

SMT Volvo Case Study

About the customer

SMT GB markets Volvo Construction Equipment products which include wheeled loaders, articulated haulers, hydraulic excavators, Volvo utility equipment and Volvo road equipment products in Great Britain. There are eight strategically placed customer support centres, a dedicated National Used Equipment Centre and a network of utility equipment dealers to ensure high quality customer support is maintained throughout the country.

The challenge

Prior to working with Northgate, SMT GB's mobile repair teams were using a fleet of Renaults with an unsatisfactory power generation system to carry out repairs on site. The vehicles, and on-board equipment, were not coping well with regular driving over rough and sandy terrain.

At that time, the vehicles were being repaired by third party suppliers situated at different locations across Great Britain. The process was difficult to manage, and it could often take a week or more for highly specialist equipment to be repaired. Engineers had given feedback on the vans and assisted in the design and building requirements for the new vehicles.

The solution

Northgate – the largest LCV hire company in the UK and Europe – is working to replace SMT GB's fleet of repair vans over two years. The firm is applying its buying power to acquire 120 Mercedes Sprinter MWB high-roof 314 vans, and working with specialist suppliers Tevo and Gardner Denver to customise interiors to meet engineers' needs.

Northgate Vehicle Hire worked in partnership with SMT GB for six months to gather updated driver requirements, find a more appropriate van for their repair work, and customise the vehicles to meet the needs of skilled engineers. Northgate created a mock-up van to check SMT GB was satisfied, before implementing modifications.

The new vans include on-board power generation, compressors and jump start equipment, as well as welding machines, Wi-Fi for diagnostics machines, bespoke racking, customised interior and exterior lighting, washbasins with hot and cold water, and safety features including first-aid kits and safety eyewash. Northgate are also providing a further fleet of 20 smaller vans for supervisors, demonstrator staff and apprentices.

The result

The team hope that investing millions of pounds in market-leading mobile repair vans and servicing will help to reduce the downtime of equipment which is critical for some of the UK's biggest construction projects.

It is also hoped that the new vans will support the retention of skilled mobile service engineers through increased driver satisfaction and comfort, and assist with the recruitment of new engineers in a highly competitive market.

Nathan Upchurch, Service Solutions Manager at SMT GB, comments; "The success of SMT GB is based on the highest quality maintenance/servicing. To remain the industry leaders with customer support we have to support our engineers with the correct equipment and tools to do the job. The new vans are much appreciated by our engineers, with increased driver satisfaction and comfort and will also assist with the recruitment of new engineers in a highly competitive market. The investment in this area of the business certainly sends a clear signal that our engineers are very important to us."

Keith Shorter, New Business Manager at Northgate, said: "With customers of all sizes across the construction supply chain, Northgate understands that reducing down time of these machines is critical to industry. We are delighted to be the only company which could deliver a solution to a complex brief from SMT GB.

"By applying sector knowledge, expertise in the end-to-end procurement and customisation of vans, trusted supplier relationships, and economies of scale, we are proud to have delivered a service that benefits SMT GB, and ultimately hundreds of construction projects across the UK."

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