March/April 2023

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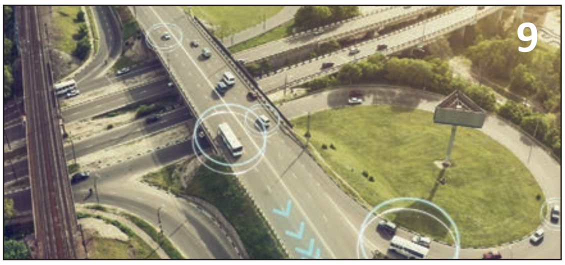

CONTENTS

Protect your business and its reputation

By Louise Woodburn, General Manager of KBC Risk Solutions

Find out how occupational health and safety (OHS) service providers can eliminate negative publicity.

Globally, 2.78 million workers die every year in occupational accidents, while 374 million suffer from non-fatal accidents on the job. With workplace incidents regularly making headline news, organisations can no longer downplay their occupational health and safety responsibilities. Not only do these incidents negatively affect the reputation of the business for years to come, but also their ability to apply for funding, contracts or tenders (the Internet never forgets).

Workplace safety must be prioritised. The safety and well-being of employees ensure a healthy and productive workforce while helping to protect businesses from costly lawsuits, damaged reputations and downtime. However, establishing a culture of safety and shifting the perception of risk is not always easy. Many businesses struggle to implement effective safety measures that protect their employees and their bottom line, but this is where occupational health and safety (OHS) service providers can help businesses to flip the script. OHS service providers can be instrumental in establishing a culture of safety by enabling business leaders to prioritise employee health and safety and providing them with the knowledge and tools they need to create a safer, healthier workplace.

Clearing up white-collar misconceptions

There are several common misconceptions that businesses may have about health and safety regulations from a white-collar perspective. One of the most prevalent misconceptions is that workplace safety regulations only apply to high-risk industries such as construction or mining and that office-based businesses are exempt from these regulations. Another misconception is that implementing safety measures will be too expensive and time-consuming and will negatively impact productivity. Some businesses may also believe that safety regulations are unnecessary or overly burdensome and that they can rely on common sense or personal responsibility to keep employees safe. Finally, some businesses may mistakenly believe that safety regulations are purely a legal requirement and fail to recognise the value of safety in promoting employee well-being, job satisfaction and retention.

Putting safety at the top of the agenda

Partnering with a health and safety partner is one of the clearest indications that an organisation is committed to employee well-being. It is an effective means for organisations to step up their safety focus to achieve compliance and improve their health and safety records. Using an OHS service provider that delivers customised, highly relevant training programmes tailored to the specific needs of the business, leadership can ensure that employees are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their jobs safely. OHS service providers also provide a fresh perspective by helping businesses to identify and mitigate potential hazards in the workplace, such as ergonomic issues, hazardous materials or electrical hazards. By addressing these issues proactively, businesses can reduce the likelihood of accidents or injuries occurring and can create a safer work environment for their employees.

In addition to helping companies achieve compliance and reduce risk, partnering with a training provider can also improve the health and safety record of the business by promoting a culture of safety. OHS service providers can work with employees to develop safety policies and procedures (collaboration is important to create a sense of ownership) while communicating these policies effectively to employees. In achieving a safety-first mindset among its workforce by prioritising employee health and

safety, a business can increase employee satisfaction and retention, and reduce absenteeism and health care costs, while enhancing its reputation as a responsible and caring employer.

Safety first, results follow

Selecting the right OHS service provider with which to partner is essential to ensure that businesses receive the necessary training, support and motivation to establish a culture of safety in the workplace. To make the right decision, businesses must consider the following factors:

1. **Customisation:** The OHS service provider should offer customised training programmes that are tailored to the specific needs and requirements of the business. One-size-fits-all training programmes will not be effective and a good OHS service provider will work with businesses to develop a training programme that is relevant to their specific needs.
2. **Expertise:** The OHS service provider must have the necessary expertise and experience in delivering safety training programmes in the industry relevant to the business. It must have qualified instructors who are knowledgeable and experienced in their field and who can provide guidance and support to employees as needed.
3. **Relevance:** Safety regulations and best practices in South Africa are constantly updated. The OHS provider must be on top of these updates and its training programmes should reflect this.
4. **Feedback:** The OHS service provider must be willing to listen to feedback from businesses and adapt their training programmes accordingly. Businesses must look for a training provider who is responsive and willing to work collaboratively to ensure that their training programmes are effective, and open communication must always be a top priority.
5. **Results:** Finally, businesses should evaluate the effectiveness of the OHS service provider by measuring the results of their training programmes. This could take the form of tracking injury rates, considering employee feedback or looking into other metrics that demonstrate the impact of training on employee behaviour and workplace safety.

Taking responsibility for safety

By partnering with a dedicated, expert OHS service provider, companies acknowledge that safety is an issue that is bigger than the business itself. As such, it is necessary to give it due respect by letting the professionals handle it. In allowing a specialist OHS service provider to handle occupational health and safety training and compliance, businesses ensure that they are always up to date on the latest safety regulations and best practices, and rest assured that their safety procedures are in line with industry standards. Organisations will know that they have chosen the right OHS service provider because the provider will simplify safety procedures, effectively communicate the importance of a safety-first culture and obtain buy-in and commitment from employees at every level. In short, with the right OHS partner, safety will make sense. •

Air cargo helping drive local economic recovery

By Taarek Hinedi, VP FedEx Express Middle East and Africa operations

Evolving consumer behaviour and market trends have seen air cargo helping to drive South African economic recovery.

Air cargo became a lifeline for the South African government and economy when COVID-19 placed consumers into lockdown. When ports were at a standstill, road freight was forced to slow down and with only essential services allowed on the road, air cargo remained a safe, practical and efficient means of keeping global consumers and markets connected.

According to the International Air Transport Association, globally air cargo has played a key role in the smooth transportation and distribution of emergency relief packages and essentials such as vaccines and medical test kits thanks to its well-established, temperature-sensitive distribution systems and cutting-edge technology.

Today, as markets have started heading towards stability, the consumer behaviours and market trends seen during the pandemic continue to take the South African economy along the road to recovery, all thanks to the air cargo industry that has opened doors of global opportunities for many small and medium-sized businesses.

Increased online shopping preference and growth of e-commerce

Consumers' preferences for online shopping during the pandemic took e-commerce to new heights. Mastercard's 2020 study on consumer spending found that 68 percent of South Africans were spending more time shopping online than prior to the pandemic.

Data from First National Bank Merchant Services highlighted that before the pandemic, e-commerce accounted for 8 percent of total card payments spent in the retail space, and at the end of 2021, e-commerce accounted for 14 percent of total card payment sales.

E-commerce presented the opportunity for small and medium-sized companies to reach new consumers and Statista confirms that this trend is continuing as the African e-commerce industry is expected to increase to US$42.3 billion in 2024 and generate US$46.1 billion in annual revenue by 2025.

With more small and medium-sized businesses establishing an online presence to keep existing customers or to make the most of attracting new customers, the air cargo industry has become an efficient solution for e-commerce companies to match the demands of delivering goods in the fastest way.

Increased need for trade facilitation to boost economic development

Trade facilitation measures (simplification, modernisation, synchronisation) of export and import processes will play a key role in helping countries to build back economies.

While air cargo is a key global trade facilitator that contributes to economic development by transporting more than US$6 trillion worth of goods annually, accounting for approximately 35 percent of world trade by value, this alone is not enough. Economic reforms and frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) should seize the opportunity to remove trade barriers, especially for small and medium-sized businesses in order to promote economic development trade.

Economic reforms and frameworks will boost trade by enabling better access to global markets, promoting mutual trade practices, attracting investments and further helping the small and medium-sized businesses currently making up more than 90 percent of formal businesses across the country and contributing 34 percent towards growing gross domestic product (GDP).

AfCFTA will be a game changer to stimulate intra-African trade, accelerate industrial developments on the continent and diversify South Africa's imports and exports, and, in so doing, make trade a key driver of economic growth.

The success of these frameworks coupled with reliable air cargo collaborations will enable more South African small and medium-sized businesses to grow and increase their scope by trading internationally. As a dynamic economy of the enormous African continent and vibrant member of key reforms in Africa, South Africa has the responsibility of leading the way for collaborative growth.

Adoption of agile and future-forward innovation and technology

The pandemic demonstrated the value of integrated innovative approaches to ensure resilient transport connectivity for businesses across the globe and further emphasised the need for businesses to accelerate digitalisation.

With digitisation in mind, we witnessed many small and medium-sized businesses adopting cloud computing, which has boosted customer experience and dramatically reduced the cost of doing business whilst freeing up capital for other global business avenues that air cargo helped to facilitate.

Through the air cargo electronic document-preparation and customs-clearance solutions, businesses have been digitally transformed, thereby making international trade simpler and less daunting to reach international marketplaces and contributing even more to developing the South African economy.

Since the emergence of the air cargo industry as a facilitator of uninterrupted international trade and bearer of innovative digital shipping solutions, it has become clear that it is a key driver of economic recovery around the world.

There is no doubt that these are challenging times for the South African economy, however, the lessons we learn from today's industry trends will help boost the economy in the long term. •

Forecasting growth:
When is the right time to bring in a BPO partner?

