

# RISING STAR

## at Polson Vervoer

**Stories of how Powerstar trucks have helped South African plant hire companies to grow into successful, profitable businesses are common.**

**ONE SUCH COMPANY'S FLEET** carries the arrowhead logo of the trusted Chinese brand, viz Polson Vervoer, which acquired its first Powerstar truck in 2005 and today has 20 of them in its ever-burgeoning fleet.

Based in Pretoria West, Polson Vervoer hires out tippers, water tankers, graders, rollers, and other machinery to a range of prestigious customers across the length and breadth of Gauteng, the North West Province and beyond. These include customers such as Phoenician Earthworks and Demolition, Zero Unlimited Earthworks and Excavations and the Tshwane City Council, which has used Polson Vervoer for many years on a host of different contracts, including the Kusile Power Station.

Derick Polson, sole owner of Polson Vervoer, founded the company in 1994 after working for more than a decade for Leithcon Machinery, owned by his father Leith Polson, a successful plant hire company in its own right. "Plant hire is in our blood," says Derick. "My father, my brother and I are all in this line of business and, apart from being family, perhaps the most important thing that we have in common in terms of our businesses is our absolute belief in Powerstar. Together we have more than 60 of these vehicles and they have been an important contributor to our success," he says with enthusiasm.

Derick Polson bought his first Powerstar truck in 2005 and was so impressed with the performance of the vehicle and the service and support he received from Deon van Rooyen, the Brits Powerstar dealer, that a couple of years later, again through Deon, he bought 12 Powerstar trucks from a plant hire company that was going out of business. In December 2012 he added another four Powerstar trucks to his fleet, and this year he has purchased six more – bringing the total number in his fleet to 20.

"With many other brands, if you have a problem, there is expensive downtime waiting for expensive spares, and it is often difficult to repair the problem yourself, because of the complicated electronics. This, as everyone knows, can cost you the job as your client will simply get someone else to do it."

Derick's main Powerstar choice is the 2628 VX 6x4, one of Powerstar's most popular sellers and, like the entire VX range, it is a superior design that Powerstar's research and design engineers fast-tracked in order to capture more of the 'off-road' market.

The Powerstar 2628 features an improved cab design including, air-conditioning, external sun-visor and driver-seat suspension – affording extra comfort for drivers and hence improved productivity – and, using the renowned, powerful and compact Weichai engine, the truck's torque output and workhorse capabilities are unquestionable.



Derick Polson, owner of Polson Vervoer, says that the company has grown steadily in the past decade having consistently secured new contracts since inception.



Polson Vervoer has 20 Powerstar trucks in its fleet most of which are either 10m<sup>3</sup> tippers or water tankers.

With a footprint in more than 30 countries, Weichai is the largest high-speed, power diesel engine manufacturer in the world. It has an annual production capacity of 80-million kW, with engines ranging from 40hp to 10 000hp. Its manufacturing capability is diverse, ranging from small-bore engines for light trucks, excavators, forklifts and marine applications to powerful Weichai series engines for bus, tractor, engineering and marine applications. To remain at the forefront of technological competitiveness, Weichai employs more than 800 advanced R&D engineers.

While a wide range of specialised bodies can be built on the 2628 chassis, Derick's requirement, thus far, has been for 10m<sup>3</sup> tippers, which carry mostly soil and tar, and water tanker bodies. "We do an average of 5000km per month with these vehicles," he says.

Polson Vervoer has grown steadily in the past decade having consistently secured new contracts since inception. Today it employs 221 people and runs a fleet of more than 43 vehicles. To cope with the growth, Derick recently invested in new offices, which he built adjacent to his massive yard, which he shares with Leithcon.

"Our business is thriving," he says. "Our Pretoria West facility is a constant hive of activity and while the economic environment has obviously been tough for a few years we have continued to grow because of the good service we give and the excellent relationships we have built with our customers and suppliers, including, of course Deon and Powerstar Brits."

Bob Wang, Powerstar South Africa, CEO, says he is delighted with the relationship that exists between Powerstar Brits and Polson Vervoer. "This is the how we like to do business. When there is a genuine partnership between our dealers and their customers, the customers are able to get the best out of our unusually reliable and tough vehicles. In this way, there's a win-win situation created for all involved."

He says that the excellence of Powerstar engineering and R&D is an important factor in the success of the Powerstar operation in South Africa. "During 2012, we expanded our team of engineering and technical experts to be able to deliver high-end consultation with respect to early technical trouble-shooting and solutions. This has paid off significantly with our reliability levels, which were world class, improving even more," he maintains.

He adds that, in addition, international representatives from Weichai and other suppliers are based at the Powerstar Pietermaritzburg plant to expedite and resolve any required technical changes with their corresponding operational division in China. "In this way we are constantly able to ensure that our vehicles keep up to date with the demands of local businesses and the local environment in general," he concludes.

*"My experience with Powerstar is that downtime is virtually eliminated. Firstly the vehicles are strong, rugged and reliable, and, secondly, because they are mechanically simple my team can often do the repair on the spot. In cases where we need spares, they are easy to get hold of through our Powerstar dealer and, very importantly, they are reasonably priced."*