles registered).

The lion's share of the heavy-goods department, in terms of sales volumes, went to truck tractors (30 647 units), followed by tipper trucks (12 700 vehicles), special vehicles (8 700 units) and rigids (6 600 vehicles).

Figures for the first five months of this year show an overall fall of more than five percent in the market with respect to 2018. Sales of Western vehicle makes have also decreased (-14 percent).

SALES OF NEW VEHICLES ABOVE 3,5 T BY MAKE

Manufacturer	2018 Volume	2017 Volume	Diff	%
Kamaz	26 203	27 317	-1 114	-4,1
Gaz	9 081	8 642	439	5,1
Scania	6 631	5 642	989	17,5
Volvo Trucks	6 212	5 850	362	6,2
MAN	4 956	4 684	272	5,8
Mercedes-Benz	4 739	5 543	-804	-14,5
Isuzu	3 994	3 804	190	5,0
Maz	3 107	2 871	236	8,2
DAF	2 725	3 406	-681	-20,0
Ural	2 648	2 654	-6	-0,2
Hyundai	1 829	1 543	286	18,5
Hino	1 706	1 243	463	37,2
Maz-Man	1 076	929	147	15,8
Fuso	1 019	871	148	17,0
Renault Trucks	942	531	411	77,4
Iveco	855	1 017	-162	-15,9
Shaanxi	724	450	274	60,9
FAW	477	276	201	72,8
Iveco-Amt	358	281	77	27,4
Howo	271	135	136	100,7
Top 20 total	79 553	77 689	1 864	2,3
Other makes	1 149	659	490	42,7
General total	80 702	78 348	2 354	3,0
National manufacturers	38 104	38 808	-704	-1,8
Foreign manufacturers	42 598	39 540	3 058	7,7

Federation through a network of approximately 50 dealers located throughout this vast geographical region.

The cab design in the new Kamaz trucks – for a range of cabs that includes approximately 40 models, variants and versions – has the Italian touch provided by the company Torino Design, which has been in partnership with the Russian manufacturer since 2013.

"At the beginning of the partnership Kamaz basically wanted to restyle the models already being produced," explains Roberto Piatti, CEO and managing director of the Italian design company.

components – was one of the key concepts underlying the new cabs.

The project commenced between the summer and autumn of 2014, whereas the design of the templates was "frozen" at the end of the year.

Subsequently the 3D models were developed, and the vehicle samples cut to a scale of 1:1.

The initial presentations were delivered to the senior Russian managers in February 2015. At the same time, a demonstration lorry offering a wide range of innovative solutions was created for the industrial vehicle trade fair in Moscow in 2015. After several months of optimisation, the designs were set in May 2015.

Piatti says that the partnership with Kamaz has been different to relationships with lorry manufacturers in other countries.

"We usually deal with styling, 3D modelling and design templates through to the finalisation of the feasibility and



LEFT: A Mercedes-Benz Actros and a new long-distance Kamaz. The two vehicles have the same cab structure. However, the exterior differs. So, too, do the interior layout and driveline components which, in the case of the Kamaz, include a six-cylinder, in-line Liebherr engine and an automatic ZF TraXon 12-speed gearbox

BELOW: A robotic workstation at Chelny



However, in 2014, the Russian manufacturer reached an agreement with Mercedes-Benz to use the Actros cab structure in its vehicles, radically changing the design focus.

The Russian management team decided to stop the restyling process and concentrate instead on developing a new modular range of cabs. The characteristic of modularity – in relation to savings on investments for construction

design phase. However, in the case of Kamaz, we also dealt with all development and engineering.

"This complex task involved a team of 100 to 120 specialists. It wasn't an easy task, as the Actros structure had to be combined with the original components of the Kamaz vehicles, while maintaining the Kamaz brand identity," says Piatti. **F**

As regular readers of **FOCUS** know, this magazine has been appointed an associate member of the International Truck of the Year (ITOY)! **FOCUS** is the sole South African magazine to have joined this prestigious body. One of the advantages of this association is access to exclusive articles, specially written for **FOCUS** by ITOY jury members. This is one such article.



QUALITY FOREMOST AT AUTOX



HAVING RECENTLY UNDERGONE A HIGH-TECH UPGRADE, SOUTH AFRICA'S AUTOX BATTERY PLANT CONTINUES TO PRODUCE PRODUCTS THAT CONSISTENTLY OUTPERFORM INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Port Elizabeth-based battery manufacturer AutoX has earned an enviable reputation globally for the quality of the products it manufactures – among them well-known brands such as Willard and Sabat and, for export, HiFase.

The company's recently upgraded factory – incidentally, the first battery plant in Africa to have achieved ISO 9001 quality management accreditation, one of many international standards ratings the facility has earned over the years – produces a range of batteries based on a variety of technologies designed to serve original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) as well as the automotive aftermarket.

"Since inception, AutoX has invested heavily in research and development, driven by a need to identify and solve market problems and to come up with innovative solutions aimed at increasing efficiency. Through new battery development, we've produced several patents and designs. We have also pioneered innovative charging algorithms that have set an international benchmark in the industry," says Glenn Geldenhuys, the company's CEO.

Established in 1954, AutoX has undergone several name changes under different owners. However, one thing has remained constant – a commitment to maintain a record of accomplishment as a battery producer of technological repute.

"We are dedicated to evolving our battery brands and pushing the boundaries where possible," says Geldenhuys. "Over the years we've built a successful track record of consistent performance and value for money."

