



# THE ROAD TO ULTIMATE EFFICIENCY

**SCANIA SOUTH AFRICA AND THE 4PL GROUP ARE TWO COMPANIES THAT VALUE CONCRETE RELATIONSHIPS AS A BASE FOR MUTUAL GROWTH. THE RAPIDLY RISING LOGISTICS SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS SPECIALIST IS ACHIEVING JUST THIS WITH THE SUPPORT OF ITS VEHICLE SUPPLIER OF CHOICE**

**A**s its name suggests, the 4PL Group business model was always going to be non-asset based. However, since 2006, the 4PL Group has expanded rapidly. In 2007 it purchased 50 percent of a Cape Town-based company focusing on the tautliner and flat-deck market. Today, this business unit is known as 4PL Cape.

Later, in November 2010, the company bought the Afgri logistics division (that was bought as a going concern from Afgri), where it inherited a fleet base of 20 International trucks – as such, the 4PL Fleet division was started, which is a completely stand-alone bulk-tipper business within the 4PL Group.

4PL Group also invested in two other fleet businesses, express-freight business Transmart (in 2009) and niche tautliner and flat-deck operator Teralco Logistics (in 2013).

All this expanding business activity meant the 4PL Group needed a reliable vehicle partner, and as Louis Adlem, MD, 4PL Fleet and 4PL.com, had known Johnny-Ray Basset, key account manager national fleet, Scania South Africa, for many years, Scania was the first – and so far only – port of call.

The Group officially bought its first Scania in February 2012, and today its heavy-duty fleet of 68 vehicles (across all business units) is completely made up of the Scania G460 CA 6x4 MSZ.

"After long consultation with Scania, during which it acquired an understanding of our business and the applications we

operate, the G460 was found to be the vehicle best suited to our business," explains Adlem.

The company also rents vehicles from Scania Rentals for additional capacity, to mitigate the risk of taking on seasonal work and when gauging the feasibility of entering new markets. "When the new opportunity makes sense with the rented vehicles, we then replace them with units bought specifically for the job," laughs Adlem.

In fact, the 4PL group makes use of the full suite of Scania services; from buying on tailored packages from Scania Finance (with guaranteed trade back on assets after three years or 600 000 km) and maintenance, through full Scania Repair and Maintenance contracts, to employing the Scania Fleet Management C200 system. The entire solution comes together to maintain optimum efficiency.

"Efficiency is a key for us to achieve success – we need to reduce down time, work smarter and pick the best assets. Fuel efficiency is a key factor and here the Scania trucks are way ahead of the competition.

"Of course, we must have dedicated aftersales service ... our relationship with Scania results in tailor-made solutions to achieve this by guaranteeing maximum uptime. Scania is proactive in getting issues resolved," Adlem explains.

Basset adds: "Aftersales is the most important factor. Scania tries to create a solution that gives the best cost of ownership. For example, we have an agreement that if a 4PL vehicle arrives in one of our workshops, it gets attended to immediately."



Efficiency is also maintained through the Scania Fleet Management system. "This is a management tool that allows us to monitor fuel consumption and driver behaviour, among other parameters," says Basset.

Reports are sent to Adlem and his team on a weekly basis and each quarter Scania customer care representatives meet with him to discuss the vehicles' costs per kilometre, the workshop experience and problem areas.

"We can't allow a truck to stand for any reason," Basset adds.

"The more information we have, the more efficient we will be," explains Adlem. "Improving fuel consumption is

"New drivers spend time with older drivers and receive driver training through Scania, before being assessed and then put into their own vehicles. Training and driver retention is very important. Because of the demanding routes that we run, our drivers need to be 100-percent confident. It would be negligent of us to not spend time and money on them," he says.

As Adlem points out, a transport company's reputation is always on the line.

"Scania understands this; the brand's staff understand the transport game. We're investing in assets – it's not

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one of our focuses; because diesel is the biggest expense in any transport business costs are meticulously calculated on a daily basis. Because we are a smaller tipper fleet, in comparison to the companies that own many vehicles, we can adapt when necessary to find optimal levels of efficiency."

Another benefit of the system, and the close relationship between customer and supplier, is that the drivers' skills can be optimised. If any drivers need on-route training, or refresher training outside of the regular six-monthly courses, Basset can pick this up and implement it.

Adlem explains that all new 4PL drivers go through a rigorous training programme.

for the short term and we're confident that we're making a good investment in the complete solution that Scania offers. In fact, it's a great solution that suits all our needs!" he enthuses.

Basset is humble in his reaction: "We're really trying our best to give the best service. Our fleet customers have the backing of all the directors in our business. 4PL can now see the dividends of its investment in Scania vehicles."

"Our culture is to build and maintain relationships with reputable suppliers. We're not constantly out looking for the 'best deals' ... we are committed to Scania and we're walking a long road together," Adlem concludes. **F**