



Fleet management for *the masses*

Fleet management is an extremely sophisticated field, which should translate into long-term savings. So says Nicholas de Canha, managing director of Imperial Fleet Management (IFM), a highly innovative company which now manages over 400 000 vehicles

De Canha says that the total cost of running a fleet can be divided into three categories. "It is made up of the finance, maintenance and management costs of assets. Managing each of these three areas is critical for a company to keep control of the bottom line and that is where a professional fleet management company can assist. Nowadays fleet leasing companies offer more than just the finance component of a fleet to their customers. The bigger ones can also lock in the maintenance costs and management services to make running a fleet even easier," he explains.

IFM is one such provider of full service fleet leasing solutions including finance, maintenance and management services. "A joint venture between Imperial and WesBank, IFM captures the scale and expertise of both partners. As part of Imperial, which owns 250 dealerships (the largest network in South Africa), IFM is able to offer very competitive sourcing and resale for vehicles to finance. And, as part of WesBank, the funding rate which can be offered to customers is best in class," says De Canha.

Imperial also owns the largest contract maintenance and service plan provider in South Africa, Liquid Capital. "Having the network, finance and the ability to offer maintenance means that we are able to offer the best prices, with the most competitive maintenance rates and aggressive residual values," De Canha notes.

While Imperial has vast experience in dealing with large corporates, it is also able to focus on small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, the company provides roadside assistance and accident management with a dedicated 24 hour call centre, comprehensive insurance, annual vehicle licensing and registration, fuel cards and fines administration.

Imperial sells nearly one in five vehicles in South Africa through its extensive retail network – and IFM intends matching this number with its fleet sales. "The true value add that we offer is that we understand

fleets and ensure that we deliver real value to customers in terms of long-term cost savings – which is precisely what every fleet management company should do," De Canha concludes. ■

Advancements in the MiX

Improved security is perhaps one of the greatest advantages of telematics to fleet operators. According to Brendan Horan, general manager sales and marketing for MiX Telematics, specialised fleet management solutions can substantially reduce accident rates; drive improvements in fuel economy and CO₂ emissions and lower maintenance costs.

The on-board computer connects to the vehicle's control systems, capturing detailed information about the vehicle and how it is being driven. "This device and the in-cab display work together to actively notify drivers when they are over-revving, idling excessively, braking harshly, accelerating severely or speeding – the key factors that influence fuel economy," he says.

"It's almost like having a permanent in-cab driver trainer providing them with continuous feedback on their style."

In an effort to streamline supply chain management technology for fleet owners, MiX Telematics recently partnered with Intellichain, a South-African based software solution company. The collaboration has translated into specialised cross-platform supply chain solutions for MiX Telematics' enterprise fleet customers.

MiX Telematics hopes the bespoke

integration development capability resulting from the partnership will lead to a streamlined, integrated and customised solution for customers, between their new and existing hardware and software systems. This value-add service will enable commercial fleet customers



to optimise their business processes accordingly.

"An intelligent technology approach and better use of real-time tracking information equips customers with evolving functionality and provides them with a single view across their operation. This results in effective management of operations and continuous business growth," says Horan.

"The information and targeted feedback provided by the technology gives users the insight to better manage their drivers and jobs individually and, by extension, the efficiency of their entire operation," he concludes. ■