These days the company supplies more than 3 000 retail outlets across South Africa and selected African countries with car, truck and motorcycle batteries, as well as batteries

for industrial, agricultural and leisure use. Additionally, it manufactures house brand batteries for a number of aftermarket outlets and, on behalf of global conglomerate Johnson Controls, distributes the Varta battery range throughout the southern African region.

According to Geldenhuys, the lead-acid batteries produced by AutoX – which include Sealed Maintenance-Free (SMF) batteries, Enhanced Flooded Batteries (EFB +C) and Absorbed Glass Matt (AGM) batteries – consistently outperform international specified standards, a characteristic that he attributes to the use of high-grade materials – including specially formulated lead alloys – and specialised additives developed in-house.

"We have continuously upgraded our production processes and manufacturing facilities to maintain the highest standards possible," he says during a tour of the plant. Stopping at a workstation on the line, he points out that, on the battery-casing side, production methods and curing processes have been customised to heighten consistency and deliver lightweight, attractive to look at, but highly robust finished items.

"Through innovations such as these, AutoX has become one of the world's foremost battery suppliers, ensuring our products meet the demands of the most extreme conditions," he says.

While each of the batteries manufactured at the plant is carefully monitored for defects throughout its various fabrication processes, no unit leaves the factory without being tested. "We benchmark our products against the best quality batteries in the world," Geldenhuys maintains.

Commenting on the recently completed upgrades to the plant, he says AutoX will continue to optimise production efficiencies and address capacity constraints with a view to introducing to market new battery products. **F**



GETTING THE MONEY TO BUY THAT TRUCK!

OBTAINING VEHICLE FINANCE IN AN ECONOMIC DOWNTURN IS OFTEN PERCEIVED TO BE DIFFICULT FOR TRANSPORT OPERATORS – BUT IS THAT REALLY THE CASE? TO PUT THE MATTER INTO PERSPECTIVE, ANDRE VAN EEDEN, REGIONAL SALES MANAGER FOR SCANIA FINANCIAL SERVICES, ANSWERS SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

H

ow easy or difficult is it for transport operators to obtain vehicle finance in the current economic climate?

It is not really about whether it is easy or difficult to obtain credit. Even though the economic climate is not the best, it remains possible to finance vehicles optimally. At Scania Finance, each application is assessed on its merits and risk profile.

Tell us about Scania Finance. What sort of services do you offer?

We have a number of flexible options available to customers, in which tailored solutions can be applied to cover a variety of choices – financial leases, operational leases, instalment sale agreements as well as insurance cover. We pride ourselves on being a trusted partner rather than merely a finance provider, customising solutions to ensure predictable costs and manageable risks. Our aim is to deliver an advantageous financial plan that meets a customer's operational needs and goals.

Do you believe the challenges involved in securing vehicle finance could be impacting on vehicle sales and the transport business in general?

No, as I've already mentioned, if a business case has merit there is no reason for anyone to struggle to get vehicle finance and insurance.

How would an owner-operator go about securing Scania Finance?

The process starts with the potential customer making contact with one of our experienced finance representatives, each of whom is a specialist in the transport industry. The initial discussion will include a comprehensive assessment of the customer's financial position, and the representative will help to identify shortcomings and assist with financial calculations. A credit application form that covers all aspects of the agreement will need to be filled in, with approval for finance dependent on the merits of the case made.

Is it true that hire purchase or finance lease options remain popular with transport operators due to lower monthly repayments?

Instalment sale agreements and finance leases don't necessarily come with lower monthly premiums – but they have advantages when it comes to tax deductions. In deciding on the type of vehicle finance best suited to a customer's needs, some very important questions need to be asked, including:

- For how long would you like to keep the vehicle?
- Would you like to take ownership of the vehicle at the end of the term?
- Will you be replacing the vehicle immediately after settlement?
- Would you like to build equity in your fleet which you would be able to realise in case of tough times? **F**

SHEQ

MANAGEMENT

SOUTH AFRICA'S PREMIER OCCUPATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

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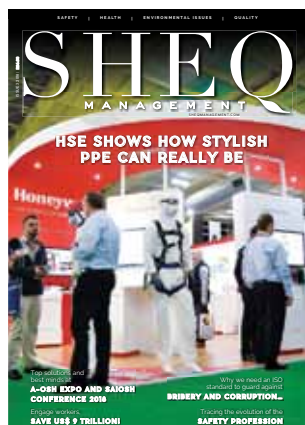
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ISUZU X-RIDER BACK IN BLACK

ISUZU MOTORS SOUTH AFRICA IS ENCOURAGING ITS CUSTOMERS TO "STEP OUT OF THE SHADOWS" WITH THE LIMITED-EDITION D-MAX X-RIDER BLACK. MARISKA MORRIS TEST DRIVES THE DOUBLE-CAB BAKKIE IN THE WINDY PORT ELIZABETH (PE)

To promote the return of the limited-edition Isuzu D-Max X-Rider Black double-cab bakkie, Isuzu Motors South Africa hosted an urban adventure weekend to showcase the vehicle in its "natural environment". It was an opportunity to highlight the versatility of the all-black design while reiterating the vehicle's capabilities – starting with a gala dinner hosted at the Isuzu manufacturing plant in PE.

While a bakkie might seem like an unconventional choice of vehicle for a black-tie event, the complete black design of the X-Rider Black is meant for luxury. The stark black exterior complete with matt black accessories and blacked out 18-inch alloy wheels is well suited to high-end nightlife.

