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INCREASING SERVICE AND SUPPORT CAPABILITIES

Before Pace Cranes became the National Distributor for major crane brands including Maeda and Sennebogen, the business was recognized for its crane service capabilities. Managing Director Anthony Heeks and Service Manager Patrick Mardaymootoo explain how workshop capabilities remain a key element of Pace Cranes' DNA.

"SOMETIMES I BELIEVE WE ARE A 'VICTIM of our own success'. With the successful sales of the Maeda product, many customers are not aware of our history and especially our service and maintenance capabilities, and think we only work with mini cranes. The other perception is we only work on the brands we represent, which is not true," said Anthony

Patrick, who has worked at Pace Cranes for close to 30 years, has seen many changes to our industry. "Over this time, we have steadily increased the service

work year on year and a lot of this work is major inspections. This work involves Maeda and Sennebogen, but we also work on other brands and pieces of equipment including telescopic handlers, forklifts and access equipment," he said.

"Many of our Maeda & Sennebogen customers have asked us to service and maintain other types of equipment in their fleet. We look after our customers and the work is always varied.

"We've been representing Sennebogen for 14 years now. With many reaching the

10-year age, these cranes are coming up to their major inspection period. Customers are starting to book these in which is increasing the workload. Many of the cranes are working nationally but they are still preferring to bring them back to us for the major inspections," said Patrick.

Anthony explains more about the servicing heritage of Pace Cranes and the company's commitment to an apprenticeship program.

Some of the key areas of focus for our service department are employment, staff

Over the 36 years in business Pace Cranes has always invested in apprentices.





Currently Pace Cranes has five tradespersons, three apprentices and a trade assistant in the workshop, and all are excellent

training and more importantly staff retention.

“Over the 36 years in business we have always invested in apprentices, and we have seen 27 apprentices in our program over this time. In recent years it has proved more difficult to attract potential candidates because I believe the schools are pushing for university educations and other career opportunities,” said Anthony.

“But this focus is changing with governments recognizing that together with the severe skills shortage, housing shortages and local manufacturing push, something has to change.

“Currently we have five tradespersons, three apprentices and a trade assistant in the workshop, and all are excellent. One apprentice is aiming to become a mechanical engineer and we’re helping him pursue that. We’ve got another who’s just come out of school, and he’s already completed a schooling pre apprenticeship,” he said.

“Several apprentices have stayed with us for many years with some branching out to work for other companies. A number have started their own businesses and are now successful.

Others are in senior roles, with other manufacturers and importers”. said Anthony.

The apprentices are taught with a step-by-step approach to the work in hand says Patrick.

“The learning and improvement from the apprentices come from the support we offer and making them part of our team. We explain why we are taking the various steps and the results we are expecting,” he said.

Patrick goes on to discuss how the workflow is managed throughout the workshop.

“Recently, we promoted Chris Ryan to leading hand. His promotion is motivating for the younger staff, and he’s really taken hold of the workshop and displayed excellent leadership skills. With the amount of growth, we are experiencing, and the number of apprentices we currently have, we were delighted to offer him the position.

“Every morning Chris and I meet for a toolbox session where we discuss the priorities as we walk through the workshop, what jobs need to be moved etc. We must be flexible and reactive in the workshop because customers tend

to drop off their Maedas for a service, often without notice. Many customers have the crawlers out for dry hire on projects and once that hire is up, they need them serviced before they go to the next job, which is often the next day,” said Patrick.

The Service Department also works very closely with the Sales Department says Anthony.

“We see a lot of stock come through the workshop and we must prioritize the pre-deliveries. Every Monday, Michael Cawston, our National Sales Manager, Greg Muller our Product Support Manager and Patrick sit down and plan the pre-deliveries for the week ahead. The only way to manage the volume of work is to plan it, it would be mayhem otherwise,” he said.

Pace Cranes has a nationwide network of service agents which are factory trained in each product. Patrick explains how important this training is.

“The machines increasingly feature advanced technology, and ongoing factory training is a necessity. We frequently have technicians travel from Europe and Japan to conduct technical training programs and all our agents fly

in from around the country to attend.

“We have a service agency in every state and in New Zealand’s North and South Islands. From a sales perspective, we understand the importance of after sales service and support. We will sell the first crane to the customer but it’s the after sales service they receive that brings them back for the second and third,” said Patrick.

“Supporting product is critical and when we know a new model is being released, the first thing we ask for is a recommended list of parts that we should be carrying. We’ve been working with the Maeda brand for 30 years, so we have plenty of experience and understand how customers treat them. With this experience we know what parts to have on the shelf and are readily available. This helps get the customer’s crane out of the workshop and back working as quickly as possible,” he said. ●



Pace Cranes' apprentices are taught with a step-by-step approach to the work in hand.

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