

# European moves

Major re-organisation is taking place within Manitowoc's European operation. **Tim Whiteman** interviewed Jean-Yves Bouffault about how he plans to forge a pan-European operation from Grove, Manitowoc and Potain.

"WHAT I like in my job is the mixture of cultures – we have the ability to create a truly European organisation" says Jean-Yves Bouffault, executive vice president of the Manitowoc Crane Group's EMEA regions (Europe, the Middle East and Africa). Bouffault is the former CEO of Potain, the man who was in the hot seat when Manitowoc bought the company two years ago. His job now is to create the best sales team, manufacturing units and after sales systems possible from the disparate groups that were once Grove, Potain and Manitowoc.

Initial planning for the changes started after Manitowoc bought Potain two years ago, but was interrupted when the company swooped to buy Grove early last year. Now Bouffault's strategy is clear and, as expected, involves a significant level of rationalisation and re-organisation.

The thrust of the strategy is threefold:

- COMBINE THE sales teams of Potain, Grove and Manitowoc and organise them into six "customer focussed" geographical regions
- RATIONALISE THE eight existing European manufacturing sites down to six and merge some other offices
- CREATE A pan-European Crane Care operation to provide spare parts, used equipment, after sales and training

The six sales regions will be: Northern Europe, (including the UK, Germany and Benelux), which will be managed from the Grove sales/support facility in Langenfeld, Germany; France and Africa which will be managed from the current Grove sales location in Cergy, Paris; The Iberian Peninsula which will be managed from the Potain factory in Porto; Southern Europe, which will be managed from Milan, Italy; the Middle East, which will be managed from Dubai; and Russia/CIS, which will be managed from Moscow.

Rationalisation of the European sites sees the closure of two of Potain's French facilities, at Charolles and Bretigny, (which formerly served Potain customers in and around Paris), and also Potain's German sales and support operation in



**Jean-Yves Bouffault runs the EMEA region of Manitowoc – approximately 45 per cent of the Manitowoc Crane Group's €1.4 billion annual turnover now comes from this region.**

*“Crane Care is now coming to Europe. We have 500 people who want to take care of your cranes.”*

Waldorf-Morfelden, which will be moved to Langenfeld. The former BKT luffing boom tower crane factory in Arnebourg, Germany, which was bought by Potain in the 1990s, and the ex-BKT design office in Munich will also be closed.

"Although the changes have a significant impact on some aspects of our organisation, there are actually about 2000 people in manufacturing who see no change to their management or organisational structure" says Bouffault. The restructuring brings big changes to the sales operation and the desire is to see an international company with regional management. Bouffault's strategy combines Potain sales personnel with Grove and Manitowoc sales staff in regional teams, but means that tower crane personnel remain responsible for tower crane sales.

Turning to some of the detail, it seems likely that the Grove factory at Wilhelmshaven will become involved in the finishing and assembly of crawler cranes and possibly even sections of tower cranes previously built at Arnebourg. It is also likely that Manitowoc will continue to assess the feasibility of building crawlers within Europe, a subject that fascinates senior management who are keen to develop truly European crawler cranes – a 555, 999 and 2250 have recently arrived in Europe for "evaluation" by European users.

Within the UK it is likely that the Manitowoc, Grove and Potain sales and after sales operations will be centralised in new premises that will be in the Greater London area (although Samuel Walker continues as Grove's appointed service agent). Grove's Sunderland offices will continue to provide a base for some administrative functions although it seems to be playing a diminishing role in Grove's activities.

Manitowoc's work platform business, which includes Potain's Liftlux and Grove's Manlift and Toucan, has been placed in a separate Manlift division (see separate story this issue).

Looking to the future Bouffault enthuses about Crane Care, Manitowoc's existing service, training and parts business. This is now "coming to Europe" and "we have 500 people who want to take care of your cranes".

C&A