The interior also boasts a black colour scheme with red accents, from the red stitching on the black leather bucket seats and leather-trimmed steering wheel (complete with audio controls) to the X-Rider logo on the headrest and door trim. Even the eight-inch, touchscreen infotainment system – standard in each X-Rider – has a red colouring.

Along with the alloy wheels and black design, the X-Rider Black has several unique accessories that are standard with the bakkie, including a bold black front bumper guard,

projector headlamps with LED daytime running lights, front fog lamps, all-terrain tyres, matt black roof rails, black side steps and sports bar.

While beautiful, the Isuzu D-Max X-Rider Black doesn't compromise on power, as it proved on the second day of the urban adventure with a 100-km scenic drive along the coastline from the PE city centre through the Van Stadens Wild Flower Nature Reserve to Falcon Rock amid Uitenhage Farms.

Although it is not small, with its gross vehicle mass weighing in at three tonnes, I didn't notice the size or weight of the vehicle. It was light, although sturdy. Much of this, I believe, is thanks to the hydraulic power-assisted steering and ample power provided by the turbo-charged 2.5-litre 100 kW diesel engine.

While only available in manual, the X-Rider Black is a pleasure to drive. The powerful engine resulted in fewer gear changes as I drove through Sardinia Bay and on a windy route through the Van Staden's Nature Reserve, while the 320-nm torque made for fast acceleration on the highway.

The X-Rider Black is available only in 4x2, but comes standard with hill-start assist and hill-descent control. Even

on gravel road, the X-Rider Black was easy and comfortable to drive with high-ride suspension and shock absorbers. Although it is not meant for the greatest of outdoors, I believe this bakkie will be at home on any construction site, farm or mine.

While beautiful and designed for luxury, the Isuzu D-Max X-Rider Black is still built for hard work with a 1,48-m load box, which is fitted with a tonneau cover, a one-tonne payload capacity and 2,1-t tow bar.

The X-Rider Black is a no-frills bakkie – though the infotainment centre with Bluetooth capabilities and manual aircon are some great additional features. Its four-cylinder engine has a fuel consumption of 7,7 per 100 km on a combined cycle.

The performance is what the market has come to expect from the X-Rider range. The only thing that sets the limited-edition X-Rider Black apart is its stark black styling.

Priced at R462 000 (including VAT), the X-Rider Black comes standard with Isuzu Complete Care, which includes a five-year, 120 000-km bumper-to-bumper warranty, roadside assist, anti-corrosion warranty and a five-year 90 000-km service plan.

Sure, the X-Rider doesn't boast the most advanced technology, and perhaps an automatic option would be appealing, but it does offer a competent vehicle with beautiful design at an affordable price. In the words of Isuzu Motors South Africa: "Your budget may be mid-range, but the look of your ride can be decidedly top-class."

The Isuzu D-Max X-Rider Black is ideal for a light commercial vehicle owner or bakkie enthusiast who would prefer a more high-end design and finish without forking out a small fortune, or compromising on performance. It is a great vehicle for the no-frills, but stylish vehicle owner – endorsed by SuperSport presenter Xola Sibabalwe Ntshinga. **F**



While beautiful and designed for luxury, the Isuzu D-Max X-Rider Black is still built for hard work with a 1,48-m load box.

CHINESE PUZZLE!



IT MAY SOUND IRONIC, BUT A SALES DECLINE IN CHINA'S AUTOMOTIVE MARKET – THE FIRST IN 20 YEARS – APPEARS TO OFFER THE COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC PRODUCERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE ON A GLOBAL LEVEL

C

China continues to be the world's largest vehicle market with the Chinese government predicting that domestic production will reach 30-million units by 2020 and 35-million units by 2025.

According to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, over 27-million vehicles were sold in the country last year, made up of 23.79-million passenger cars (down 4.08 percent from 2017) and 4.38-million commercial vehicles (an increase of 5.05 percent). Only 1.1 million (about 3.90 percent) of the total number vehicles sold were imported.

In a statement, the association points out that the fall-off in passenger car sales represents the first annual decline following 20 years of substantial growth. Worryingly for Chinese authorities, however, is that the downward trend has persisted into 2019.

A report published last month in the *China Daily* indicates that 12 of the country's 17 listed car manufacturers reported a fall in profits for the first half of the year, while only three of the 12 commercial vehicle manufacturers posted profit increases.

"An overall sales decline in the market has led directly to carmakers' poor earnings," the report says. "In the first half of 2019, China's automobile production and sales reached 12.13-million and 12.32-million units respectively, down 13.7 percent and 12.4 percent year-on-year. This was due to multiple factors, such as the slowdown of the macro economy and early implementation of new emission standards."

That said, the country's economic dip doesn't appear to have deterred Europe's original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) from investing in China. For instance, at the end of 2018, Groupe Renault – part of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance – formalised a joint-venture agreement with Shenyang-based Brilliance to form the Renault-Brilliance-Jinbei Automotive Company with a view to producing light commercial vehicles (LCVs), multi-purpose vehicles (MPVs) and sport utility vehicles (SUVs).

Since then, the company has launched two models into the market under the Jinbei label – the Lingkun, an electrically powered MPV, and the seven-seat Guangjing – the entity's first SUV. Both of these models are said to feature quality standards that conform to Renault's benchmarks in terms of comfort, reliability and technology.

