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Hans Bedman



Joining the dots

After a €2 billion investment in its new trucks programme, Scania has set about beefing up its UK training and support centre. Ian Norwell reports from Loughborough

A tour of Scania's upgraded training centre doesn't reveal extra bays, vehicle lifts and ramps. Not even extra garage space. The added bite comes from new IT that reflects the digital, connected environment in which trucks now live. Indeed, with dual screen workstations, video conferencing and wireless comms, it has more the whiff of a CIA ops room than a workshop.

“We only use technology where there is a clear contribution to efficiency,” said Hans Bedman, Scania's head of field quality, inaugurating the new centre. “The data we now have from customer vehicles gives us the ability to remotely diagnose and rectify issues, on occasion without even attending the scene.”

Scania's upgrades will help its truck, bus, industrial and marine engine users, and the improvements mirror advances made with its new R and S series heavy trucks. ‘Internet of things’ is the catchphrase, and Scania's improvements in Loughborough are as much about remote diagnostics as training.

With more than 220,000 Scania vehicles now connected to the Swedish giant's developing database, 1.8 billion km of global service data is collected every month. No doubt, the vast majority is mundane, but the exception reports are the nuggets that lead to modified service schedules aimed at pre-empting failures.

So Scania's Loughborough systems now allow either remote diagnosis or deliver on-site live access to technical engineers for trouble-shooting, via an armoury of toughbook laptops, iPads

and smartphones. Technical centres have also been strategically placed around the globe – in Sweden, Brazil and Hong Kong, with a fourth due online in Dubai this year, giving technicians access around the clock.

As for the training and technical support workload, Loughborough reveals an interesting split. Although UK sales are around 7,000 trucks, 300 buses and coaches and 800 industrial engines, the truck product only accounts for around 50% of the work. “The truck product is from a more mature market, while the diversity of applications for our industrial engines – from stone-crushers to lifeboats – makes them more labour-intensive,” explains Mark Grant, aftersales director for Scania GB.

As for the numbers, truck operations account for 2.1 million service hours sold, from a 49,000 chassis parc – with 98% of issues solved at dealer

level, and the remainder arriving at Loughborough. Incidentally, training for ancillary equipment is also here: BPW, for example, sends trainers to cover its axle, braking and suspension components.

From its 90 UK dealer workshops, 1,257 technicians all made their way through Loughborough for familiarisation with the new R and S series trucks ahead of their launch. These and a further 216 master technicians and 27 escalation techs all have access to nine technical engineers and their IT at the Loughborough site.

Increasing product sophistication inevitably brings the need for more advanced service support, and the IT continues to supplant spanners and grease. With continuously improving reliability, how long will it be before the UK's idiosyncratic six-weekly inspections fall into a more European mould? Brexit notwithstanding. [TE](#)