By Tennille Bell, General Manager: Sales at Programmed Process Outsourcing (PPO)

Building and running a business is far from easy, which is why it makes sense to bring a business process outsourcing (BPO) partner on board sooner rather than later.

Unpredictable by nature, it can be tricky to anticipate growth or predict the direction a business will take in the future. For company founders, there are many factors to consider when evaluating the prospective survival and expansion of their business: the number of product lines, distribution channels, workforce size and key performance indicators (KPI) targets. These need to be considered against the backdrop of the overall business strategy as well as economic and technological means.

BPO means business growth support

Business process outsourcing (BPO) does not mean externalising portions of the business by handing over control to a third-party provider, but rather bringing a capable partner into the business and trusting them to provide the support necessary to increase productivity, introduce new product lines and manage the organisation's workforce. This single BPO partner becomes a pivotal part of the organisation and provides the flexibility required from a human capital management and labour perspective. They do this by assuming all responsibility for the administrative burdens that come with business growth, which means that business leaders can take back their time and spend it on more productive pursuits, such as exploring new revenue opportunities and focusing on customer satisfaction.

Timing is everything

This raises the question: When is the best time to bring a BPO partner into the business? The answer is as soon as possible. However, this isn't always feasible, so the second best time to bring a BPO partner on board to outsource non-core business functions is when the business needs to reduce or lower its costs, mitigate or reduce risk, expand teams without the hassle of recruiting and training internally, focus on strategy and critical business matters or grow fast and increase productivity output.

At this point, it's necessary to weigh up the benefits and costs of outsourcing with pros and cons of continuing to insource the relevant processes by maintaining internal departments. To do this, it is helpful to understand how and why BPO will have a positive effect on the business in line with the company's specific goals.

Shifting back to strategy

Most people didn't start a company so they could spend their days overseeing disciplinary hearings, approving payrolls or conducting countless recruitment interviews. They started a business to do what they love and to make money doing it. No matter the size of the business, having a team of people who can translate your goals into results can make all the difference.

This is the strategic reason behind partnering with a BPO provider and this decision will allow business leaders to focus solely on perfecting core business functions and the work that matters most in accelerating the growth of the business faster and easier. By outsourcing to a specialist BPO, businesses gain access to immense industry expertise, from human and industrial relations to legal expertise through to operational and financial expertise without the need to recruit and hire internally. A BPO provider also provides flexibility of labour resources to the business without any of the stress and hassle of having the additional headcount on the books and managing the associated industrial relations (IR) and human resources (HR) processes. This gives businesses the ability to scale up and down as necessary to meet seasonal and fluctuating demands.

It's a numbers game

Bringing a BPO on board is a cost-effective means of achieving more with less by reducing overhead costs and saving valuable time. Fixed costs (salaries, etc.) become variable costs directly linked to output and performance. The relationship between the company and BPO provider is governed by service level agreements (SLAs) that contain clear KPIs. What happens from the moment a business decides to outsource a non-core operational function? Its chosen BPO provider comes in to re-engineer that business function in order to streamline operations and increase output. A more efficient way of working is established by the BPO and from there the BPO monitors processes continuously to refine efficiencies even further. This results in boosted productivity, enhanced utilisation of resources and decreased operational costs. Better still, it results in increased profits and enhanced risk mitigation.

Keeping up with technology trends

Technology is improving daily and it's hard for businesses to keep up with the pace of change. Today, every business relies on customer experience and there needs to be a seamless alignment between people and processes in order to facilitate a positive customer experience. By joining forces with a BPO, companies gain access to the latest technology and tailored solutions for their businesses, applied by trained and skilled professionals. •


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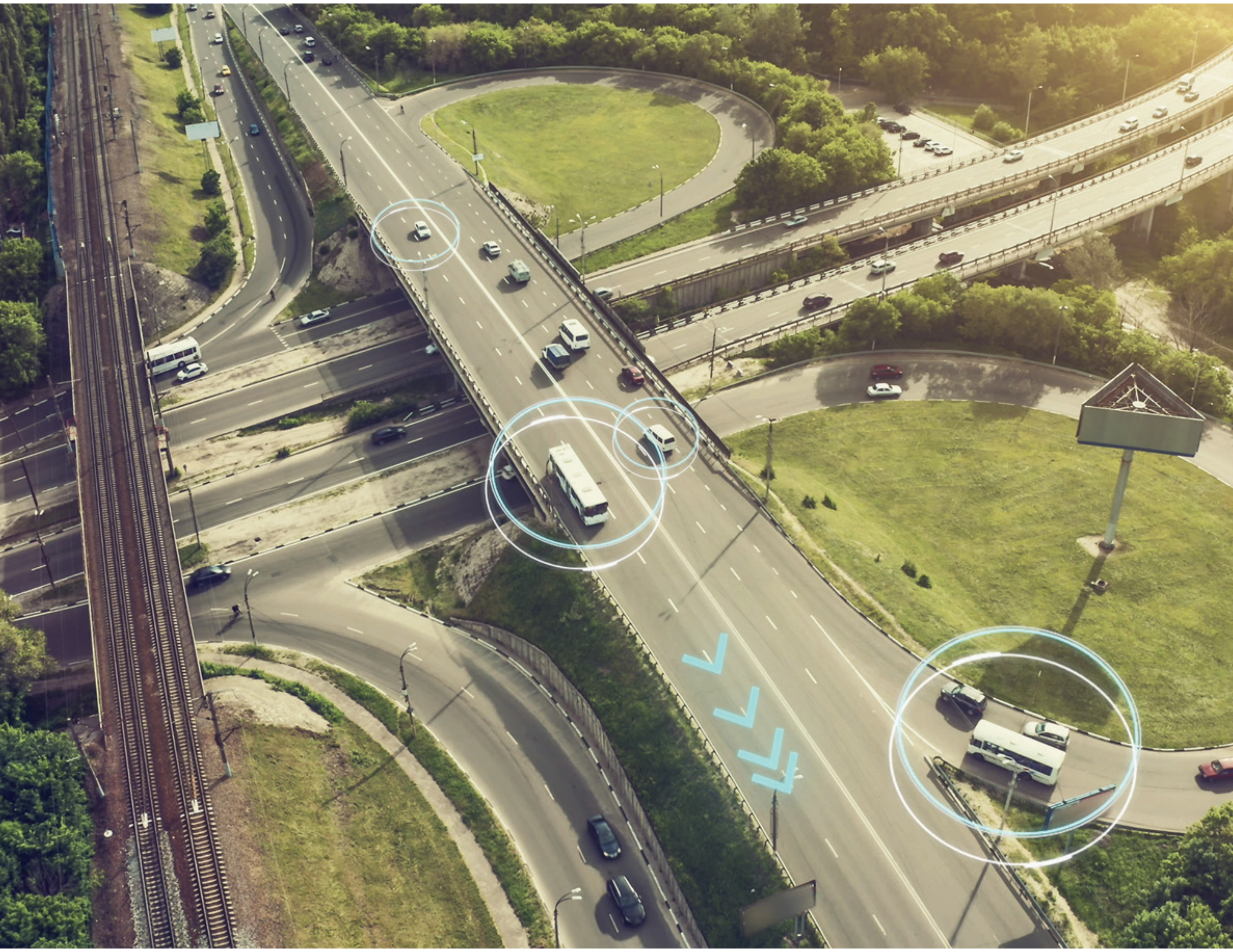
Ctrack continues evolve into 2023

Ctrack, South Africa's leading telematics and fleet management provider, is continuously developing and refining its innovative hardware and software offering in order to provide its customers with the latest solutions in an ever-changing environment. Ctrack continues to strive to offer cutting-edge solutions for the simple and effective management of a wide variety of movable assets.

"At Ctrack, we understand that the environment in which we operate is always changing and that our customers are constantly facing new challenges. Out of necessity, our solutions are continuously evolving and we look forward to offering our customers the latest and greatest in telematics and fleet management into 2023," says Hein Jordt, CEO of Ctrack Africa.



When developing and refining its operation, Ctrack always considers the five pillars of fleet management around which all solutions are developed. Risk, cost control, fleet utilisation, operations control and asset control remain at the core of all the solutions that Ctrack offers.

The basis of Ctrack is its hardware solutions that have been designed and refined locally in South Africa and truly built in Africa for Africa. This includes everything from compact battery-operated tracking devices to a variety of camera systems allowing for the tracking and monitoring of a wide variety of movable assets across industries.

With the launch of Ctrack Crystal in 2022, fleet managers were given an all-encompassing, customisable platform. This new cloud-based offering places ease of use at its core while combining existing functionality with a host of new features.

Ctrack Crystal is always on and is cloud-based, allowing access to high-level overviews or detailed reports from any device located anywhere in the world. These reports are presented in a user-friendly way that makes the identification of trends easier. Being cloud-based allows for seamless live updates, ensuring that Ctrack customers are always able to take advantage of the latest innovative refinements.

Fully customisable functionality combines all the existing features that consumers have come to know and love with a variety of new features into a one-stop, do it all fleet management platform.

One of Ctrack's big advantages is its flexibility, and making many of these bespoke solutions possible is its proprietary SMILE technology that offers endless opportunities. "Ctrack is able to listen to the needs of its customers and offer them locally engineered solutions that give them the exact results that they require to run their particular business safely and efficiently," adds Jordt.

