

At its core, road transport is about two things: getting goods to their destinations on time – and doing so at the most affordable price, both for the operator and the client.

But the real secret lies in finding a good balance between the two. “Choosing the right truck and trailer manufacturer for your business can make a huge difference to your overall service delivery and bottom line,” explains Kamal Mitoo, marketing director at Time Link Cargo. “For example, we have found that – even though Scania trucks are more expensive than many of their competitors – in the long run the overall reliability, value for money and service delivery you get from the manufacturer more than makes up for the price.”

For Mitoo, a road transport operator worth his salt must be able not only to meet client delivery expectations, but exceed them. “We have invested a lot of time and money into this company to ensure that we are the best within our sector. That means working with top-of-the-range equipment, so that all we

have to worry about is getting the job done,” he maintains.

Operating across three divisions – long distance transport; warehousing; and dedicated contracts, which include local distribution and customised logistical solutions – Time Link Cargo was formed in 2003 by Kamal Mitoo and Dean Chetty, both of whom cut their teeth in family-owned transport businesses. “We wanted an operation of our own which could be run according to our principles,” says Mitoo, explaining what motivated the formation of Time Link Cargo.

The company’s dedicated contracts provide their clients with customised solutions that are tailor-made to their requirements. “In order to give our clients this value-added service, we need trucks and trailers that are tailored to our needs,” says Dean Chetty, director of operations at Time Link Cargo. In this regard, both Scania and SA Truck Bodies have met Chetty and Mitoo’s expectations.

“SA Truck Bodies has been with us since our inception,” says Mitoo. “We have worked

together to design the perfect trailers and bodies for our various divisions and clients, and the result has been a great working relationship in which we can rely on each other. They stood with us while we were growing and we will always give them our full support as a result,” he continues.

“Scania has also been extremely helpful in delivering the vehicles to our exact specifications,” Chetty adds. “In addition to Scania’s trucks boasting powerful engines, they are the best-looking and most comfortable long haulers on the road – while service time is always short and parts are readily available. And, in the highly unlikely event that a breakdown does occur and the right parts are not instantly available – or the truck cannot be promptly fixed on the side of the road – Scania will supply us with a truck to complete our delivery.”

At Time Link Cargo, time is money: which means that, although no corners are cut or expenses spared to ensure impeccable service, deliveries will always be on time. “When we entered this market for the first

# Time is money



What’s the secret behind a successful road transport operation? **FOCUS** chats to Time Link Cargo about service delivery, reliability and revolutionising transport in keeping with client expectations

# Time Link Cargo



time seven years ago, trips between Cape Town and Johannesburg took two days. This was the industry-expected norm," elaborates Mitoo. "We have cut this down to 18 hours, simply through running excellent rigs and having two drivers in each truck.

"Whereas before, deliveries only left Cape Town on Mondays and Wednesdays, today they can leave on a daily basis and arrive at their destination the following day. It has changed not only the way our clients do business, but the transport industry as a whole." Cape Town to Durban trips have also been reduced – to 21 hours; and Durban to Johannesburg trips to eight hours. "We transport perishable and urgent items in our long-haul division," explains Chetty. "It's imperative that these deliveries are always on time."

However, this commitment is never achieved at the expense of the safety of the drivers or loads. "We are very proud of our well-maintained vehicles, trailers and depot facilities, which are also very modern," says Mitoo. "This enables us to ensure proper control over drivers, as well as management

systems which provide us with accurate on-line information on vehicle movements.

"We have established high standards of operational criteria which have been achieved through strict compliance with legislation," he continues. "We have a 24-hour manned control room that operates throughout the year with real-time live tracking. This allows us to ensure that proper routes are followed, driving hours are adhered to and that drivers sleep in allocated, safe sleeping areas. All this serves to safeguard our fleet against accidents relating to driver fatigue and incidents of hijacking and load tampering."

Mitoo also adds that Time Link Cargo has a well-maintained operating fleet which is kept up-to-date with manufacturing improvements that allow for improved fuel consumption, extended service intervals, and greater payload achievements. "We don't operate retread tyres on any of our vehicles and trailers, minimising operational delays," he says.

