

BALFOS LTD

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CORPORATE BROCHURE



Big fix

John Adom, managing director of Balfos Ltd, talks to Jayne Alverca about the company's diverse product and sales offering as a single supply source to some of West Africa's leading mining and industrial operations

Since 1995, when the company was incorporated in Ghana, Balfos Ltd has developed and enhanced its sales and service operations to become a single supply point for three of West Africa's largest mining, industrial and construction countries (Ghana, Guinea and Côte D'Ivoire).



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The mining industry is the company's most important market segment, but diversity is seen as a fundamental strength. In addition to the core mining business, Balfos also has customers drawn from wood processing and treatment plants, haulage and transport companies, fabricators, engineering companies and cement plants; and it is now laying the foundation to expand to the offshore oil & gas industries and breweries.

Whatever the application, Balfos is dedicated to helping its customers identify the most appropriate engineering solutions and support packages at the lowest possible cost, but never at the expense of compromising quality or deadlines.

Balfos represents some of the world's leading manufacturers of heavy equipment destined for the toughest and most demanding environments. World renowned brands the company supplies include Powerscreen, Telestack, PC Pump and UK Steel; and Balfos is now offering the products of the Polaris range of transport solutions, as well as Oro Industries and Terex Construction.

“What sets our approach apart is our determination to see projects through to the end,” states managing director John Adom, who has worked with the company for 13 years and is based at the main office in Obuasi, Ghana. “Our approach is very, very thorough, from identifying and really understanding



our customers' requirements to ensuring that we provide them with the best possible solution at the most competitive price."

Adom wants long term working relationships: the aim is for partnerships that will produce a 'win-win' scenario for both parties. "We try to be as flexible as possible on price. Obviously we have to retain a certain margin, but we recognise that customers want the best deal possible. On our part, once we have made a sale we want that customer to feel they are getting real value from the relationship and hope they will want to continue working with us for years to come."

He explains that after-sales support is a critical element of the company's service offering. Productivity is key to profitability—if a vital piece of machinery is not functioning properly, then it can quickly



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lead to significant losses. Hence, the approach that Balfos has adopted is one that embraces the complete product lifecycle.

After-sales care is centered on a fully equipped workshop in Obuasi which is stocked with a range of spares; support from the equipment manufacturers; and a workshop, equipment and tools designed specifically to maintain in optimum condition the machines and products that Balfos sells. “Our target, which we take very seriously, is that the equipment we sell is fully operational for 95 per cent of the time,” Adom continues. “Once we have sold an item of machinery, it means we have already made an estimate of the parts and spares it will require over a given time period and we make sure that these are always available.” To complete the circle, Balfos now plans to re-purchase and refurbish used plant and equipment that will either be re-sold or hired out on a contract basis.

Powerscreen, based in Northern Ireland, supplies many of the bestselling product lines in the Balfos portfolio. The company has decades of experience as a specialist in the design and manufacture of mobile crushing, screening and washing equipment destined for the aggregate, mining, recycling and contract industries. All of its

products are designed to operate in the toughest environments and feature minimum set-up times and excellent reliability to give the market’s best recorded productivity rates. “Powerscreen is one of our most important suppliers. We work with companies like this for a simple reason,” states Adom. “Our customers tell us that they supply the best equipment on the market and they are very happy with the performance they get from the machinery they purchase. That is what we aim for above all else—complete customer satisfaction.”

However, while the mining industry in West Africa is generally buoyant, it is inevitably capital-intensive, requiring a heavy initial capital outlay. Moreover, some mines have very short term specific projects and equipment may only be needed for a period of a few months, and therefore contracting out has obvious cost benefits over ownership.

Balfos intends to address this issue by expanding its role as a contractor. It can already point to a track record of successfully completed projects with customers like AngloGold Ashanti. “They needed their ore crushed to a precise and exact grade and we were able to provide this very successfully on their behalf. Now we want to expand this capability,” Adom says.

Developing a contracting arm is one of several strategic approaches to building on the existing business. Steel is fundamental to most heavy industrial applications and in the past, Balfos had a strong relationship with Macsteel to supply steel plate for many different types of fabrications. “It is an aspect of the business that lapsed in the last three years to be replaced by UK Steel, but now we are very keen to revive them both,” he asserts.

Balfos has also entered the market to supply solar equipment to meet both government and industry’s rapidly growing energy needs in West Africa. Solar powered road and street light lighting, for example, is a major growth area throughout the African continent and has enormous untapped potential. It is a move that Balfos believes will help support the environmental objectives of customers, as well as slashing their energy bills.

In another shift towards the government

sector, the company is currently exploring the opportunity to work more closely with a Chinese supplier of minibuses, trucks and ambulances. Balfos already supplies specialist equipment to the mining industry and the latest move would complement that offering, as well as reaching a new market. Here again, the company’s strong focus on after-sales support would be leveraged.

From a geographical perspective, Balfos currently operates through a network of agents in neighbouring countries. Plans are now in place to increase its presence beyond Ghana’s borders, by opening dedicated offices in Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo. “We feel it is important to operate in as many areas as possible. We want to establish a footprint wherever we have the capability to deliver to the high standards that our customers expect of us,” he concludes. balfosob@4u.com.gh

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