With SMILE, the same hardware can be used to offer an endless array of control and data in a format that makes decision making easy, the benefits of which have been proven in real-world scenarios time and again. Industries such as crane operators, mining and the farming community have specific needs, all of which can be accurately catered for by this technology.

A growing threat to the tracking and telematics industry is GPS jamming. This unscrupulous practice not only interferes with the transmission of telematics data that has become a vital part of successfully running a fleet operation, but can also prevent the tracking of vehicles or assets as part of a stolen vehicle recovery attempt. Ctrack's jamming mitigation can detect jamming interference and react accordingly by implementing several mitigation strategies that will ensure that the integrity of the transmission and data remains unaffected.

Ctrack's Driver Management tools provide multiple solutions to ensure that operations run effectively, efficiently and safely. These tools allow for the management of operators, access and behaviour across multiple vehicles and assets.

Ctrack's Bureau Service is the complete outsourcing of fleet control room activities, backed by highly proficient hindsight, insight and foresight data analytics and reporting. Dedicated skilled fleet controllers meticulously monitor vehicle movements, incidents, alerts and alarms from a central support centre, which operates 24/7 and provides real-time support to optimise fleet operations.

"In an environment that can very quickly become overwhelmed by big data, providing feedback that allows for efficient decision making is critical to effectively managing fleets," says Jordt. "Looking forward to 2023, Ctrack will be launching further enhancements to the popular Crystal software platform in the first quarter of the year, providing further proof that Ctrack's innovative fleet management software is unmatched in the market as well as peace of mind to fleet and asset managers in businesses big and small," he concludes. •

2023: Celebrating shockwaves of change in supply chain

By Chantal Kading, Leadership and Talent Strategist at The People Shop

2023 is the season for change and transforming all the lessons learned from the past into powerful visions.

Murphy's Law is probably what comes to mind when most of us reflect on the past three years. As supply chains recover from a period when everything that could go wrong certainly did go wrong for many in the industry, I find myself reflecting on an important truth: There's a season for everything, and, yes, that means a season for things to go wrong and not work out and a season for the exact opposite.

2023 is the season for change and transforming all the lessons learned from the past into powerful visions. If 2020 and 2021 were the years of the pandemic, 2022 was the year of everything else that could go wrong. Geopolitical conflicts, port congestion, protests, infrastructure and climate disasters all created new challenges for businesses still grappling with aftershocks.

However, it's important to remember that global shocks sometimes precipitate positive change. In 2008, it was the financial meltdown followed by institutional reforms and in the 2010s, it was the mainstreaming of cybersecurity professionals after the worst decade of hacks (Forbes, 2019). In the 2020s, it will be supply chains and the continued elevation of its professionals. Many businesses now recognise supply chains as more than just conduits and cost centres, but, in fact, as powerful value generators deserving of representation in the C-suite (generixgroup.com, 2020).

Today, supply chain turmoil is viewed as the greatest threat to growth. More executives are placing global supply chains at the heart of their operations strategies and this has accelerated the drive to rethink the entire playbook. As one expert put it: “The question should not be how to return to pre-pandemic conditions, but whether those conditions were really serving the company well in the first place” (Chiefexecutive.net, 2023).

Despite the economic uncertainty, COVID-19 inspired more investment in innovative technologies. Increased volatility and the need to quickly respond to disruptive forces emphasised the value of supply chain digitisation. Prior to the pandemic, a significant number of companies had less than optimal visibility and didn’t communicate with or even know the location of their suppliers (N.R. Sanders, 2023).

In response, one of the biggest global corporate agendas has been the implementation of new technologies to improve visibility and communication all around (Hackett Group, 2023). This visibility is creating foresight and shining much-needed light on how ill-prepared the world may be to face the next crisis.

The world learned how insufficient the ‘every man for himself’ approach is when it comes to dealing with global shockwaves of change as well as the importance of collaboration and sharing valuable information. Change management evolved into change leadership as businesses began to recognise the wisdom in making transformation and continuous improvement part of the company’s culture and DNA.

As we look forward to the future, the one word that should come to mind should be ‘opportunity’. It is said that the waves of change are inevitable and the ones who will thrive in the future are those that surf it the best. Is your supply chain in flow across its value chains and do your team and leadership have the resilience and adaptability to catch and ride the waves to shore? May your supply chain surfing score a ‘Perfect 10’. •

Rising demand for the courier industry

By Lucinda Alfonica, Commercial Manager, Workforce Staffing

Discover how the courier industry can meet growing demand as e-commerce ramps up.

South Africa's postal service has become increasingly difficult to access, with hundreds of branches closing over the years. More recently, another 92 branches were shut for good. This has placed increasing pressure on courier services in the country as they have become the only option for many areas. Added to this is the growth of e-commerce, which has seen increased use of couriers to deliver online purchases. Temporary Employment Services (TES) providers can help courier companies to keep up with this rising demand and ensure they can maintain their service levels and effective delivery times.

Ramping up to meet demand

As demand for courier services increases, courier companies find themselves under pressure to hire additional drivers to meet service delivery levels. However, sourcing and vetting drivers can be a complex and time-consuming process, which may lead to shortcuts being taken. The challenge with this is that drivers without the necessary experience and qualifications can prove problematic for several reasons. From a safety perspective, unlicensed or inexperienced drivers can increase the risk of accidents or injuries. Reliability could also become an issue, which could lead to delayed deliveries, lost packages and dissatisfied customers. Insurance will not cover drivers who do not have appropriate qualifications and experience, leaving courier companies vulnerable to financial losses in the event of an accident or theft.

In addition, various regulations govern the transportation of goods, including rules around driver qualifications and vehicle safety. If courier drivers are not professionally trained and qualified, courier companies may not be following these regulations, which can lead to fines, legal issues and damage to the company's reputation.

A helping hand from a TES

A TES provider will assist with sourcing and vetting drivers and crew according to industry standards to ensure that they

meet all requirements, including experience, appropriate licenses and other qualifications. In addition, a TES provider will have an extensive database of skilled and qualified drivers who have experience in handling all types of cargo and travelling to areas that may be deemed high risk.

A TES partner will also be able to train drivers on how to handle high-risk situations and deal with all human resources (HR) and industrial relations (IR) matters. These components allow couriers to focus on their core competency of distribution. Additionally, a TES provider will ensure that couriers are registered and compliant with certain bargaining councils where required while handling the administration regarding paying over certain levies for these councils.

Flexibility when you need it most

The most significant benefit, however, is the ability to scale up and down according to fluctuating demand. Rather than having to hire and retrench drivers continually, a TES service ensures flexible staffing solutions to help courier companies fulfil orders within tight deadlines and maintain customer satisfaction.

Additionally, a TES partner can provide cost-effective staffing solutions to the courier industry by reducing the administrative costs associated with recruitment and payroll management. This can help courier companies to manage their costs effectively while meeting the rising demand for their services. •

Top four cold chain growth drivers in 2023

Greg Tuthill, Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) of SeaCube Containers, a global leader in intermodal refrigerated equipment leasing, looks closely at the top four cold chain growth drivers.

Greg Tuthill, CCO, SeaCube Containers.

Stakeholders throughout the supply chain understand 2023 will not be like any other year – and this is especially true for the cold chain, both in terms of challenges and opportunities. Offering reliability and predictability, the reefer market continues to grow and has proven to be more resilient in the face of supply chain disruption as the movement of temperature-controlled cargo continues to be prioritised.

While a fluid cold chain is critical to feeding the world's population, cold chain fluidity does not 'just happen' – it relies on investment and innovation. Ocean carriers looking to optimise their refrigerated equipment investment need a strategic roadmap that addresses the ongoing economic and geopolitical challenges, food supply shortages, food waste and refrigerated equipment capacity – all while working to reach sustainability goals.

The top four cold chain growth drivers include food waste mitigation, food supply outsourcing, decarbonisation goals and technology.

Food waste mitigation

Nearly 40 percent of food produced in the world is lost, with 7-15 percent spoiling during transport. Lost containers contribute to the problem; however, a more significant and preventable problem is related to the container temperature or poorly packed containers. This is especially true for fruits and vegetables, which are particularly vulnerable because they are loaded onto containers in corrugated boxes, which offer no protection from spoilage.

Food waste has been a persistent issue and will prove to be an even bigger problem in 2023 as experts predict food supply shortages will continue to get worse throughout the year. This elevates the need to take action to reduce food waste by investing in technology that will protect food during the transport journey.

While today's refrigerated equipment provides superior cold storage, arming reefer fleets with telematics technology allows for greater collaboration, increased transparency and real-time data, which provides accurate information on the exact location of the container, necessary for proper planning. Telematics also provides insight into the temperature, humidity and airflow inside the container, which ensures the quality of the cargo is protected and waste is reduced.

Food outsourcing

As the world's population continues to grow, so does the need to move food safely and swiftly throughout the world. This elevates the need for state-of-the-art refrigerated equipment that includes telematics to ensure the cargo is handled properly throughout the entire journey.

The reefer market is expected to grow on average five percent year over year through 2025 while breakbulk containers demand will drop by 15 percent. The movement of fruits and vegetables will be the key driver in the temperature-controlled cargo market as consumers expect off-season perishables to be readily available all year long.

