

Professional PROFILE: Woody Weld

Tracking Technology

L&A: What is Acme Lift's history?

Weld: It started in 1997, but its first full year of operation was in 1998. I came in to run the business three or four years ago. I'm the owner of the company now.

L&A: Can you describe re-rental?

Weld: Wholesale re-rental means that Acme Lift's job is to supply equipment to rental companies and to create additional capabilities and profitability for the branch operations of rental companies only. We do not rent any equipment to contractors or end-users, so we're never in competition with our customers.

L&A: Who are your customers?

Weld: Every company that rents aerial equipment in the United States — from United Rentals, RSC, NationsRent, NES, Cat Rental, all the major regional rental companies, and all the local high-reach centers around the United States.

L&A: What makes Acme Lift different than other re-rental companies?

Weld: What's unique about Acme is we have late model equipment that's only 80 feet and above, so we really specialize in the very large equipment. Every year, we buy brand new JLG equipment. This year, we've bought 57 new pieces of 80-foot and above equipment. No. 2 is that we're entirely wholesale — we have no retail component. Almost every other re-rental company in the country sells retail or is associated with a retail company. Lastly, we have the largest fleet of this type of equipment in the world, so we have more specific expertise and capabilities in these large areas than anyone else.

L&A: Have you thought about offering other types of equipment?

Weld: We're just starting to offer the large telehandlers; they are kind of a niche product. The really large sizes, 12,000 pounds and up, no one carries in their

inventory, so they don't have them in stock when customers need them. We also will carry scissor lifts that go up to 105 feet. JLG is just starting to bring those in. We have large Manitex boom trucks; they go from 17 to 38 tons. That's a very small part of our business — it's a niche within a niche, but it's still something our customers have asked for. Another thing we provide is the Bronto aerial lifts. JLG makes lifts that go to 150 feet, and after that, we use the Bronto truck-mounted units, which go up to 236 feet.

L&A: In 2003, you integrated Qualcomm GlobalTracs™ on your entire fleet. What have your experiences been so far?

Weld: I'd like to stress that Acme's only reason for existence is to quickly and accurately provide additional capabilities for our customers 24/7 in all 48 states, and receiving accurate information is the complete cornerstone of being able to do it. There are two ways we get accurate information: The first is through Wynne Systems RentalMan® ASP. Instead of going out and buying a little software program for a little rental company, we simply lease space on Wynne's servers and use the same rental system as United Rentals, RSC, Sun State, Sunbelt, and everyone else. It really gives us a lot of software ability to manage our business and information and analyze the information within our company, which we never would have been able to do without it or a full-time IT person and thousands of dollars of computers.

The second aspect is Qualcomm. We looked at many satellite tracking, GPS providers, and chose them because they are the dominant force in the trucking business; they track between 300,000 to 500,000 units every day. Qualcomm integrates with Wynne Systems, so Qualcomm data streams into Wynne and allows us to tell the location and status of our equipment and usage. When we tell



Title: Owner

Company: Acme Lift

Location: Phoenix, Ariz.

Products: Aerial Lifts, Boom Trucks, Telehandlers

people where the machines are, we can tell them the exact location. When we want to know if they are being used or not, we can tell. Many times we've gotten our customers additional revenue by accurately tracking the machines' usage.

The other thing is it eliminates the discussion regarding the discovery of those usage anomalies. Now all I have to do is fax over the Qualcomm report with the latitude and longitude and a map showing where a machine is and a little thing showing exactly when it started and stopped everyday. We don't have a discussion anymore — now it's simply data. You send it over and say: "Hey, it's being used. Here's the bill." Very rarely does anyone argue because it's truthful.

L&A: Does it help with maintenance?

Weld: New machines have CANbus, which means you have computer modules that multiplex signals over a small group of wires. When a machine breaks, you need an analyzer that gives you the fault and error codes, which tells a technician what's wrong. Driving out to a machine with an analyzer takes a lot of time and trouble, and Qualcomm is working with JLG and other manufacturers to pull those fault codes. When a machine malfunctions, it will simply go into the computer, pull the fault code, and send it out as a message the same as when we get the hours and location. No one will have to go to the machine to find out what's wrong with it — it's enormously time and money saving. ■