According to a statement, Renault will pursue further growth in the sectors by launching another five models in rapid succession – two of them electrically powered – with the aim of achieving sales of 150 000 units a year by 2022.

The decision by the French company to expand its operations in China – which follows the establishment in 2013 of the Dongfeng Renault Automobile Company (DRAC), a joint venture which produces Renault-badged vehicles – appears to be based on the fact that the domestic LCV segment (of which MPVs form part) is growing rapidly. This boom is attributed to the burgeoning e-commerce market, which has been fuelled by the increasing urbanisation of China's population.

"Final-mile deliveries in urban areas are expected to increase by 125 percent between now and 2030," says a statement issued by Renault, adding that the trend in light delivery vehicles is towards Euro-styled MPVs, compact vans and bakkies of the type produced under the Jinbel badge.

Though prospects for growth look positive, China's commercial vehicle market is not without its challenges. According to recent study by Strategy& – the global strategy consulting team at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) – over the years Chinese truck makers have built overcapacity to cope with demand from the expanding domestic market, and they are beginning to feel the effects of the economic pinch.

"They have every incentive to move internationally and to compete on price," the report says. "It will be very difficult for international OEMs to counter this, since they cannot compete effectively on given product costs. In the long run, this will establish some Chinese truck makers as significant global players that are able to compete in low-cost tiers, as well as in higher-end markets."

Chinese trucks already sell in significant volumes in some markets. In Russia, for example, every 11th truck comes from China, and in Vietnam the figure is said to be two out of every three trucks sold. Brands such as FAW, Powerstar, Changan and JMC are familiar names in

QUICK FACTS

- China's highway system is said to stretch 4 846 500 km;
- Freight traffic on highways totalled 39,57-billion tonnes in 2018, an increase of 7,30 percent on 2017's figure;
- First Automobile Works (FAW) produced China's first vehicle, a truck called the Jiefang CA-30, which rolled off the company's assembly line in 1956;
- The first domestically produced car was unveiled two years later – on May 12 – by Dongfeng, China's second oldest automobile manufacturer;
- On August 1, 1958, the country's first high-end passenger car, Hongqi, was manufactured by FAW and became the exclusive vehicle brand for state leaders during national events. The latest derivative is branded the Hongqi L5.



South Africa. However, measured against total volumes produced, China's exports of commercial vehicles remain modest.

The Strategy& report points out: "Truck makers in China are, by and large, producing the sorts of vehicles that succeed in emerging markets, since they are perceived to be well-suited to imperfect infrastructure and good enough in terms of basic reliability and safety. Sooner or later, though, Chinese manufacturers will migrate from good-enough trucks to value models that compete on features other than price."

On this point, an area in which the country is looking to establish itself as a leader in the automotive industry encompasses the building of new-energy vehicles (NEVs) – cars and trucks that are powered by alternative energy sources and incorporate latest connectivity and autonomous-drive features.

The sector is one of 10 pillars that support President Xi Jinping's "Made in China 2025" programme, an initiative aimed at upgrading the country's industry from low-cost, mass production to higher-value, advanced manufacturing. Sales of NEVs are expected to exceed 1,5-million units in China this year, with the figure forecast to double by 2025.

To support the initiative, the Chinese government has introduced a quota system specifying that vehicle manufacturers – including joint-venture entities and auto importers – are required to manufacture or import a minimum percentage of NEVs relative to the total number of vehicles they produce or import. Companies that do not meet targets are required to purchase NEV credits from automakers that have exceeded production quotas – or forego sales of vehicles powered by internal-combustion engines.

Further, government has encouraged cooperation with automotive leaders in the fields and, in what has been seen as underlining the importance of official strategy, FAW and Japanese manufacturer Toyota recently signed a strategic cooperation framework agreement regarding the development of electrified and intelligent, connected vehicles.

According to the agreement, the companies intend to make full use of their resources to provide hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles, as well as all-electric and hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles for Chinese consumers to meet multiple mobility demands, while jointly promoting research and development as well as popularising electrified vehicles in China.

"FAW and Toyota will strive to satisfy the multiple mobility demands of Chinese consumers, while making their due contributions to the protection and improvement of ecological environment of China," the agreement says. **F**



LAST MONTH, WE MENTIONED THAT WE WOULD BE ATTENDING THE TRATON INNOVATION DAY AT SCANIA'S HEADQUARTERS IN SÖDERTÄLJE, SWEDEN. WE WERE PROMISED A HOST OF INNOVATIONS, AND THE GROUP CERTAINLY DIDN'T DISAPPOINT

The day kicked off with a presentation from Traton CEO Andreas Renschler, who touched on the multifaceted challenges faced by the commercial vehicle industry, including in particular the significant transformation towards alternative drive systems and systems with reduced CO₂ emissions, as well as the considerably fast pace at which consumerism and logistics are changing.

"When we started this journey four years ago, attempts at e-mobility in commercial vehicles were brushed aside as experiments. Today, we are already taking orders for electrically powered trucks and buses. We are confident

that over the next 10 to 15 years every third truck and bus we deliver will have alternative drive systems, of which the majority will be purely electric," he revealed.

Renschler was followed by Traton COO Christian Levin, who spoke about leveraging the best from the three commercial vehicle brands – MAN, Scania and Volkswagen Caminhões e Ônibus – for the group. "Group-wide coordinated research and development empowers us to achieve our mission of becoming a global champion. A common modular toolbox across all brands allows us to respond even faster, better and more efficiently to customer needs," he said.