Decarbonisation

In 2018, government imposed regulations that compel the shipping industry to reduce carbon emissions by half by mid-century. With aggressive sustainability goals, the shipping industry is looking to make changes throughout the supply chain and there are significant opportunities within the reefer sector. Innovation and open-mindedness are the keys to reaching decarbonisation goals.

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) as a refrigerant is used more because of its zero depleting characteristics and its global warming potential of one. CO_2 as a natural refrigerant is one of the most environmentally sustainable alternatives for refrigerated marine transport. Other considerations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions include variable speed drives for compressors and two-speed evaporator fans, which offer energy efficiency and can elevate even the most optimal operation linked to an energy-efficient fleet.

Technology and connecting end-to-end

Technological advancements, digitalisation and the digital transformation of businesses will be a growth driver not just for the reefer market, but the entire supply chain. Technology will be used to map the entire end-to-end supply chain more accurately – from the direct supplier to the second-tier supplier and beyond. 'Smart' containers are equipped with telematics that provides real-time tracking and monitoring. This enables customers to plan their inventory and production accordingly and operators to increase turn-time and improve equipment availability. Telematics also provides preventive measures using algorithms that recognise failures before they happen, notification of erratic driver behaviour, potential theft and safety issues.

The use of telematics in the maritime shipping industry is expected to explode in the coming years. According to data from Allied Market Research, telematics investment is expected to grow in maritime shipping by a CAGR of 21.3 percent by 2026. This stat is a strong statement about the supply chain industry's commitment to investing in technology to address critical cold chain issues.

Reefer market: Challenges and opportunities in 2023

The reefer market represents the most resilient sector within the shipping industry. Even during times of economic and geopolitical uncertainty, food must be transported in equipment that is up to the task. With the growing population and potential food supply shortages, the industry has a responsibility to take all necessary steps to mitigate food waste – and technology is the key to delivering on that promise.

The pressure to reach very aggressive sustainability goals has the industry looking for a silver bullet and while that may not exist, the current carbon emission-reducing solutions connected to reefers present an opportunity to make a significant impact and the potential solutions on the horizon are very exciting. •

How to overcome cross-border payment challenges

Financial technology company Verto has identified numerous ways for exporters to optimise their cross-border payments. By implementing several improvements to their strategies, financial risk can be reduced and payment methods can be diversified, giving businesses more confidence and control over their cross-border payments.

Ola Oyetayo, CEO at Verto.

Cross-border trade is a key driver of the South African economy, accounting for over half of the country's total exports. However, South African exporters face several challenges in receiving cross-border payments, including high transaction fees, currency conversion issues and difficulties in verifying the identity of buyers.

According to a survey conducted by the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SACCI) in 2021, the high cost of cross-border payments was identified as a significant challenge by 35 percent of exporting companies in South Africa.

Another challenge is the time it takes to process cross-border payments. According to the same SACCI survey, 29 percent of exporting companies identified delays in payment processing as a challenge. These delays can be caused by a range of factors, including payment intermediaries, regulatory requirements and compliance checks.

There are several strategies that exporters can implement to enhance global payments, decrease financial risk and streamline their financial operations. This includes staying informed, partnering with an innovative payment provider and diversifying to improve overall efficiency of cross-border payments.

Introduce digital diversification

A focal point of an exporter's global payments strategy is to diversify payment methods, particularly in emerging markets like South Africa where there is a reliance on cash or cheques as the most common way of payment. While this is favoured, it leaves exporters at risk of not receiving payments or delays that can impact cash flow or result in shipping delays. Using electronic transfers and digital platforms, which allow for faster, safer and tracked payments, can be a smart way to improve exporting.

Staying informed to stay agile

For exporters, operating globally means that keeping abreast of the economic and political environments of the jurisdictions in which they operate is essential. Instability and currency fluctuations in emerging markets can lead to border problems, cash flow issues and delays in receiving money safely and on time. Ola Oyetayo, CEO at Verto, says being informed can help a business be adaptable and mitigate any potential risk. "Some steps to do so may be setting news alerts on your computer or phone, working with local partners who can keep you informed or working with a payments provider that understands these risks."

"At Verto, we can help mitigate currency fluctuations for our customers with our Marketplace, which allows businesses to set their own foreign exchange (FX) rate and our competitive FX rates to always stay ahead of the market. In addition, our multi-currency wallets can hold funds in up to 50 currencies, enabling businesses to lock in favourable exchange rates," he notes.

Implementing a helping hand

A step towards better payments may lie with who the payments providers are, especially as exporters can work in markets that they are unfamiliar with and that have differing regulations, which may result in the risk of not being financially compliant. Using an innovative global payments provider can ensure exporters are provided with a variety of services such as global compliance support, fraud prevention and detection, and currency conversion. "For example, at Verto, we allow our customers to set their own preferred rates via our Marketplace so that they can negotiate and execute trades at a price that suits them," concludes Oyetao. •

Trends that are reshaping supply chains

The need for flexibility and agility is becoming key to servicing clients, say Bidvest International Logistics experts Rhett Oertel and Marcus Ellappan.

The logistics industry battled a number of challenges in 2022, least of all the war in Ukraine and turmoil over China's strict COVID-19 policies. That said, the world also emerged from the worst of the pandemic, meaning that supply chains returned to some degree of normality despite the conflict in Eastern Europe. Within this context, a number of significant developments occurred within the industry itself and the impact of these is anticipated to be felt this year and beyond.

From a shipping perspective, acquisitions by shipping lines last year changed the landscape to some extent. The lines were highly profitable between 2019 and 2022, and many used some of their profits to enter various landside logistics businesses – from warehousing to transport and IT-related services.Going forward, this shake-up is expected to create new alliances within the industry, with old alliances becoming new competitors.

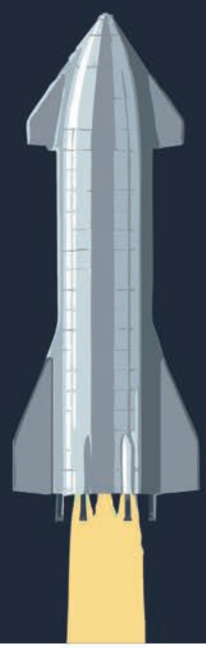
Another major development last year was the increased adoption of technology and automation to drive efficiencies and reduce costs. According to Bidvest International Logistics (BIL) Head of Sales Rhett Oertel, in 2023, technology adoption will keep driving supply chain companies in the direction of automation while increasing visibility, improving predictive analytics and ultimately optimising supply chains."The impact of blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI) and electric vehicles in the supply chain industry will be ongoing. Blockchain is in use in trade financing and contract execution and is even tracking to AI use in the supply chain to help with forecasting." This view is shared by BIL Director Marcus Ellappan, who says with the logistics industry under constant pressure to reduce costs, businesses increasingly will be looking at automating processes.

Another trend that emerged in 2022 and should become even more prevalent this year is environmental, social and governance (ESG) compliance. "ESG will remain for years to come as companies focus on reducing their carbon footprint and their overall impact on the environment. The emphasis on ESG is at the forefront of a lot of discussions nowadays as companies look to partner with people who, like them, invest in green technologies and initiatives," Oertel says. This will entail companies needing to be more involved in the entire life cycle of products and packaging.

For South African businesses, load shedding and high fuel prices remain a huge problem. As a result, Ellappan expects to see them focusing a lot more on efficient management of fuel usage and renewable energies. "Burning fuel in generators is not the way to go."

The industry is, of course, keeping a watchful eye on tensions between certain countries as in the event of these escalating, new policies that impact trade could be introduced. Trade agreements or changes in tariffs, for example, will affect the flow of goods and the cost of doing business. "Companies need to be aware of these developments and strategically apply the required focus on the aspects that will impact their market in the most effective way," Oertel maintains. "All in all, supply chain business models seem to be changing and the need for flexibility and agility is becoming key to servicing clients. E-commerce is continually growing. This, in the end, leads to the demand for faster and more flexible and reliable supply chains." Ellappan agrees: "Coming out of COVID-19, together with various global supply chain issues, businesses are forced to become more efficient. The benefits of digital transformation, risk management and ESG will most certainly talk back to a business's bottom line results and sustainability." •

