

TLS and Plant Hire share back office for efficiency and best practice as firm takes bigger view

# Integrated GE goes national for Games

By Andrew Gaved

GE EQUIPMENT Services will integrate its vehicle rental and plant hire businesses in a bid to land Olympic framework contracts.

The firm intends to create a larger national business offering machines ranging from tippers to telehandlers.

But the TLS and Plant Hire businesses will keep separate sales operations to build on their brand loyalty.

According to Andrew Way, the newly appointed managing director of both the Plant Hire and TLS businesses, the fact that US parent company GE Capital is a major sponsor for the next three Olympics will stand the combined equipment business in good stead.

He said: "Having put all that money in at a corporate level, you can expect that you will get something back."

Mr Way said the changes will see GE



**Andrew Way: taking with both hands**

building on common ground between the two operations, while benefiting from the integration of back offices, logistics and depots where possible.

He said: "They will be operationally separate under one leadership team. We were looking at how to grow both things faster to increase both scale and reach,

and this will make us a bigger player. The Olympics is an opportunity to take with both hands.

"With facilities in London, we believe we are very well placed.

"The two businesses have been working closely for a while for national accounts, but this will introduce them to each other's regional customers."

TLS has 25 depots and Plant Hire 26. The merger will allow the firms to use each other's outlets where possible.

Mr Way said: "The facilities are almost identical. The only question is whether each site will be big enough. Around 50 per cent of TLS outlets could host plant hire, while 20-25 per cent of the hire depots could include vehicle rental."

He said there were a number of areas where the efficiency of the business could be improved.

"Moving plant around the country requires a high degree of transport and

logistics and with TLS we do that for a living," he said. "Plant hire faces more challenges than vehicle rental, since rarely do customers turn up and drive away the plant, but there are definitely improvements from the TLS business that we can use in plant hire.

"We will be improving service and we expect that plant hire will learn from the vehicle side in areas such as safety. Duty of care is becoming a big deal."

The back office merger would result in some head office staff losing their jobs, he said, but he was confident they would find other positions within the wider GE Capital group.

He said: "This is not about cost-cutting. In this business it is about being in the small regional market or being a big national provider. Trying to serve both is a problem, so we are moving up to a national scale."

*andrew.gaved@emap.com*