Levin also emphasised the importance of realising the

The incredible Scania AXL made its world debut at the event

potential of digital systems. "The proportion of electronics and software experts in our development departments is rising considerably. We intend to invest over a billion euros in digitisation over the next five years," he announced.

We were able to attend workshops hosted by three of the captains of the global transport industry: Scania CEO Henrik Henriksson, Joachim Drees, CEO of MAN Truck & Bus and Roberto Cortes, CEO of Volkswagen Caminhões e Ônibus.



TOP: The three brands in the Traton stable: MAN, Scania and Volkswagen Caminhões e Ônibus

ABOVE: The International Type LT Series truck tractor was the most popular and least green vehicle in the line-up

“
For the journalists who were there, the real highlight of the day was driving the innovative products from the Traton Group.

They were terrific (you will be able to read about them in future issues of **FOCUS**), but, of course, for the journalists who were there, the real highlight of the day was driving the innovative products from the Traton Group.

Actually, it was impossible to drive what was undoubtedly the star of the day. That's because the Scania AXL – which made its world debut at the event – is fully autonomous, so it has neither a cab nor a driver.

NXT, for instance), but there were several that we could drive!

For space reasons, I am not going to discuss each and every vehicle that was available for testing in great detail. Suffice to say that they were all massively innovative!

MAN showed its eTGE 3.140, an electric van that is proving very popular with transport operators; eTGM 26.360 E 6x2, which is being tested in Austria; eTGM 18.360 E 4x2, which does daily duty at Porsche; MAN Lion's City

BELOW: We were treated to a fleet of extremely innovative vehicles that we could test drive

RIGHT: The e-Delivery 11 is an affordable and practical electric vehicle from Brazil

BELOW RIGHT: The Volksbus is yet another innovative vehicle from the Volkswagen Caminhões e Ônibus stable



During the Innovation Day, we were bussed to a demonstration area, where the AXL "did its thing". The truck – which looks incredibly futuristic – drove itself around quite happily. It even drove around a vehicle that was obstructing its path.

At this stage, the AXL – which can run on regular diesel or biodiesel – is just a concept vehicle. However, it certainly could be seen hard at work in a mine, in construction or a quarry one day (and not too far into the future either). Those environments are, of course, perfect for autonomous vehicles, because there are generally clearly defined routes and little other traffic.

All of the other vehicles that were on display were designed for regular roads. There were some vehicles that we could not test drive (the Scania truck that is designed to run on e-highways and the pretty incredible Scania

18 G, which boasts a natural-gas engine with an efficient hybrid system; and its MAN Lion's City E, which we drove earlier this year at the company's pre-Busworld press conference in Munich.

I took a spin the eTGE (to be perfectly honest, simply because I really enjoy driving this van; I would be delighted to make it my daily mode of transport) and I also did a lap around the test circuit in the MAN that's used by Porsche. It's a really great truck, which has a range of up to 130 km.

Scania showed its incredible NXT, which we have also reported on previously. Just in case you missed that article, the NXT is a people carrier that can also be used as a truck. The NXT was a static display in one of the presentation areas; we were not able to take it for a spin (pity, I would love that).

Scania also showed its Citywide LF Electric, which has a 300kW/2100Nm electric motor; the Scania P320 B6x2; Scania R450A4X2NB; the Scania G410 A4X2NA, which has an liquified natural gas (LNG) engine; Scania P280 B4X2NB, which is powered by compressed natural gas (CNG); Scania P320 A4X2NA hybrid; and the Scania L 320 B4X2NB hybrid.

I went for a drive in the mighty impressive Citywide LF Electric (we were relegated to passenger status) and I also took the Scania P280 for a whirl around the test

spacious inside.

I also took a spin in the Volksbus, which is really interesting because it boasts flexible architecture. It works with battery electric vehicles (BEV), hybrid electric vehicles (HEV), plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV), and range-extended electric vehicles (REEV). The performance is the same, regardless of how the batteries are charged.

To be perfectly honest with you, the most popular vehicle on display (with the exception of the AXL) was



track. Its 280 hp (209 kW) gas engine was very willing and extraordinarily quiet. The cab was also a great place in which to be; it's both comfortable and practical (there's lots of storage space). It has a 350-km range.

Volkswagen Caminhões e Ônibus had three vehicles on display: an e-Delivery 11, with a 200 kW electric motor; an e-Delivery 4, with an 85 kW electric motor and a Volksbus e-Flex, with a 300 kW electric motor. I took a spin in the e-Delivery 11; it's a real workhorse, which is surprisingly

undoubtedly an International Type LT Series truck tractor; there were always queues of journalists fighting for a drive in this truck.

It was, without a doubt, the least green vehicle there, because it's not powered by gas, electricity, biodiesel or anything like that. Its 12.4-litre engine sips away on nothing other than good old diesel. Still, International insists that it leads the industry in fuel economy, so it is somewhat innovative. And it was heaps of fun to drive! **F**



@womanonwheelsza

CHARLEEN CLARKE is editorial director of **FOCUS**. While she is based in Johannesburg, she spends a considerable amount of time overseas, attending international transport events – largely in her capacity as associate member of the International Truck of the Year Jury.

SHORT HAULS

OPEL CLEANS UP!

Industroclean, a Level 4 BBBEE business that provides services to the industrial and institutional cleaning market, recently purchased a fleet of Opel Combo cargo vans with a view to transporting technicians and equipment into the field.