WEBTECH



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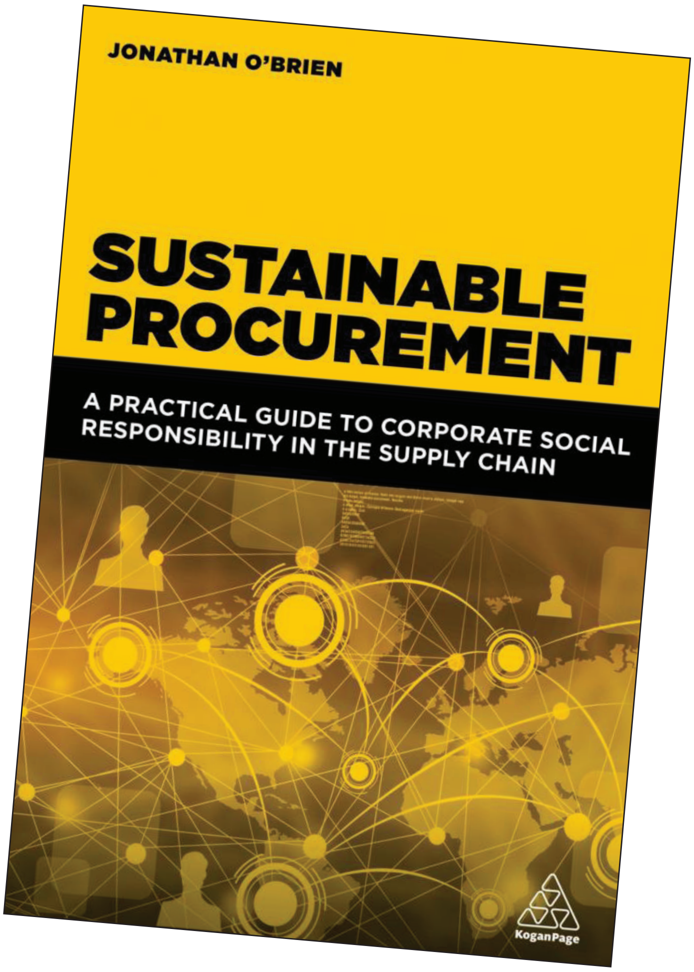
Sustainable Procurement

Written by leading procurement expert and best-selling author Jonathan O'Brien, this practical guide outlines how to establish sustainable procurement as a key strategic enabler to reduce supply-side risk and drive action to respond to detrimental impacts in the supply base.



The business case for sustainability is clear and organisations are responding to the imperative to act. But with 50-70 percent of the change needed involving the supply base, procurement and supply chain functions are critical to success.

Sustainable Procurement explains how procurement and supply chain professionals can develop existing best practice approaches to make supply-side sustainability a reality. Based on the OMEIA® Sustainable Procurement process, this book provides a step-by-step and highly practical methodology that embeds sustainable procurement into existing proven procurement approaches. It also provides crucial new tools that equip and enable those in this field to drive highly effective supply-side sustainability.

By exploring the current landscape and the business case for sustainability, *Sustainable Procurement* makes sense of how we can translate good ambition into prioritised grassroots-level change. Guidance is offered on how procurement can help redefine what an organisation does based on what needs to change in its supply base.

There are extensive resources to help determine hotspot risk areas, assess suppliers and determine and prioritise where to direct our precious resources. It also provides new models for 'sustainable value engineering' to help organisations transform what and how they buy.

About the author

Jonathan O'Brien is the CEO of Positive Purchasing Ltd, an international procurement and negotiation consultancy and training provider, and is based in Plymouth, UK. With over 30 years of experience, he has helped global organisations increase their purchasing capability through training, education and working directly with practitioners and executive teams. He is also the author of *Category Management in Purchasing, Negotiation for Procurement and Supply Chain Professionals, Supplier Relationship Management* and *The Buyer's Toolkit,* all published by Kogan Page. •

5 tips on how to deal with unpredictable supply chain lead times

By Jan Tukker, Principal at BusinessChain

Supply chains have felt the effects of COVID-19, shipping escalations, erratic supply and the war in Ukraine. For supply chain planners, it's an impossible task to forecast a smooth flow of goods. There are, however, some approaches that can minimise the impact of this volatility.

Getting the balance right between too much inventory and being out of stock is a challenge. Each industry has specific dependencies that need to be carefully considered. For example, the oil industry is traditionally quite volatile, but add in currency fluctuations on top of the Ukraine war, and the supply of this precious commodity is made significantly more difficult to manage. Unfortunately, politics impacts supply chains, forcing businesses to make excessive buying decisions that they would not normally make.To mitigate against volatile lead times, consider the following pointers.

1. Measure your supplier's lead time performance and react to the data

Volatility has a habit of making planners overreact, buffering too much resulting in overstock positions. The worst lead time is often used in the planning cycle. The inventory holding costs of this approach are high, often created by how planners are measured. Stock holding costs should be one of the metrics for which planners are held accountable. Using statistics to create the required planning lead time based on data and confidence levels is far superior to emotively plugging in a 'fat' lead time.

2. Understand your suppliers' capabilities

Having a comprehensive understanding of your key suppliers' production capabilities, risks and performance is critical to understanding how to react to supply chain disruptions. Have a formal supplier capability programme to help make better strategic procurement decisions.

3. Win-win

Supply chains are all about relationships. If your organisation has a transactional approach to dealing with suppliers, you are likely to gain a short-term cost advantage, but unlikely to have support from those suppliers when things get bumpy.

4. Consistency

Supply chains thrive on a smooth, consistent flow of products to customers. Erratic processes will lead to out of stocks and too much stock. Drive for consistency even if the lead times are slightly slower than you'd want.

5. E-commerce fulfilment reliability

In the super quick 'I want it now' shopping world, lead time really is king. Measuring and managing last-mile lead time and promising your customers a delivery day that is very likely to occur will keep you in the game. Couriers whose operational capabilities are not carefully managed will likely have your customers feel the effects of unreliable deliveries. When selecting a courier (or courier platform), make sure you ask to see their standard operating procedures (SOPs). If they don't have SOPs, they are likely to let you down.

Final considerations

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) across supply chains is making a real difference. With so many stock-keeping units (SKUs) to manage, people and the systems they use are unable to effectively get to each planning element without the use of some form of AI.

An integrated supply chain, driven by customer buying behaviour and demand, acknowledging each node's capabilities is the ultimate goal. There is no use in optimising one node.

Listen to the data, acknowledge the people element when collaborating and adopt a continuous improvement mindset. •

Better infrastructure and the fate of fleets

By Justin Manson, Sales Director, Webfleet

Government's most recent pledges to begin the procurement of services in extensive new build and upgrade of road infrastructure offers a glimmer of hope to businesses in the transport and construction industries.

Part of the reality with South Africa's failing electricity and water systems is that the facilities in place were not originally designed to serve as large a population as today's. The roads bear an even greater burden due to the disrupted rail network provider currently working to rescue routes and refurbish equipment. This should make these revamped rail routes more relevant to modern mining, industrial and commercial operations that could benefit from its potential cost-effectiveness.

Over the coming three years, according to the Finance Ministry's annual budget published in February, the government will be spending an estimated R903-billion on hard infrastructure. Most of this will be focused on strategic transport and logistics, and water and sanitation.

Earlier in February, the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral) announced that it had awarded four long-overdue, major construction tenders for projects on the new N2 Wild Coast highway in the Eastern Cape and the N11 in KwaZulu-Natal. Sanral's investment creates much-needed capacity in the country's major coastal economies, boosting the construction industry while opening a key artery of trade. It forms part of a broader government programme mandated to uplift the economic growth of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

The roads agency states: "The much shorter and quicker N2 route will dramatically reduce traffic carbon emissions, travel time and costs. The one-and-a-half to three-hour reduction in travel time for light-to-heavy vehicles using the current N2 and R61 routes between KZN and EC will result in a projected time cost saving to the economy of R1,5-billion per annum. The new route will also open access to the Pondoland region, boosting regional and local socio-economic development, particularly in tourism and agriculture."

The 410km N2 Wild Coast Highway, running between the N2 Gonubie Interchange and the Mtamvuna River bridge, is a key step in government's Strategic Infrastructure Projects SIP-3, South-Eastern Node and Corridor Development. While new roads are very well desired, refurbishment of existing infrastructure is also certainly needed and will drastically improve the safety of passing motorists.

In the recently published maiden Webfleet Road Safety Report, where we surveyed a large sample of fleet operators, it emerged that 7 percent of accidents are caused by poor road conditions. If we can bring this down 2-3 percent, we would save thousands of lives each year.

Government, supported by the private sector and local communities, must also urgently repair the existing rail infrastructure. Abandoned stations, overgrown gantries and rusted tracks could all be brought back to life to further ease congestion and begin the drastic improvement in road surface quality across the nation.

Fleet owners should be preparing for a massive evolution in South African logistics. They will have to contend with more customers upholding stricter contractual conditions, like large multinationals. Lack of insurance or vehicle telematics, for instance, will be a non-starter. Managers and those utilising their service will want to keep an eye on the live on-board diagnostics data, which will be relayed back to central command for directors and customers to see the entire operation in detail, making for quicker and better decisions on live route planning, vehicle health and driver well-being.

The job now, during the construction of this new infrastructure, is to collect as much data as we can throughout the development, ensuring that live traffic information is captured and fed back to road users as close to real-time as possible. Eventually, through technological refinement, devices fitted to monitor vehicle statistics will become so sensitive, they will pick up that a vehicle has gone through a pothole.

If this can be mapped out, it could expedite local government's maintenance schedule to further improve urban roads, the very heartbeat of the economy. •

Mitigating currency risk in international trade

By Linda Bird-Duxbury, Director at Leading Edge,www.leadingedge.mu

The average daily trading volume of global foreign exchange has surged to approximately $7-trillion and is by far the biggest market in the world.If you are involved in any aspect of international business, be it freight, international trade, insurance, warehousing and/or customs clearance, you are exposed to currency fluctuation.

Many people in the supply chain feel that currency and exchange rates are a topic only for bankers and their finance departments to give consideration to and many businesses are exposed to currency risk without evening realising it. With recent wild swings in global currencies, exchange rate risk is very real and many companies should give serious consideration to mitigating their foreign exchange losses.

