



Increasing their workshop capabilities to carry out refurbishments has been a top priority

As Good As New

When the going gets tough, the tough get smart. This has been the strategy at Micron Engineering where the establishment of a breakdown and refurbishment section is changing the face of the business. “Supply Chain Today” speaks to Mark Tucker, sales and marketing director.

There is no denying the importance of a forklift and its attachments in the world of logistics, but purchasing these essential items has come under the spotlight in the tough current economic environment.

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“We saw a remarkable change in 2014 in the approach of our customers to their materials handling equipment,” Mark tells us. “New product sales showed a definite downward trend and research into the situation soon proved that people were thinking twice about buying new. In fact, we found that there was a definite trend towards working the equipment longer and that a lot more roll-overs were occurring when it came to new purchases.”

This led to the company to take a hard look at its offering to the market. “We realised that if our customers were not buying new equipment as often as in the past, there would be a definite need for refurbishment as well as a breakdown service, and that we could add value by stepping into this space.”

Massive impact

Mark says the establishment of a breakdown and refurbishment department has had a massive impact on the business. “It has become the key driving force and is currently the area in which we are seeing major growth and development.” With support services becoming the focus, the Micron team has extensively increased the number of technicians it employs countrywide while a heavily-funded apprentice programme has been kicked off.

“Our focus now is more on the reconditioning and repurposing of existing equipment than on selling new attachments. It’s a far more cost-effective option for many businesses and if undertaken correctly by a reputable company, it’s as good a long-term investment as buying new would be.”

Workshop gears up

At its premises in Benoni in Gauteng, Micron’s workshop is staffed with highly-skilled technicians who are able to take on the toughest of assignments. The company also has a service centre in Durban, representation in Richards Bay, Cape



Mark Tucker, sales and marketing director, with Raymond Stebbing, repair and refurbishment foreman

“On the sales side, our staff is not just confined to selling new equipment but also our refurbishing service, thus offering customers a new lease on life for their existing materials handling equipment.”

To round out its offering, Micron has established a rental service. “Not all businesses want to buy new or need equipment for long periods of time. Through renting they can have the right equipment on site when they need it only,” he adds.

Town, East London and Port Elizabeth.

“In essence, we are able to deal with breakdown and refurbishments across the country on site and in the field. Our workshops are geared towards taking in equipment that needs repair or servicing and this aspect of our business is proving to be very successful,” Mark asserts.

Long-term approach

According to Mark, the move towards refurbishment is not new. “It’s been a long time coming really. Since the global economic meltdown in 2008, there has been a fundamental shift in the materials handling market as price has become a big factor when it comes to replacing equipment. Delivery times are just as important. And I want to make it clear that refurbishing does not result in yet another used machine.

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This triple-whammy approach is paying off for the company. With most of the equipment being imported, the exchange rate has further impacted on sales of new equipment. But there are times when refurbishing will no longer suffice, in which case Micron offers brand new top of the range product.

“There will always be companies that can afford to upgrade and purchase new, but in the tough economic environment there is a far greater need for refurbishing. Then there are times when renting makes the most sense. Providing a variety of options to customers ensures our longevity as a business,” Mark concludes.

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