According to a statement issued by Opel, the vans are aimed at helping Industroclean maintain its commitment to providing superior after-sales support to customers. "A fleet manager's purchase decision is based on the value of a vehicle beyond its retail price. Return on investment is key, with low total cost of ownership being the ultimate goal. The Opel Combo fully meets both these requirements for Industroclean," the statement says.

The derivative is powered by a turbocharged, 1,6 litre diesel engine that produces 68 kW and 230 Nm. Fuel economy is said to be in the 5,0 litres per 100 km range. "With safety, comfort and security a top priority, the Combo has been designed to not only keep the driver and passenger safe but, just as

for a number of opportunities for the fitting of shelves, storage bins, toolboxes, refrigeration equipment or compressors. The cargo area offers plenty of flexibility."

Industroclean chose the long wheelbase version, which offers a length of 4 753 mm and generous width of 1 848 mm, delivering a superior payload of



up to 1 tonne and a towing capacity of up to 1 250 kg with a braked trailer. "The Combo's enclosed, square-shaped body and rear cargo area offer up to 4,4 cubic metres of load space, with a flat floor and no intrusion from the wheel arches. A low load height allows for efficient and easier manoeuvring of goods and equipment, both in and out of the two sliding side doors and extended dual-opening back doors. Additionally, Industroclean's exterior body branding has become a moving billboard for product awareness," the statement says.

importantly, to offer maximum protection for valuable cargo and equipment by keeping it out of sight in an alarm-equipped, enclosed shell that is an integral part of the vehicle's body."

Blacked-out windows, remote-controlled central locking, rear interior electronic door locks and an anti-theft immobiliser help to reinforce the vehicle's security aspects, while safety features include airbags, three-point seatbelts, hill-start assist, ABS, EBD and ESP. Air-conditioning, an audio system, Bluetooth and USB ports are among other features.

"The flexibility of the Combo van is geared towards business needs, with solutions tailored to suit individual requirements," the statement adds. "The protected steel box created by the Combo's body shape includes floor tie-downs to eliminate movement and reduce inner-body damage, allowing



According to Opel, the Combo was designed as part of a cross-business programme in which services were systematically tailored as closely as possible to the needs of business-to-business customers around the globe, with a view to offering convenience, safety, security and high value for money.

FULL FAITH IN FAW

Mawire Transport and Logistics, based in Pomona, Kempton Park, relies on FAW trucks to deliver heavy loads in challenging environments. The specialist cross-border transporter and sub-contracting company is owned by Jerry Mawire, who operates a fleet of 10 trucks – five of which are FAWs. He currently owns two FAW 8.140 FL five-tonners and three FAW 16.240 FL eight-tonners.

He says he saw other cross-border transporters using FAWs to transport loads into Africa and spoke to them about the brand. Motivated by their endorsements, he decided to buy his first FAW eight-tonner from nearby FAW Isando where his trucks are also serviced.

Mawire says a major factor in his decision to purchase was that FAW South Africa was able to assist him with the deposit required to buy his first truck. "The price of FAW trucks is really very good, and with low operating costs we have been able to pay off our vehicles in just three years," he says.

Despite their affordable pricing, Mawire says the fitment of the full dual-circuit air-brake system, with ABS, is impressive. He is also delighted with the low fuel consumption figures his drivers are achieving.



Mawire is happy with the vehicles' service intervals (15 000 km) and service plans. "We know these trucks are serviced correctly by highly trained technicians who fit only genuine parts. This helps me to sleep at night," he says.

Fitted with Euro-2 diesel engines, Mawire has no fear when it comes to fuel quality for his FAWs on inter-Africa trips. He explains that his company primarily transports mining equipment to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Other destinations include Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Tanzania.

"We deliver loads almost anywhere in Africa," he says. "We have been as far as Kampala in Uganda, a one-way distance of over 4 000 km."

INCIDENT SIMULATION PUTS SAFETY FIRST



Uzuko Carriers, a joint venture between Cargo Carriers and Caltex Eastern Cape Marketers, master franchisor of more than 106 Caltex service stations in the province, recently undertook a large-scale emergency simulation on the N2 near East London.

The initiative was staged to ensure the readiness of first responders in the event of an incident and was planned around a scheduled emergency simulation by the Buffalo City Fire Department on behalf of the South African National Roads Agency Limited (Sanral).

The event – the first in a series of scheduled annual emergency simulations that will be undertaken by Uzuko Carriers in the Amathole District Municipality – was perceived to be a resounding success, demonstrating all of the organisations' abilities to effectively respond to a major, if improbable, incident.

During a post-incident assessment, existing procedures were reviewed to ensure preparedness for a variety of incidents, ranging in severity from controllable spillages through to major rollovers. And, with important insights gained from the experience, the fire department and the larger Amathole District Municipality expressed keen interest in participating in future drills.

Uzuko Carriers is now finalising a report on the findings of the simulation that will be used to benchmark and institute improvements to its current Safety Health Environment and Quality (SHEQ) Management System wherever necessary.

The company's SHEQ Management System is already of an extremely high standard considering Uzuko Carriers' close affiliation to Cargo Carriers, one of South Africa's leading transporters of fuel and hazardous goods.

Importantly, the final report will also be used to raise awareness among, and to train, Uzuko Carriers' staff to hone their abilities to effectively manage emergency scenarios in line with Cargo Carriers' ongoing customer-centric drive.