## DELIVERING THE GOODS

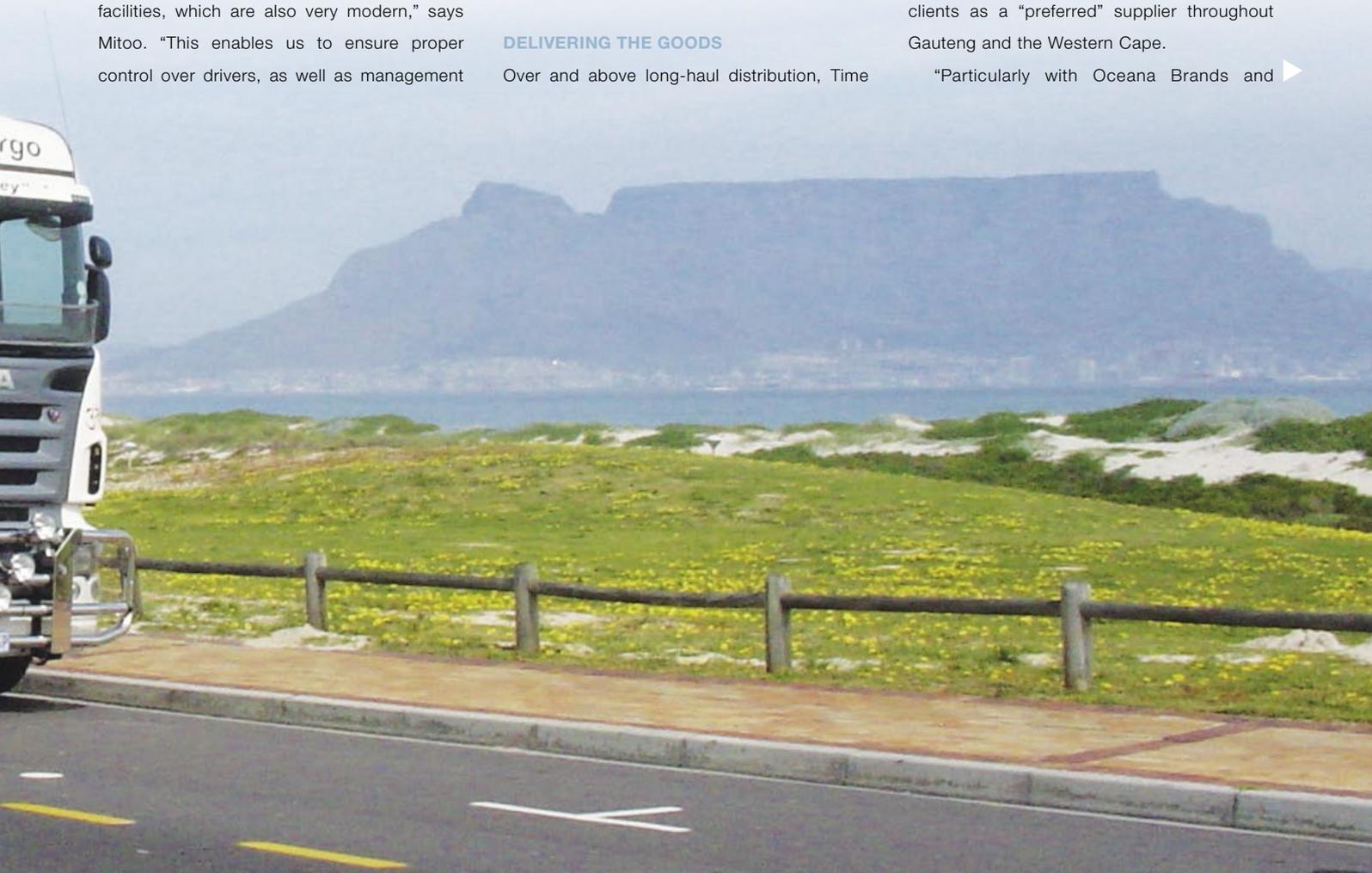
Over and above long-haul distribution, Time

Link Cargo has a number of dedicated and preferred supplier contracts in Gauteng, Limpopo and the Western Cape. Two of these are with Oceana Brands in the Western Cape and Nampak in Gauteng and Limpopo.

"We deliver Oceana products – which are predominantly canned fish goods – throughout the Western Cape region to large supermarket groups and small spaza shops," says Mitoo. In the case of Nampak, while Time Link Cargo operates from Nampak's premises in Industria and Polokwane, it utilises its own managers, staff, drivers and trucks. At Nampak in Industria, Johannesburg, however Time Link Cargo has actually secured its own depot nearby to Nampak – such is the level of commitment between Nampak and Time Link Cargo to their contract.

The transport operator does provincial and cross-border deliveries to Botswana from both depots, as well as fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) deliveries for a number of clients as a "preferred" supplier throughout Gauteng and the Western Cape.

"Particularly with Oceana Brands and ▶





**Above:** Time Link Cargo is the proud owner of one of three Scania R500s to be presented to valuable clients at the truck's official launch in April.

Nampak, we have achieved this status not only by always being reliable – but also fast in our delivery times,” Chetty maintains. “We have invested in top-quality trucks to achieve this – not only for the reliability, fuel efficiency and back-up service they provide, but because of the level of comfort they afford our drivers. The luxurious, ergonomic cab interiors provided by Scania mean each driver is able to maintain concentration while driving, and have a good sleep when the second driver takes the wheel.”

In fact, this is just one example of Time Link Cargo's attitude towards business. “We continually strive to improve service levels to our clients by offering a hands-on approach in the running of the daily activities of our company,” explains Mitoo. “We have focused on long-term partnerships with our clients and we have achieved them; based on service delivery and reliability without compromising safety or quality.”

According to Chetty, ongoing performance measurement – coupled with ready access to appropriate technology for remedial action – ensure sustained improvement in the pursuit of true service delivery excellence. “This



**Below:** Time Link Cargo is the dedicated transport operator for Nampak in Gauteng and Limpopo.

is strengthened by a corporate culture of openness to technological and conceptual innovation,” he adds.

This philosophy has been extended to Time Link Cargo's relationships with its providers. The operator is currently running a fleet of 51 trucks and, although many of them are already R470 and R500 Scania's, Chetty and Mitoo are

in the process of converting the entire fleet to Scania's.

All the operator's trailers are built by SA Truck Bodies and the entire fleet – trucks and trailers – runs on new Michelin tyres, so it is clear that, once the directors are happy with a product, they support it wholeheartedly.

“We never run retreads, and we only run our long-haul trucks for 500 000 km before shifting them into the local distribution side of our business,” explains Chetty. “We believe this maximises usage of all our investments, while still ensuring quality service.”

In a nutshell, Mitoo believes it is his company's hands-on approach to doing business, mutually beneficial relationships with clients, and investment in new and reliable products

that underpin Time Link Cargo's success. “Although we have our sights set on growing our business, this will always be in line with the investments we can make and the relationships we can cultivate,” he explains. “We will never grow beyond our means to deliver excellent service. The two must always go hand in hand.” ■