Managing currency risk can bring benefits to your business by protecting your cash flow and profit margins. South African exporters benefited during the COVID-19 pandemic through the depreciation of the South African rand against other major currencies. When converting global currencies such as the US dollar into ZAR, these companies made unexpected additional profits as a result.

The South African Reserve Bank allows South African exporters to hold foreign currency accounts in South Africa. This provides benefits such as paying for imports and/or freight from a Corporate Cash Management (CCM) account or Client Foreign Currency (CFC) account, which eliminates hedging of ZAR to USD. However, this benefit is only extended to exporters and, often, due to cash flow issues, many South African exporters have to convert their foreign exchange earnings immediately upon receipt.

Steps to managing your business's currency risk

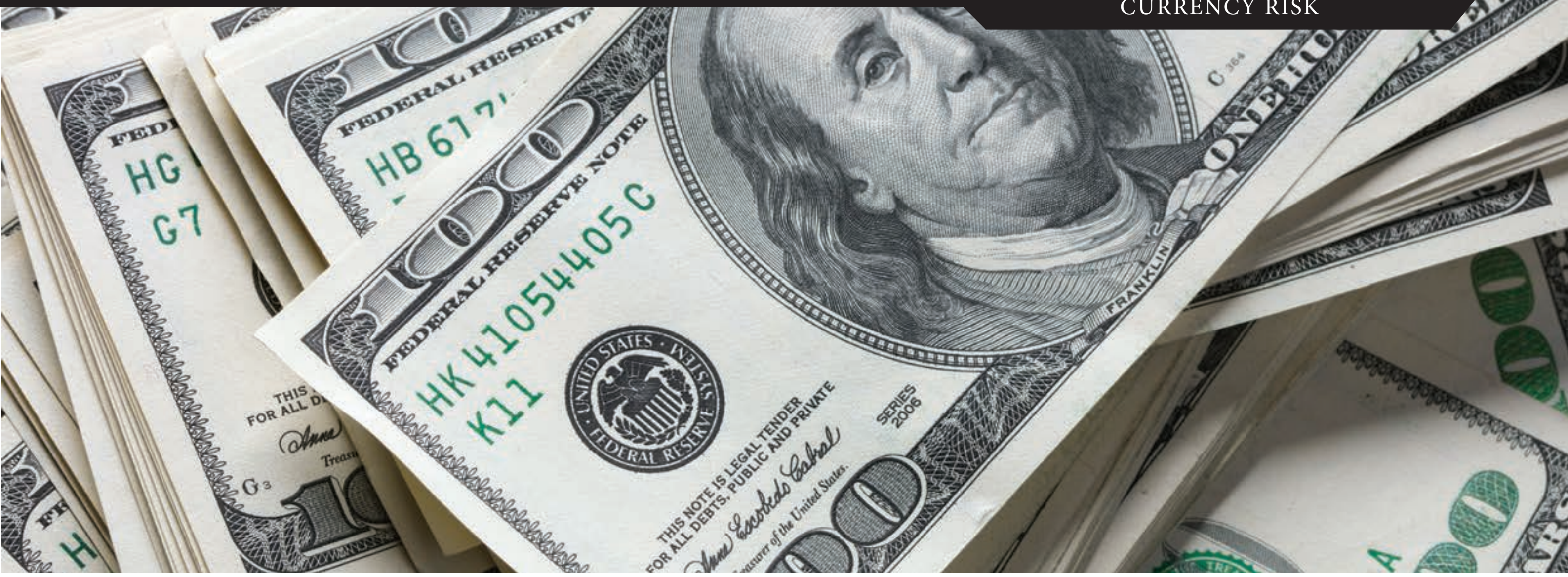
Understanding where and how currency fluctuations affect a company's cash flow is not as straightforward as it may seem. Many different factors influence exchange rates, from the political aspect of the US elections to the economic issues relating to BREXIT and macroeconomic trends.

Understanding your operating cycle – is essential to understanding where the forex risk exists. Freight payments, imports, export earnings and possibly the payment of taxes in foreign countries should all be taken into account. Additionally, the payment terms offered to international clients and the cost of banking should also be considered.

Managing your exposure to currency risk – should include the risk exposure before a deal, purchase or transactions are agreed upon and the actual risk that exists after the deal is completed. Therefore, you would need to have an understanding of pre- and post-shipment transaction risk and the level of risk to which you are exposing your company. Transaction risk is the simplest currency risk to measure and manage. These occur because of the timing difference between contractual commitment and actual receipt of funds. Transaction risk can be hedged with financial instruments including currency futures, swaps contracts and/or options. Hedging means that you use financial instruments, such as currency or FX forward cover, to lock in the currency rate so that it remains the same over a specified period.

Spot cover – refers to foreign exchange transactions where one currency is bought or sold against payment in another currency at a specified rate, with settlement taking place two business days later. The two-day settlement process, commonly referred to as 'spot', is an international practice and is due to differences in time zones and the time required by banks to ensure that settlement occurs correctly.

Same-day and next-day value deals – where urgent currency payments or receipts need to be processed, one-day value or even same-day value exchange rates may be provided, depending on the currency cut-off times (typically 11am for same-day transactions).



Foreign exchange contracts (FECs) – are used to hedge exposures to exchange rate fluctuations by 'locking in' future foreign exchange rates. FECs are contractual agreements between the bank and its clients to exchange a specified amount of one foreign currency for another at a predetermined exchange rate on a specified future date. There are various types of FECs that can be used depending on the client's requirements:

- A fixed FEC can be used only on a specified maturity date.
- A partly optional FEC can be used within a prespecified period between two future dates.
- A fully optional FEC can be used at any time between the date of establishing the FEC and the specified maturity date.

Swaps – a swap is the simultaneous purchase and sale of identical amounts of one foreign currency for another, but on two different value dates, either spot against a forward date or one forward date against another forward date.

Early receipt (or pre-take up) – swaps are used to bring forward the maturity date of an existing FEC.

Extension (or rollover) – swaps are used to extend the maturity date of an existing FEC to a later date.

Long-dated forwards – are FECs with a maturity date longer than 12 months forward.

Currency derivatives – can also be used to hedge exposure to exchange rate fluctuations, but are fundamentally different from FECs. Whereas the parties to an FEC are locked into a future transaction in a forward contract, the buyer of an option contract has the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell a fixed amount of currency at a fixed exchange rate on a predetermined date in the future.

The option holder (buyer) can therefore choose the better exchange rate – either the prevailing rate in the market at the time or the price specified in the option contract. There are two main types of option contracts, namely call options and put options – these can be used in various combinations to provide structured solutions to meet a client's hedging requirements. While currency derivatives provide greater flexibility as a hedging instrument, they also have a cost in the form of a premium that is payable at the time of purchasing the option contract.With a call option, the buyer has the right, but not the obligation, to buy the underlying currency at a fixed exchange rate on a predetermined future date.

Currency futures – or a CFs contract is an agreement that gives the buyer the right to buy and sell an underlying currency at a fixed exchange rate at a specified date in the future. One party to the agreement agrees to buy the CF contract at a specified exchange rate and the other agrees to sell it at the expiry date. The underlying instrument of a CFs contract is the rate of exchange between one unit of foreign currency and the South African rand. Contracts are cash settled in ZAR and no physical delivery of the foreign currency takes place. CF contracts are traded on the South African JSE and have margin requirements that the client must provide.

The impact of foreign exchange risk will influence the preferred sources of funding for a South African company trading in global markets. When the performance of the company is negatively affected by consumer behaviour and the ability of the organisation to reprice its goods in a volatile forex market, it is worthwhile to determine whether the company has economic foreign exchange risk that is embedded in its service and goods. •

Cactos signs deal with Logitri to optimise its carbon-neutral logistics operations

Cactos, a producer of smart energy storage systems, has signed a deal worth over 1 million euros with Finnish third-party logistics giant Logitri to install 20 Cactos One smart energy storage units at its logistics centre in Tuusula, Finland. The storage system will provide 2.5MWh of energy storage capacity, securing the electricity supply of Logitri's logistics centre. The units will also help to level out consumption peaks caused by charging its fleet of electric vehicles, which includes Finland's first-ever electric semi-truck, ordered for Logitri's transportation company Storemen Logistics. Cactos's scope of work includes the fabrication, installation, commissioning, operation, maintenance and financing of the smart energy storage system.

With a global logistics chain powered by electric vehicles and temperature-controlled warehousing, Logitri searched for new ways to secure its electricity supply and optimise its own consumption amid the ongoing energy crisis. With an objective to future-proof its infrastructure as it moves towards a fully electrified fleet, the ability to maximise the use of clean energy, manage cost exposure as well as levelling of consumption peaks were each of particular importance to Logitri in finding the optimal solution.

Cactos's smart energy storage systems enable cost saving and flexibility by utilising intraday electricity price fluctuations and releasing stored solar energy generated from Logitri's 958kWp solar array, one of the largest of its kind in Finland, when electricity prices and consumption are at their highest.