Established in 2010, Uzuko Carriers has an impressive track record undertaking last-mile distribution on behalf of the Caltex brand to supply filling stations in rural areas in the Eastern Cape, rural towns in the Karoo and the Nelson Mandela and Buffalo City metros.

CARFIND.CO.ZA LAUNCHES COMMERCIALFIND.CO.ZA

Carfind.co.za, an online vehicle search and purchase platform that pioneered the sector, is proud to announce a new and exciting chapter in its business – Commercialfind.co.za.

After 20 years as one of the leaders in the industry, Carfind.co.za has been instrumental in helping to find new owners for thousands of cars, bakkies, SUVs, 4x4s, motorbikes, boats and caravans.

Using a simple, but highly sophisticated and effective online digital search matrix, South African vehicle buyers continue to trust Carfind.co.za to easily find them dream vehicles from a multitude of models representing more than 70 brands across the country.

Innovation and customer satisfaction are the driving forces in the motor industry. That is why, for the past two years, extensive research has been conducted by the Carfind.co.za Innovation Team to find new ways of helping South African consumers in the commercial sector achieve their digital online goals and aspirations.

"Commercialfind.co.za is the right solution. It is geared towards customers who need to find the right agricultural equipment, industrial equipment such as yellow metal, industrial plant, trucks and trailers for their commercial needs.

"The Commercialfind.co.za platform is just as easy to use as Carfind.co.za. The site offers customers a wide range of options from the comfort of their homes, work desks or smart phones, whether they are purchasing new, used or demo products," says a statement issued by the company, which adds that besides offering outright purchases, the platform also accommodates rentals, wherever offered.

"The aim of Commercialfind.co.za is to connect the right buyer with the right commercial product," says managing director, Mike de Charmoy. "We are extremely excited about taking our digital online consumer expertise acquired via Carfind.co.za and applying it to the commercial vehicle market."

De Charmoy says Commercialfind.co.za represents the culmination of research into understanding specific needs of commercial vehicle buyers.

"We have ensured that all the elements have been suitably translated into meeting requirements for a bespoke, superior, commercial online experience, delivering to the prerequisites of all commercial consumers.

"We are confident that Commercialfind.co.za will supply the answers, and we look forward to the journey with all our potential new customers," he concludes.

LOADTECH INTRODUCES ITS VIGIA SYSTEM

The VIGIA system from Loadtech monitors and automatically regulates the pressure of a vehicle's tyres. The system is handy for transportation companies, such as trucking companies and bus services, as it is said to improve the safety of vehicles, extending the lifespan of tyres and improving fuel efficiency.



The air the system to tyres comes from an auxiliary tank which includes an in-line filter to eliminate any impurities. In the case of extreme pressure loss, the system shuts off the flow of air to ensure that sufficient remains for the braking system and air suspension.

According to the manufacturers, benefits of a VIGIA system include less downtime. Research has shown that improper inflation accounts for 80 percent of retread separations, cuts, bruises, flats and blowouts. "Correct inflation pressures can extend the lifespan of a vehicle's tyres by up to 25 percent," says a company spokesman.

BETTER FUEL ECONOMY

He adds that for every 10 kPa of under-inflated tyre, a vehicle consumes 0,8 percent more fuel. "The VIGIA system is designed to ensure that tyres operate at optimum pressure, providing proper sidewall flexing and a safe operating temperature."

VIGIA FOR TRAILER-ONLY APPLICATION

He adds that, in many cases, a trailer-only solution supplied by VIGIA makes a substantial difference to tyre costs in a fleet. "Tyres on a trailer are furthest from a driver's view, which means that they are most often the ones that get damaged," he says.

CTRACK LOGISTICS BAROMETER INDICATES ROAD-FREIGHT RESILIENCE

Though August data from the Ctrack Logistics Barometer indicates pronounced deceleration in global logistics growth, particularly in sea- and air-freight volumes, total freight volumes in South Africa are up 1.1 percent from those recorded a year ago on a three-month (June, July, August) moving average basis.

Road-freight volumes showed the strongest positive trend, rising 3.1 percent, while sea-freight volumes showed the biggest decline of -3.5 percent.

However, the global trade war is starting to have an impact on South African trade and the volume of shipped containers is a clear indication of a slowing world economy. Break bulk volumes at the country's ports have declined 35.3 percent from a year ago on a three-month (June, July, August) moving average basis – the biggest year-on-year decline recorded since 2008. Container volumes declined by 6.2 percent during the same period.

Land transport, though, is still growing, due to internal demand, while bulk coal and iron-ore exports show positive growth. However, even here the short-term trend is slower than before, with the Ctrack Logistics Barometer suggesting far more mundane economic performance in the third quarter.

The pipeline sector, which is dominated by fuel transportation, indicates a small decline of -0.4 percent compared with the figure a year ago, but a much larger (-5.1 percent) decline compared with July's rating. The price of fuel has not increased much, but users have either delayed buying more in the hope of lower prices, or they appear uncertain of the short-term economic outlook.

Measurements in the table show freight volume changes – in percentages – over different time periods. The most important of these is the three-

month moving average (June, July, August) measured against the same three months of last year.

Strangely, in contrast to slowing world trade trends, the latest IATA data shows a substantial increase in international air freight for South Africa. Nonetheless, the global trade war is impacting world trade and that will likely have a negative impact on both sea and air freight. Slower growth will also influence the movement of minerals – the main income generator for Transnet Freight Rail.

