

ASCENDING IN ABU DHABI

Multiple deals are struck as Volvo Trucks strengthens its position in the UAE capital

Last month saw Volvo Trucks strengthen its presence in Abu Dhabi after Al Futtaim Auto & Machinery Co. (FAMCO) delivered new trucks to two major players in the market.

The five FH460 6x4 Tractor units received by Al Nubla Contracting Company and eight FM420 4x2 Tractor units purchased by Cardiff General Transport have been meticulously engineered to save fuel and deliver uptime. Beyond the efficient Euro 13l power unit, the trucks have an array of features, like the coveted I-Shift, which help fleets to meet the changing demands of the market. Throw in a selection of services wrapped around the purchases and there are large gains to be made.

Although ultimately this may depend on the driver's experience and the operating

conditions, Volvo Trucks and FAMCO believe they are helping the fleets to get the most out of every drop of fuel and can make a big difference to a fleet's bottom line.

Speaking at a handover ceremony event held in the UAE capital last month, Vladimir Knezevic, managing director, FAMCO UAE, said the Volvo FH460 6x4 and FM420 4x2 can deliver a whole new level of efficiency, reliability and value on the job.

"As always, FAMCO is able to bring this industry-leading product from Volvo Trucks to market with confidence in both the world-class engineering and design, and, unparalleled service," he says. "FAMCO will continue to invest in such heavy-duty vehicles to ensure the best possible results and the highest standards of overall operational efficiency for all the transportation and construction segments."

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Buyer breakdown

Taking five FH460 6x4 Tractor units, Al Nubla Contracting Company owns local transportation players Al Nubla International General Trading and Al Nubla International General Transport. The company is engaged in a diversified series of B2B (business to business) activities including – but not limited to – excavation & mining, aggregates, cement, road base, subbase, sand, gatch, chemicals, blocks, plywood, and building materials trading.

General manager Mohamad Fares explains to T&FME that the Al Nubla group believes in turning market trends and challenges into "opportunities and make use of potential gaps into long term business relations."

He remarks that the focus on fuel economy and fleet efficiency offered by FAMCO and the new tractors from Volvo

are crucial at a time where cost control is the main challenge and priority.

"There are factors like fuel cost and tolls which cannot be controlled. In recent times fuel prices have gone up which affected our cost control. Toll taxes, alone, have added a significant amount to the total cost as it comprises 30% of the total cost. The low fuel consumption in Volvo trucks is one of the many key features that will reduce our operational costs."

Another challenge over the last ten years has been adapting to a changing market pushing the company into enhancing the customer service side of the business.

"Nowadays, the markets are dynamic, supply chains have become longer and more complex, and customer expectations have changed, both in terms of delivery times and service quality. Now customers also expect their logistics partners to provide innovative cost-effective solutions."

Feras tells T&FME that the company's fleet operations have developed considerably over the last decade and it has pro-actively worked to introduce new technology to the fleet leader.

He said: "Our customers' expectations have demanded advanced and enhanced solutions. The fleet management tools and software we have introduced have made the our operations more fluent fortunately."

Maximising uptime within the fleet has become more important over time with the group facing rising parts and labour costs. He says, however that Volvo Trucks and FAMCO are helping to mitigate this extra pressure on the business.

"Partnering with Volvo Trucks and FAMCO gives us access to world-leading innovative fleet solutions as well as total project management programmes and complete after-sales. Their effective implementation has helped us to achieve a maximum reduction of downtime and ensured a reduced risk of any un-calculated emergency expenses."

Feras feels that his new trucks arrive ready to also improve uptime in the company and ensure they are ready to serve customers when they are needed the most.

"Safety measures are being taken care of in the new trucks range which is the key feature for our drivers' safety," Feras says. "That is most important for us as we consider our drivers as crucial partners in our business. Volvo's trucks are spacious, and drivers have the space to take a comfortable rest when it is necessary. This in return will reduce the cost of accidents



MEETING REQUIREMENTS
A series of features on the trucks helps companies like Cardiff General Transport reach the high requirements of sectors such as Oil & Gas.

as well impact downtime reduction risk."

Cardiff General Transport, meanwhile, says its new FM420 4x2 tractor units will help boost its progress as one of the largest and most successful transportation companies in UAE. It has established a wide range of operations in the oil-field industry; providing 24/7 on-shore and off-shore transportation, vehicle leasing and rental, customs clearing and forwarding services to major clients, including ADNOC.

The oil and gas sector is heavily regulated ensuring fleets must reach demanding standards to win work. Cardiff's general manager, Ziyad Mohammed, says that Volvo Trucks and FAMCO have helped the firm to access the "latest techniques and modern machines to comprehensively comply with all the requirements of international standards."

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He says the purchase comes during a time where the market is 'very sensitive', but he remains optimistic on the firm's prospects: "As long as ADNOC is introducing technologies and increasing production, we can expect more projects in the industry. We will concentrate on being flexible to customer requirements to keep costs manageable and build long-term business relationships."

Features like the automated I-Shift gearbox (FAMCO has sold more than 4,000 units of the system), an extra three-gear manual transmission, and the Advance Brake System (ABS) will help lower costs, improve uptime and, importantly, enhances safety in the fleet.

"In the Oil & Gas industry, everything is reported and safety comes first, there is no compromise on safety rules and regulations," remarks Mohammed. "One of the major factors that we care about is safe transportation."

He tells T&FME that he will be looking to Volvo Trucks and FAMCO for training and support during what he hopes will be a long-term business relationship.

"Controlling the fuel and maintenance costs is an important task in the transportation industry, where you need to be pro-active and introduced strategic tools to keep them under control."

Mohammed adds the company has learned that a good distributor/customer relationship goes beyond the purchasing of vehicles, and concludes by advising other fleets to seek out any training that may be available.

"Education programmes have proven to increase fuel economy, on average by 10% when you compare a driver before and after a training session."