Cactos will deliver two types of its electricity storage systems to Logitri – the 100kWh Cactos One Classic unit made from recycled Tesla EV batteries and the brand new 130kWh Cactos One Cardo unit. Cactos One Cardo units use first-life lithium iron phosphate battery modules that Cactos manufactures at its factory in Muhos, Finland. This new technology enables Cactos to increase its production output in line with clients' demands and needs, whilst continuing to offer the optimal second-life application for EV batteries with their Cactos One Classic.

Once installed, each of the units is controlled and optimised by the cloud computing service, Cactos Spine, allowing for a fully autonomous operation of the units. Cactos Spine continually seeks efficiencies and savings opportunities, automatically optimising the operation of each energy storage unit in the background on a 24/7 basis. •

FedEx to open first Advanced Capability Community in India

FedEx has announced plans to open its first Advanced Capability Community (ACC) in Hyderabad, India in 2023. The opening is part of a broader multi-year initiative to strengthen the recruitment and development of the company's diverse workforce all around the world and build a more efficient and agile organisation to enhance how it delivers for its customers.

FedEx plans to set up ACCs in different parts of the world in the future. Locations will be selected based on business needs and access to highly skilled talent pools. Each community is planned to be staffed by full-time FedEx team members across many functional areas who will provide shared services to support the technological and digital requirements of the entire FedEx enterprise. The digital innovation these communities will provide will enable the company to provide even greater value in the global supply chain ecosystem.

The Indian government's focus on providing world-class infrastructure to build a technology-driven and knowledge-based economy makes the country an ideal location for the first ACC, which will be situated in Hyderabad and is anticipated to launch in the second half of 2023. The state of Telangana and its capital, Hyderabad, has been focusing on its engineering and digital enterprise talent pool to support international organisations that want to set up a presence there.

"FedEx is creating the world's most flexible, efficient and intelligent supply chain for our customers," says Raj Subramaniam, FedEx Corp. President and CEO. "The opening of our first Advanced Capability Community in India, a critical market for FedEx, will enable us to be faster, more flexible and secure as we innovate digitally. This move supports our long-term vision to grow our Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa business as well as provide opportunities to develop technology for the benefit of our global customers." •

CHEP recognised as a leader in the circular economy

Brambles, a global leader in supply chain solutions operating locally through the CHEP brand, has been recognised as one of the world's most sustainable companies for the third consecutive year. The company climbed to third place on Corporate Knights' Global 100 list for 2023, which was announced at the World Economic Forum conference in Davos, Switzerland.

Marietjie Brown, Sustainability and Government Affairs Lead for CHEP India, Middle East, Turkey and Africa.

Launched in 2005, the annual ranking by Corporate Knights assesses and compares 6,720 of the world's largest publicly traded companies based on the social and environmental impact of their operations, revenues and investments.

Brambles' performance in 2023, which improved from 10th to third position in the overall global ranking, reflects the positive impact of its circular business model on global supply chains. In South Africa, this circular model has come to life through CHEP's collaborative 'share and reuse' approach, which aims to move more with less, thus creating working solutions to the prevalent waste problem in the world.

Graham Chipchase, Brambles Chief Executive Officer, says: "The release of our 2025 Sustainability Strategy signalled our intention to build on oursustainable circular model to pursue a regenerative vision."

"Our intent as a nature-positive company is driven largely by our efforts to create smarter and more sustainable supply chains. Being named the world's third most sustainable company bears testament to our commitment to providing scalable solutions for a resource constrained world," adds Marietjie Brown, Sustainability and Government Affairs Lead for CHEP India, Middle East, Turkey and Africa.

Toby Heaps, Corporate Knights' CEO, states:"As a leader in carbon productivity and board diversity and with 100 percent sustainable investments and revenue shaping its business, Brambles is demonstrating how companies can reap financial rewards while making socially and environmentally responsible business decisions. As the transition to a sustainable economy ramps up, Global 100 companies like Brambles are in the lead and positioned for continued success in the future."

In December, Brambles also reconfirmed its continued support of the UN Global Compact, integrating these principles into its business strategy, culture and daily operations. •

Bolloré Africa Logistics rebrands to Africa Global Logistics

Logistics company Bolloré Africa Logistics has changed its name to Africa Global Logistics (AGL). The rebranding comes after Bolloré was bought out by freight and logistics group Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) in December 2022. AGL, within the MSC Group, aims to contribute to the sustainable transformation of Africa and emerging markets, thanks to its global, customised logistics solution.

As a multimodal logistics operator working in port, logistics, maritime and rail in Africa, AGL seeks to participate in the transformation of Africa by providing customised logistics solutions, improving the connectivity of territories and contributing to the establishment of a virtuous logistics ecosystem for all its stakeholders. AGL will continue to provide its local and international customers with a competitive integrated logistics network. To this end, it will improve the productivity of the terminals it operates to better serve all of its customers.The company will also develop multimodal logistics solutions comprising rail, road, air and river to meet the expectations of its customers and meet the challenges of logistics.

AGL has over 250 logistics and maritime agencies, 22 port and rail concessions, 66 dry ports and two river terminals. Through its network, the company designs and implements solutions adapted to the needs of its customers along the value chain, including less accessible areas.

Therefore, the company will accelerate its investments to develop its capacities and facilitate the import and export of goods and will respond to the challenges of intra-African trade, energy transition, demographic growth, improvement of the living environment and digitalisation of Africa. With its 21,000 employees in 49 countries, the company is set to deploy a development strategy that will continue to promote the SME ecosystem by unlocking the potential of young African talent.

Concerned about its environmental footprint, the company will also make sustainable investments, implement programmes to set up eco-responsibility in transport (Green Terminal) and mobilise its employees, subcontractors and suppliers to reduce the impact of its activities on the environment.

"This new brand reinforces our ambition to be a trusted logistics partner for our customers in Africa and around the world while underlining our commitment to innovate and participate alongside Africa's states and partners in the transformation of the continent," says Phillippe Labonne, CEO of AGL. •

Bidvest acquires the Roan Group of Companies

Bidvest recently acquired the Roan Systems Group of Companies (RSG), effective 1 April, 2023. The South-African based Roan Systems Group of Companies has evolved over the last 25 years to become an industry leader in in-line matrix and thermal transfer printing, enterprise mobility, radio frequency identification (RFID), point of sale (POS), mobile device management, Internet of Things (IoT) and print and apply solutions for a wide variety of customers' needs across the supply chain. The group offers products, solutions and services to meet the demands of IT, production automation, FMCG, health care, automotive and various other sectors and applications.

Colin Adendorff, CEO of Bidvest Data, Print and Packaging, says: "We welcome the Roan Systems Group of Companies, which will fall under the stewardship of Simon Grisdale in the Bidvest Data, Print and Packaging Division. "This acquisition will provide great opportunities for synergies and growth for the various companies within the Bidvest Data, Print and Packaging Division." •

The new breed of start-ups championing sustainability

Every year since 2017, the local entrepreneurial multiverse has celebrated incredible new businesses in the hotly contested South Africa's Top 5 Most Exciting Startups Awards. One of the most exciting and important areas in which a new class of start-ups is emerging is the field of sustainability. This shift is clear in the inclusion of CURBON in the most recent Top 5 Most Exciting Startups.

Steffen Burrows, CURBON's Director and Co-founder.

CURBON has developed a solution that calculates the cost of offsetting the carbon footprint of online purchases, from production to doorstep delivery, and allows shoppers to offset their online purchases by purchasing carbon credits that are then used to finance climate change projects around the world.

"Carbon offsetting is important for addressing climate change challenges now because it provides an immediate solution to reducing carbon emissions while affording us the breathing room to transition to more sustainable energy sources and reduce our overall carbon footprint in the long term," says Steffen Burrows, CURBON's Director and Co-founder.

"We're focusing on e-commerce carbon offsetting made simple through plug-ins. We've grappled with barriers to entry; from a B2B perspective, it's zero cost to the company, we can integrate on all leading platforms and set up to go live in minutes," notes Burrows.

This is where CURBON makes a huge impact in making climate action cost-effective and directly accessible by helping people reduce the carbon impact of their daily activities (such as online shopping) without requiring them to make any major behavioural changes.

'Carbon offsetting bridges the gap between where we are now and where we want to be in the future. It provides funding for the development of sustainable projects and technologies that promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and reforestation," Burrows enthuses.

"We want to do things that make an impact. Every step of our carbon offsetting method has been carefully verified by leading international oversight regulatory bodies. This means every company that adopts the CURBON plug-in and their customers can trust that every transaction made is an active contribution toward a low-carbon future, visible through specific projects selected for their potential in offsetting carbon equivalent emissions and empowering communities," he concludes. •

Hybrid RTG retrofit for Baltic Hub

Liebherr RTG at the Baltic Hub, Poland.

The Baltic Hub, formerly DCT Gdansk, has commissioned Liebherr Container Cranes Ltd. to retrofit a hybrid green energy storage solution on one of its Liebherr rubber type gantry cranes (RTGs). The terminal has 18 Liebherr RTGs at the port and the initial purchase will allow the Baltic Hub to assess the technology with a view to further retrofitting its fleet of Liebherr RTGs with the system.

The retrofit sees the addition of a Liduro energy storage system along with exchanging the existing 13L genset with a smaller 8L genset. This will allow the RTG to operate at the same speed and productivity, whilst reducing operating costs and delivering substantial environmental benefits, including a reduction in emissions and carbon footprint.