Furthermore, drought in the wheat growing regions of the southern Cape will impact road freight. More wheat may have to be imported, making for longer journeys for transporters. This may already be a



reason for the positive growth seen in road freight.

"We are proud to say the Ctrack Logistics Barometer, now in its second month, has been well-received in the marketplace," says Hein Jordt, managing director of Ctrack SA. "It appears that road transport continues to gain market share, providing the backbone in the South African logistics industry."

"However, it remains imperative for transport and logistics companies to manage their delivery fleets closely in lieu of recent oil price increases. Only a holistic fleet-management system with daily insights – such as Ctrack's business intelligence reports and bureau services – can simplify this important task for fleets."

Change from 2018	Rail	Road	Pipeline	Sea	Air	Storage & handling	Logistics
August 2019 vs August 2018	+0,1%	+2,2%	-5,9%	-1,5%	-2,0%	-6,1%	-0,1%
March, April, May 2019 vs March, April, May 2018	+1,0%	+3,1%	-0,4%	-3,5%	-0,4%	-2,1%	+1,1%
Short term changes							
Change from July 2019 to August 2019	+1,1%	+0,8%	-5,1%	-4,1%	+0,9%	-6,3%	-0,7%
March, April, May 2019 vs June, July, August 2019	-1,0%	-0,5%	-1,4%	-8,5%	-0,8%	+0,9%	-1,1%

SERCO REWARDED FOR TRAILER INNOVATION

Serco's gold certificate win in the Innovation Awards competition held during the recent Automechanika Johannesburg trade fair is a reward for the company's determination to give its customers the edge by continually raising the standard of its refrigerated vehicle bodies in line with international benchmarks.

That's the view of the company's CEO, Clinton Holcroft, who says Serco's mission has been to set the local benchmark in refrigerated bodies after identifying that the thermal performance of units had not previously been measurable in South Africa.

Holcroft says the tangible benefits of the company's Protec Steel Frostliner trailers include reducing fuel consumption and wear and tear on the fridge, reducing the carbon impact on the environment and – through thermal efficiency – improving product shelf life and reducing load loss.



Announcing that Serco had won gold for its refrigerated vehicle – the first trailer in South Africa to achieve South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) approval for meeting standards related to the transport of frozen and fresh food – the Innovation Award judges said the unit built at Serco's Durban factory was of "top-class quality".

The judging panel was impressed by techniques used in the manufacture of the trailer and the types of insulation materials used.

Holcroft says: "The journey started with the investment in a state-of-the-art panel injection press at our factory in Durban's Phoenix Industrial Park, and included a critical analysis of the design and construction of our vehicle bodies to ensure they adhered to international benchmarks.

"By introducing a measurable cold-chain factor for our bodies, we were able to ensure a more efficient product, which results in an increase in thermal performance," adds Holcroft.

The thermal test at the SABS enabled Serco to measure its vehicle body performance against an international standard in a process that involved stringent testing with specialised equipment in a purpose-built facility.

STATE OF THE COMMERCIAL VEHICLE MARKET, SEPTEMBER

The National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa) reported that the slide in overall new vehicle sales continued into September, with a total of 49 191 units accounted for – representing a decline 0.9 percent against the 49 630 vehicles sold in September last year. While the passenger car market was up by 1.1 percent to 33 139 units, the light commercial segment fell by 6.2 percent. Similarly, the medium commercial vehicle segment gained 14% to register 790 sales, while figures for the heavy truck and bus segments totalled 1 789 units – exactly equalling the number of sales recorded in September last year.

Light Commercial Vehicles < 3 501 kg	Total: 13 473
Changan	14
Fiat Chrysler Automobiles South Africa	23
Ford Motor Company	2 351
GWM	170
Hyundai Automotive SA	254
Isuzu Motors South Africa	1 204
JMC	9
Kia South Africa	114
Mahindra	296
Mazda South Africa	23
Mercedes-Benz SA	105
Mitsubishi	25
Nissan	3 105
Opel	17
Peugeot-Citroën South Africa	2
Renault	1
Suzuki Auto	20
Toyota	5 360
Volkswagen SA	380

Medium Commercial Vehicles 3 501 – 8 500 kg	Total: 790
FAW	11
Ford Motor Company	5
Hino	156
Hyundai Automotive SA	10
Isuzu Motors South Africa	120
Iveco	111
JMC	13
Mercedes-Benz SA	156
Peugeot Citroën South Africa	8
Tata	42
Toyota	108
VECV (Eicher)	1
Volkswagen SA	49

Heavy Commercial Vehicles 8 501 – 16 500 kg	Total: 457
FAW	54
Hino	99
Isuzu Motors South Africa	87
Iveco	4
MAN Automotive	8
Mercedes-Benz SA	47
Powerstar	21
Tata	42
UD	86
VECV (Eicher)	9

Extra-Heavy Commercial Vehicles > 16 500 kg	Total: 1 270
Babcock DAF	11
Daewoo	17
FAW	30
Hino	24
Isuzu Motors South Africa	31
Iveco	30
MAN Automotive	214
Mercedes-Benz SA	257
Powerstar	28
Scania	188
Tata	6
UD	84
Volkswagen	3
Volvo Group Southern Africa	347

Buses > 8 500 kg	Total: 62
Iveo	4
MAN	22
Mercedes-Benz SA	13
Scania	19
Tata	4

Note: Mercedes-Benz SA reports only aggregated sales data. The company's commercial vehicle market split volumes are estimates based on historical trends and forecasting techniques. All figures are supplied by Naamsa



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