



MAN Truck & Bus SRM (Sales Region Middle East & Africa)

VW trucks prove effective for City Couriers

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Launched 24 years ago by KwaZulu-Natal entrepreneur, Richard Fisher, City Couriers has grown into one of South Africa's top logistics companies, serving a broad spectrum of clients, including several leading local and international companies.

MAN Truck & Bus (S.A.) (Pty) Ltd
Group Marketing
105 Andre Greyvenstein Avenue
Isando 1601

Backed by its fleet of 147 truck tractors, 235 trailers with a total of 750 units, the balance being made up of various size rigid vehicles, City Couriers is a 24/7 operation with a nation-wide and cross-border footprint boasting 17 distribution depots, over 1500 employees and a customer satisfaction rating that consistently sits between 97-100%.

If you have any questions please contact

Marja Brunniger
marja.brunniger@za.man-mn.com
Tel. +27 11. 928-6841

www.man-mn.co.za
www.mantruckandbus.com/media

Despite the highly competitive nature of the logistics industry and the increasingly margin-sensitive operating environment for commercial truck fleets, City Couriers has experienced significant growth since 1988.

With its headquarters in River Horse Valley, Durban, City Couriers today offers a diverse range of truck-transport services including linehaul distribution, express delivery and courier services, truck rental, specialised low-bed transport and warehousing.

Adopted ponies

In early 2011, City Couriers acquired the movable assets and client-base of an insolvent logistics company. The deal included the absorption of 22 Volkswagen Constellation truck tractors into the City Courier fleet.

According to Anthony Naicker, Fleet Director at City Couriers, "at the time of the acquisition, we were unfamiliar with the VW truck brand but our confidence in the vehicle was boosted when we learned that MAN had taken ownership of the VW Truck & Bus franchise globally. City Couriers has a longstanding relationship with MAN and our fleet includes dozens of MAN derivatives which have proven to be benchmark vehicles in terms of fuel efficiency and reliability."

The 22 VW Constellation 19.320 4x2 truck tractors had each notched up in excess of 350 000km and were no longer covered by a factory warranty. “We invested a large sum in comprehensively refurbishing and servicing the VW’s in our own workshop to get them up to our fleet standards,” explains Naicker. “By March 2011, they were on the road in the City Linehaul fleet, pulling our custom-built volume semi-trailers carrying an average load of 16-17 tons. “

In the months hence, the ‘adopted’ City Couriers VW Constellation’s have earned a reputation as fuel saving champions in their weight class, says Naicker.

Room to move

“The VW Constellation has the tallest and most ergonomic sleeper-cab in its class which not only pleases our drivers, but assists the aerodynamics of the rig; the high roof, with an aero-kit fitted, helping to deflect air more effectively over the top of the 130 cubic-metre trailer,” he adds. “This helps lower fuel consumption considerably. The VW’s ease-of-driving is also a surprise. It’s like driving a VW bakkie, straightforward and no problems were presented when training our drivers how to get the best out the truck.

“The driveline combination of a 320-horsepower Cummins engine and a 16-speed ZF transmission is ideal for our specialised linehaul application. We place much stock in what our drivers say about our vehicles and they are genuinely impressed with the pulling power and comfort of the VW 19.320.”

Fuelling the spirit

With depots as far afield as Windhoek and Gaborone, City Couriers insists on swift dealer support to keep its vehicle uptime at optimum levels. “The City Couriers mission is to provide an efficient and cost effective service to all its customers and we expect the same commitment from our suppliers. MAN has a comprehensive dealer network across southern Africa and understands our urgency when parts are required, getting the necessary components to our depots within 24-hours, at highly competitive prices,” says Naicker.

MAN Truck & Bus (S.A.) (Pty) Ltd _____ Page 3 of 3

Now mid-way through their first service life, Naicker expects the VW Constellations to retire from the fleet at 700 000km. “We run a tight ship and monitor each vehicle’s daily performance as well as its total-cost-of-ownership. Thus far, the VW Constellation has served us well in all the right areas. Apart from the impressive CPK figures it delivers, the VW 19.320 keeps our drivers happy, giving them a quality driving experience and fuelling their ‘king of the road’ spirit.”

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For further information

www.mantruckandbus.com/press

The Transport Efficiency Program from MAN Truck & Bus

The amount of transport and traffic on South Africa’s roads is rising. At the same time, the long-term dwindling of energy resources is making transport increasingly more expensive. As one of the world’s leading manufacturers of buses and trucks, MAN Truck & Bus makes an important contribution to the continued improvement of transport efficiency. MAN offers a comprehensive efficiency program to reduce your total costs of ownership. Transport efficiency, consolidated in the fields of technology, service, the driver and future expertise protects the environment and is added value for our customers.

CONSISTENTLY EFFICIENT

MAN Truck & Bus AG, headquartered in Munich, Germany, is the largest company of the MAN Group and a leading international supplier of efficient commercial vehicles and innovative transport solutions. In fiscal 2011 the enterprise, with around 34,000 employees, posted sales of more than 77,600 trucks and over 5,700 buses and bus chassis of the MAN and NEOPLAN brands worth 9 billion euros.