



## APC Forks Ltd – providing nationwide flexible rental options

It began as a one-man operation with one used machine two years ago. Now it has a fleet of 40 machines. This is APC Forks Ltd, the first UK based hire company to spot the rental niche for the JCB Teletruk - Short Term Hire. The brainchild of former Gunn JCB salesman, Stuart Hunter, APC Forks is a trading division of Arnold Plant Hire which supplies a wide and mixed fleet of machines to the construction sector.

### What gave you the idea of specialising in Teletruk as a nationwide hirer?

As a Teletruk salesman I developed a thorough knowledge of the machine, the applications and the attachments. In my dealings with customers it became apparent that there was an opportunity to rent it out to businesses for a set period of time, rather than try to persuade them to buy.

### How did you convince Arnold Plant to invest in the concept?

I was very fortunate to work with MD, Philip Oldham, who also recognised the unique ability of the JCB Teletruk to service a wide range of sectors and applications. We thought initially that the Teletruk would be a door-opener to help rent the rest of our fleet. However, the concept has become so successful that we've set up a dedicated company, APC Forks Ltd, and we are now actively working with partners in waste, builders' merchants, local authorities and logistics providers to supply machines on a flexible basis – from a week, to a month or on longer term hire.

### Was this a risky strategy in the midst of a recession?

We proceeded cautiously by investing initially in a used machine. As demand increased we built up a fleet of good quality used machines and ensured that these were maintained in excellent condition between each and every hire. Now we are buying new machines to build up the fleet and divesting our stock of used machines.

### How have you created awareness of the service?

We must have done something right because utilisation is often 100% with only a few units in stock at any one time awaiting delivery to the next customer.

We have achieved this by actively promoting flexible hire periods to the key sectors in magazines, on national websites and through the company's own website [www.hireajcbteletruk.co.uk](http://www.hireajcbteletruk.co.uk), which contains spec sheets and working videos to highlight the capabilities of the machine. We are also getting word-of-mouth business and repeat sales because of our top service. From enquiry to delivery can be a period of just 24 hours on a short term hire – quick reaction to a customer's problem pays future dividends. Once they realise the unique abilities of the machine they often come back for longer rental periods on a more planned basis.

### Do you operate from a single location?

We currently operate from one site in Cheshire and work with a fantastic local transport supplier who reacts very quickly to our needs. We also have facilities in the Midlands to store, pdi and clean machines for local delivery and we are replicating this concept in the South of the country.

### What is the future for APC Forks?

We believe we are just scratching the surface. Current demand has necessitated an increase in our fleet size again this year and we have machines on order for delivery throughout 2011. There is a massive, unexploited customer base that still hasn't been tapped. We have to target these in a controlled fashion to ensure that we can cope with demand. Also we pride ourselves on high standards – all our machines go out fully checked and serviced – and we will not compromise this. We will continue to gear up organically to take on new business.

Our thanks to Stuart Hunter and Philip Oldham