At the heart of the system is the Liduro LES 200, a capacitor system designed and developed by Liebherr-Electronics and Drives GmbH. The system is designed to capture and store energy generated during hoist lowering and braking that would otherwise be wasted. The stored energy is then deployed during the hoisting cycle to reduce the overall demand on the genset, allowing for a reduction in fuel consumed and a reduction in emissions. Dual layer capacitors are capable of rapidly charging and discharging many times without a drop in performance, making them an ideal solution for applications requiring high power and short-duration energy storage, such as that found in container handling.

By utilising this innovative technology, the RTG crane will have access to reliable, high-power energy during peak demand periods. The system is modular and depending on the operational requirements of the port, single or multiple units may be installed on a single RTG.

The Liduro energy storage system is available on new Liebherr RTGs or can be retrofitted to existing Liebherr RTGs through Liebherr specialist retrofit and upgrade teams, Liebherr Transform. •

RCL Foods to sell Vector Logistics business for R1.25bn

Danish fund manager A.P. Moller Capital has finalised a deal to acquire frozen logistics operator Vector Logistics from South African food producer RCL Foods for R1.25-billion. Vector Logistics is a prominent South African frozen logistics operator providing multi-temperature warehousing and distribution, supply chain intelligence and sales and merchandising solutions.

In a joint statement, the companies said that the purchase by A.P. Moller Capital provides Vector Logistics with an opportunity to accelerate its mission of 'Going Beyond' in supply chain expertise and logistics services, including expanding further afield to meet growing demand in Africa.

Paul Cruickshank, CEO of RCL Foods, comments: "We believe that A.P. Moller Capital is the ideal custodian to support Vector Logistics' success because of its extensive operational and investment track record in Africa and the infrastructure sector and the strong alignment between the parties' respective ways of working, business values and transformational focus. In addition, this is an important step for RCL Foods in our journey to reshape the portfolio."

According to Vector Logistics' MD, Chris Creed, having the backing of A.P. Moller Capital provides significant potential for greater impact."Given our vision of transforming the logistics industry, A.P. Moller Capital would be able to help us move up the supply chain maturity curve, particularly from a technological perspective, to support growth and to support a strong environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda to ensure a sustainable future for our business and its people."

Joe Nielsen, Partner at A.P. Moller Capital, adds: "Vector Logistics' reliable operations enable maintenance of the cold chain for food products, which increases shelf life and reduces food waste. We see a growth opportunity for Vector Logistics and we believe that our experience and our network will help to drive this growth."

The implementation of the sale is subject to approval by the relevant competition authorities and the South African Reserve Bank. •

DP World and Caspian Containers partner to help digitise international trade

Mike Bhaskaran, Group Chief Technology Officer, Digital Technology, DP World and Murat Seitpesinov, Chairman of the Integral Petroleum Group.

DP World has signed a cooperation agreement with the Caspian Containers Company SA (CCCSA), a subsidiary of the Integral Petroleum Group, to help digitise trade across the Greater Caspian Region and parts of Africa by using innovative technology to enable the booking and tracking of shipments.

Through the implementation of DP World's SeaRates, a digital platform that allows the process of identifying and booking cargo routes to take place in seconds, cargo owners will be able to compare quotes from multiple providers and make informed decisions on the optimal route for their shipments. Serving as a 'digital freight forwarder', the SeaRates platform will enable CCCSA's customers to monitor the status and movement details of a container at any point during its journey, allowing full visibility as well as the efficient movement of items from A to B.

Customers input the place of loading and required destination. SeaRates then offers the most streamlined way of making that delivery from its network of freight forwarders. It provides multiple shipment options to customers to enable them to check vessel schedules and track their shipments once the booking is made. If rates are not immediately available, SeaRates connects to Cargoes Logistics, a digital solution providing access to instant online cargo booking, to work on a tailor-made quote based on DP World-owned assets being used to ship a container.

In addition to supporting the digitising of trade, the partnership will further strengthen ties in the two growing markets of the Greater Caspian Region and Africa. The particular focus will seek to attract customers for project cargo shipments in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan, as well as Mozambique, DRC, Nigeria, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, Ghana and Kenya. The lack of standardisation in many Greater Caspian and African countries when it comes to transportation and logistics has made it difficult for customers to compare prices and services from different providers. As a result of the partnership with DP World's SeaRates, CCCSA's customers will be able to compare quotes from multiple providers and make informed decisions in minutes. •

BP to exit SA jet fuel market

British Petroleum (BP) has announced that it's withdrawing from serving airports in South Africa. Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) comments: "We can confirm that BP started officially engaging ACSA more than a year ago in February 2022 with respect to its change in global strategy. At the time, BP indicated its intention to exit the current arrangements."

In April 2022, the oil company informed ACSA that it would resign as the managing participant of the consortia at OR Tambo International Airport and Cape Town International and terminate its lease agreements for the operations of the fuel facilities at King Phalo and George Airports. "This, in our understanding, had nothing to do with Russia or Ukraine (nor the non-refuelling incident in South Africa), but BP's global strategy which was communicated to ACSA in early 2022," reports ACSA.

As BP continues to wind down its operations, it has collaborated with and assisted ACSA and the Fuel Consortium to transition to new jet fuel suppliers. This will be done across ASCA's airports to ensure business continuity.

Current fuel suppliers and airlines have been notified.

ACSA said in a statement that its legislative mandate is to ensure the availability of jet fuel at its airports; this is done through licence agreements with oil companies. The relevant oil companies that have concluded their agreements are bound by regulation (NERSA licenses) to ensure business continuity through the transition to incoming suppliers and operators. ACSA and oil companies are progressing with implementing these transitionary arrangements. •

Webfleet launches in Botswana

Bridgestone's fleet management solution, Webfleet, is launching its third African presence in Botswana by partnering with Kgare Digital to bring high-end tech skills, much-needed investment and jobs to the country. Webfleet's partnership in Botswana joins the company's presence in South Africa and Namibia, the first two African markets where Webfleet started to conduct business to improve logistics client business efficiency while contributing to the safety of road users.

"Being part of Bridgestone, we recognised the opportunity to leverage the companies' large African presence to expand the telematics and connected vehicle solutions we provide as well," says Webfleet South Africa Sales Director, Justin Manson. "With three markets now offering dedicated resources to transport and logistics customers in those markets, it's the right time to expand in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region."

Telematics will provide a similar service to what is being offered in Namibia, from basic vehicle tracking to comprehensive fleet management, including live diagnostic data collection and real-time route optimisation. Additional advanced solutions, like onboard cameras and other hardware will be brought in on an as-needed basis or from customer requests. Customers can expect to see improvements in fuel and maintenance costs, safer drivers and road users, and a boost in productivity.

In Botswana, Webfleet has partnered with Kgare Digital, the on-the-ground team that will provide sales capabilities, training and delivery of services. Kgare Digital's General Manager, Malebogo Busang, says the investment by Webfleet will not only provide quality jobs in the sector, but see the beginning of a new sector. "I think we are at a good state of readiness from a sales perspective and we already have a team of technicians, IT support, finance and other admin functions," Busang says. "Tracking services are still very new to the market, so this team will be part of the vital journey to build advanced capabilities in telematics and the logistics sector. •

Smart, zero-emission bolting solutions optimise sustainability

Mines and general industry are transforming to automated, zero-carbon, battery-driven machines, equipment and tools in a bid to achieve their economic and environmental goals. Atlas Copco Industrial Technique's range of smart, high-quality bolt-tightening hardware and software solutions contributes to the sustainability of these sectors across South Africa by optimising productivity and efficiencies, increasing personnel safety and shrinking carbon footprints.

Cornelius Coetzee, Regional General Manager at Atlas Copco Industrial Technique.

The scope of supply includes the bolting tool plus two smart batteries and a smart charger; while one battery is operational, the other can be charged from the grid or a renewable energy source. Supporting the tools are fully customisable software packages that offer on-screen operator instructions, weekly or monthly reporting as well as more complex offerings such as remote viewing and automatic torque setting selection.

Regional General Manager at Industrial Technique Cornelius Coetzee says that mobile capital equipment operating in the stringent plant and mine environments requires regular maintenance or repairs. "When these machines and equipment have to be moved off-site, productivity takes a dive." It is subsequently vital that the necessary maintenance or repair work is completed as fast as possible. By switching to a smart bolting tool solution, customers will benefit from improved efficiency, accuracy and safety. Coetzee explains that Industrial Technique's range of bolting tools is calibrated in its local in-house laboratory in accordance with OEM specifications using reference equipment that meets South African (SANAS) and global standards. "What this means is that each bolt can be tightened accurately with only a single pull of the trigger as opposed to multiple attempts. By even just halving the time means that two machines can effectively be assembled in the same time it would have taken to complete a single unit. Mines and plants can get back into operation in half the time, doubling their productivity."

In addition, Industrial Technique's software solutions work in parallel with the hardware. The fully customisable bolting tool software system makes it possible to view and identify machinery located anywhere in the country and see how many bolts need loosening and/or tightening from Industrial Technique's Gauteng facility.

Industrial Technique's 'easy start' programme trains operators on the optimal use of the tools. The training team also spends time on the job site, addressing operator expectations and ensuring that they are comfortable with the tools. •

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