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A Mobile Force To Be Reckoned With

Peterbilt Medium-Duty trucks, Model 365s carry the load for this high-tech refueling fleet

During economic downturns like the current one, typical fleet owners have to make tough decisions. Brad Davis — not typical by any measurement — has decided to expand.

Opportunities exist in every economic cycle, Davis says, even the current one. So it's his view that when the going gets tough, the tough move into new markets.

Davis owns Mobile Force Refueling, Phoenix, Arizona, a company that has delivered on-site fuel and lubrication to construction sites since 2000. Last year, Davis expanded his marketing efforts to include servicing commercial truck fleets across all industries. "I entered the fleet fueling business strictly based on projections that construction was going to slow down," says Davis. "We dedicated an entire new business to commercial truck fleets. It's a little more recession proof and creates a nice buffer for us."

Recently, Mobile Force's customer base has expanded rapidly. To keep up with demand, Davis ordered five new Peterbilts in 2008, and three more in 2009, increasing his fleet size to 20 trucks.

Because his business model of fleet fueling requires highly specialized equipment, Davis works with truck builder Southwest Products in Phoenix, Arizona, to build the body.

Rob Hanish at Southwest Products and Davis prefer Peterbilt medium-duty trucks, headlined by the Models 337 and 348, and Model 365s. They spec medium-duty vehicles with Cummins 330 hp engines, while the Model 365s get Cummins ISM 425 hp engines, Eaton 10 speed transmissions, 20,000 lb front axles and 46,000 lb rear axles.

Critical uptime

A Mobile Force truck might travel only 20 miles to each customer location, but while there it works constantly. "Uptime is

critical in this business," says Davis. "Every minute our trucks are running, we're able to generate revenue."

Mobile Force experiences very little downtime, adds Davis. "Our equipment is the lifeblood of our operation and Peterbilt is our equipment choice."

When Southwest Products designed the truck body, Davis suggested a number of labor-saving innovations that help his servicemen work smarter, in-

"A Peterbilt fleet says something to customers about our commitment to quality."

— Brad Davis



This Peterbilt medium-duty, as well as the Model 365, provide the perfect platform for Mobile Force refueling operations.

cluding rollers on the back doors, oil guns mounted for easier, more efficient handling, a better system for draining and collecting waste oil, and a computerized system to capture all critical liquid measurement data.

"We incorporated a high precision bar coding system for our customers," says Davis. "Our trucks travel to the customer's fleet yard or construction site, scan the equipment bar codes, fill up the machines, grease them, change oil and top off fluids. The data captured in the operator's handheld barcode reader is calculated precisely to within 1/10th of a gallon. This level of technology allows our trucks to dispense fuel, leave detailed receipts and generate reports that tell our customers what each vehicle in their fleet costs to operate per day, per week, per year in fuel expense."

When trucks return to Mobile Force headquarters, operators can download the collected data directly into the company computer system for automatic billing. "We're moving toward a paperless office," says Davis.

Quality image, quality service

Mobile Force trucks traveling to and from customer work sites act as "moving billboards that project our company image on the roadways," says Davis. "People in Phoenix know our trucks and always comment on how nice the Peterbilts look. While a lot of our competitors want the cheapest trucks they can acquire, we're exactly the opposite. And that really pays off for us. A quality Peterbilt fleet says something to customers about our commitment to quality."

One sign that competitors are getting wiser to Mobile Force strategies is the high demand for its Peterbilt fuel trucks at trade-in time. Davis put three trucks up for sale recently and the bidding war surprised even him. "After two and a half years of service, we sold these trucks for more money than we had paid brand new. Buyers line up for these trucks." ■

