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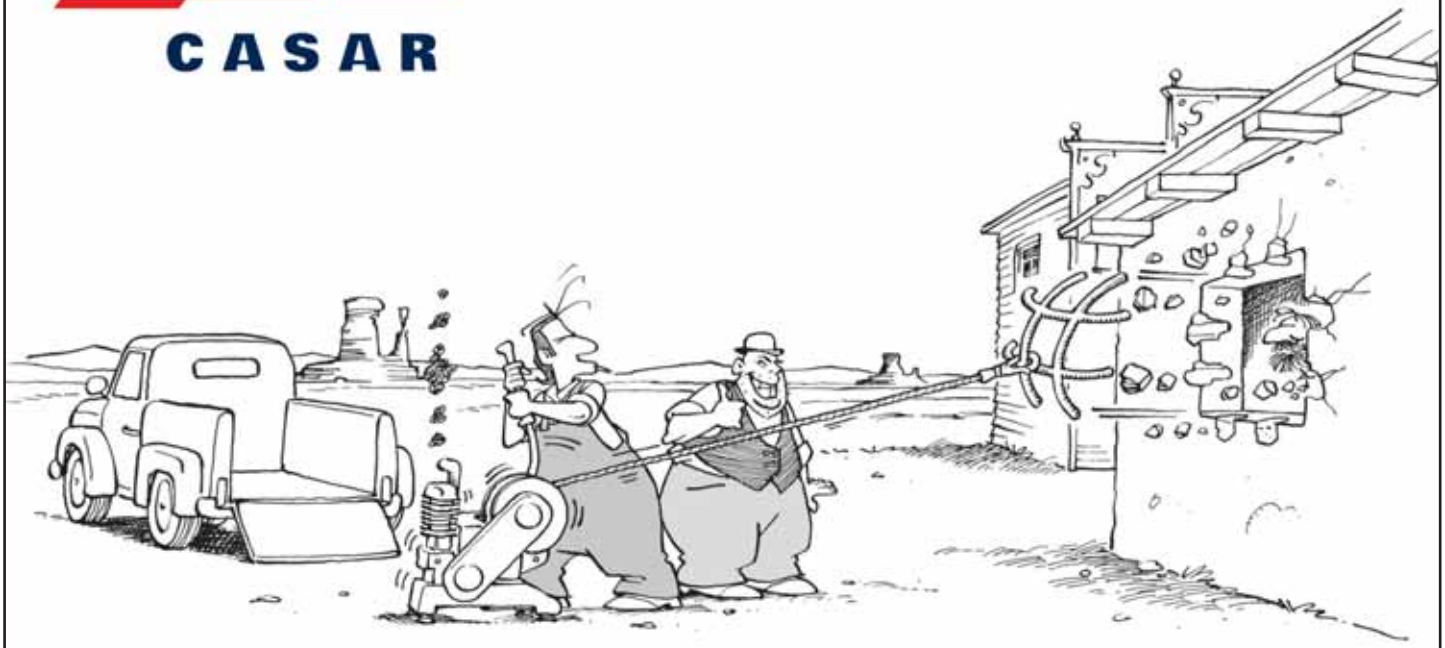

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Software update

With many crane and access companies concerned over the uncertainty in the economy and preparing strategies to cope with the expected slowdown in business, the importance of good, fully integrated rental and business software, is more important than ever. Off-the-shelf systems are now better value with more features than ever and can usually grow and adapt with the business.

Ben Bowers of Lifterz

Third time round

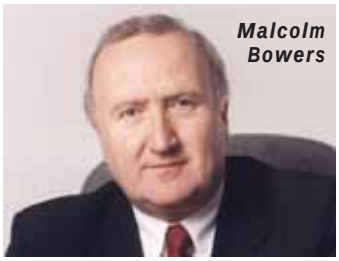
When Malcolm and Ben Bowers started Lifterz a couple of years ago, it was unusual in that it was Malcolm's third rental business start up following the original Access Rentals and AFI. With all his experience he was well aware of the benefits a good rental system can bring to the business, and there was no question of muddling by without one. He also appreciated the one-off opportunity of getting it right at the start having selected and lived with other systems during his career.

He was looking for an easy-to-use, reliable system which could easily cope with future growth plans and expansion that the two had in mind. He says that he was also keen to avoid the crashes, frozen screens and reboots he had lived with in the past. Selecting the right supplier was therefore crucial and the two spent time to make sure that they got it right.

"I was determined to avoid the crashes, frozen screens and reboots of the past"

Bowers wanted to make sure the system would cope with every aspect of their business from workshop, training documentation and record keeping to efficient order booking, scheduling and invoicing.

In the end the pair chose the Syrinx Hire Management System from Caversham-based Higher Concept Software, which provided all the features they were looking for including workshop/servicing and damage charging with digital photographs. It also included staff development and the ability to record qualifications held by each machine operator.


Malcolm Bowers

The system also highlights when qualifications need renewal and the qualifications required for each type of machine.

Bowers says the implementation of the Syrinx system was smooth and seamless, and that they were able to go live immediately after installation and training. He also liked the fact that the invoice layout is tailored to the company's customers rather than to the system. He says that the efficiencies and ease of use have paid dividends in terms efficiency, customer satisfaction and keeping a tight rein on the business, which is more critical than ever given the uncertain times we face.

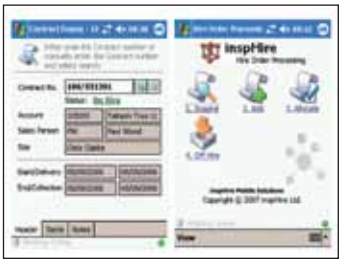
Higher Concept offered visitors to the Executive Hire Show a free software workshop run by HCS trainers, with experience working directly in the rental industry. They covered areas such as CRM, Workshop, Purchasing, Stock Management and Customer Servicing.

Higher Concept's sales and marketing director Katy Williams, said: "We appreciate our customers taking the time and effort to visit us at the show and we wanted to give something back. These complimentary workshops will help our customers to maximise the return from the investment they have made in IT, and hopefully help strengthen and drive their business forward in 2009."

Higher Concept order entry generates all necessary certifications.

Inspired mobility

Another highly popular rental software system in the UK and Ireland, particularly for powered access companies is that offered by InspHire, which has recently added a number of new developments targeted at the sector. InspHire MobileWorking offers clients access to real time information from GPRS enabled hand held devices, with the ability to accept machine handover signatures digitally. Photographs can also be stored against each unit both before and after a rental as well as for easy identification. This feature can also help companies to achieve the IPAF Rental+ accreditation by managing paperwork required by the quality mark, including documentation required by LOLER regulations. It can store driver certificates, hire desk personnel, equipment specification documents and personnel certificates.


MobileWorking screen

In addition all equipment is monitored and 'Service Due' reports (for LOLER) with equipment location can be run. In short the system stores a full hire audit trail with mandatory business processes helping instil discipline at the operational level as required by IPAF Rental+.

Web-based information

The company's new WebPortal allows rental companies to provide their customers with live information about equipment they have on hire at any time. Live data from the rental company's system automatically updates the WebPortal to ensure that a company's customers, equipped with the relevant codes, have access to the most up to date information on line which helps cut down on calls for information and work duplication. The inspHire WebPortal can also be used as a marketing tool by making it easy for customers to accurately order all the equipment they need on line.

Web Portal