**CASE STUDY**

X-Furniture supplies bespoke office furniture solution for Barloworld Equipment Botswana

**11 April 2****024:** Barloworld Equipment Botswana, a subsidiary of Barloworld Equipment Southern Africa, recently completed Phase One of its new Centre of Excellence at Phakalane. The project marks a significant investment in Botswana’s economy and serves as a pivotal step in Barloworld’s strategy to grow their Sub-Saharan African footprint. South African manufacturer and supplier [X-Furniture](http://www.xfurniture.co.za) played a key role to assist with the interior office furniture fit-out of this state-of-the-art facility.

In existence for over 60 years, Botswana is one of the many jewels in the crown for Barloworld Southern Africa, which has dealerships in Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Angola, and a joint venture in Democratic Republic of Congo.

“Botswana is of strategic importance in terms of Sub-Saharan Africa, especially as we have key partnerships with major mining houses such as Debswana, Lucara, Morupule Coal Mine and Sandfire Resources,” comments **Pierre Hill**, Country Manager, Barloworld Equipment Botswana.

“Our focus in Botswana has mainly been on mining, but we also pride ourselves with quality construction and power products and solutions. Given our history and success in the past and future business opportunities, we felt it is prudent to invest significantly in our Botswana dealership going forward.

“Part of our vision as Barloworld Equipment is ‘Building Nations’. The new facility confirms our commitment to the country’s economic development and prosperity, and we will ensure we continue to be successful for the next 60 years,” comments Hill. Barloworld Equipment Botswana’s growth opportunities are indicated by it supplying a brand new 50-unit Caterpillar fleet to African Mining Service (AMS) Botswana for the Motheo Copper Mine about 70 km from Ghanzi.

The new facility prides itself as a Centre of Excellence hosting associated functions such as administration, finance, procurement and SHEQ in-house to service the entire region. It includes an 1 200 m2 parts warehouse to keep more stock in-country to support all mining, construction and power customers.

A complete workshop includes a state-of-the-art Component Rebuild Centre (CRC) with full capabilities to service and rebuild machines and components. The workshop will have the capacity to accommodate the size of a 100 t off-highway truck. Remanufacturing is supported by a new welding bay, including a spray booth and wash bay.

“In terms of our value proposition to customers, it represents a major investment. The new Centre of Excellence allows us to offer a full suite of services to the mining, construction, energy and transportation sectors in Botswana,” says Hill. A training centre has been included to promote local skills development and empowerment.

“As part of our investment, we would like to develop our own manufacturing skills in-country. The aim is to grow the economy, employ more local citizens in Botswana in future and be a key role player in its development,” says Hill. The Centre of Excellence has a staff complement of 110, while Barloworld Equipment itself has 269 employees in Botswana overall, of which 97.4% is localised.

Hill adds that, from a risk profile perspective, Botswana is one of the best African countries to conduct business in at present, aided by political and economic stability and a stable electricity supply. “We have had tremendous support from the Botswana Investment Trade Corporation (BITC) during the project.”

Signalling its confidence in Botswana and the region, the Centre of Excellence at Phakalane is Phase One of an overall expansion strategy. Only half of the 4.5 ha site has been developed at present, with the flexibility and scope to grow in future as needed. Having resided in Botswana since 2015 and being Country Manager for Barloworld Equipment since 2021, Hill says the country presents an ideal foothold to tap into further opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

“The Botswana government is committed to diversify the economy and attract foreign investment. In terms of mining itself, we are seeing new mining licenses being awarded to other key role players as well,” says Hill.

Phase One completed final snagging at end April 2024 and the company anticipates relocating from its old premises at the beginning of May 2024. It is a significant milestone for a project that kicked off with board approval and concept design in 2021.

Hill highlights that the Botswana government is deliberate in its plan to expand the economy beyond its current mainstay, the diamond mining industry. “We are seeing a lot of investment in agriculture and manufacturing itself, which ties into our motto of ‘Building Nations’ as Barloworld Equipment, which is why we felt it fit to invest in the country’s potential.”

With the new facility serving the entire region as a dedicated Centre of Excellence – including supporting major mining operations at Jwaneng, Orapa, and Ghanzi – it was important to not only have a full-service facility, but an iconic head office building as well, inside and out.

The facility itself is based on the iconic curved façade of the main Isando head office in Johannesburg. “Our aim was to have an integrated world-class facility to provide the service excellence our customers rely on,” says Hill.

Another key factor was to boost staff morale. “We wanted a working environment where people want to come to work every day to contribute towards the company’s objectives, to grow as individuals and deliver breakthrough results not only for ourselves but also for our customers,” stresses Hill.

“Our current facility was outdated, prompting us to move with the times, not only for ourselves, but also for our customers, and ultimately our employees. That brand association is incredibly important, as people are motivated to be more productive when you have a bespoke working environment designed with all their needs in mind,” says Hill. This ranges from a full canteen to breakout areas and other amenities.

A major component of the design and interior fit-out has been to align with Barloworld Equipment’s own Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals. It means that the Centre of Excellence is a fully sustainable green facility, with 70% of water used on-site recycled and back-up power in place for any contingencies.

This required a flagship design and interior layout and fit-out, adds **Dennis Matlhaga**, Facilities Manager, Barloworld Equipment Botswana. Matlhaga collaborated closely with X-Furniture MD **Conrad Burger** and his team from the initial concept stage. “They had a major input from the planning and design phase,” notes Matlhaga.

The brief to X-Furniture was to provide a complete solution with respect to the different business lines represented at the Centre of Excellence, from administration to service and spare parts. “We wanted an overall solution to cater for all our diverse requirements. X-Furniture delivered to all our expectations, from ergonomic office chairs to shelving units in the storeroom and steel tables in other areas. From that perspective, we are very satisfied with the quality of the furniture supplied and the total solution in line with our brief,” comments Matlhaga.

Burger explains that X-Furniture responded to a Request for Proposal (RFQ) and was then shortlisted as one of five companies invited to submit tenders. “For us, it was fully understanding the client's needs and what was important for them in their way of working and what the outcome of the new head office should be, which is part of Barloworld’s strategy to establish a Sub-Saharan African footprint.”

What made the project unique is that Phakalane could serve as the benchmark for future Centres of Excellence elsewhere in Africa, which demanded a high attention to detail and quality and ensuring that Barloworld’s corporate identity is included throughout.

X-Furniture supplied all the office furniture, from soft seating for the reception area to amenities such as breakout and open plan areas, even extending to the bathroom lockers for the changerooms and an external social area.

“It was a full turnkey furniture project. We had access to the building layout and assisted our client with anything and everything to do with the fit-out. We manufactured, transported and installed, all the way to final sign-off,” says Burger. All the furniture was manufactured at X-Furniture’s South African factory according to Barloworld Equipment’s exact specifications.

While X-Furniture manufactured the bulk of the furniture, certain items came from other suppliers. “We project managed that aspect as well,” says Burger. At the end of the day, the company consolidated product from 17 suppliers into its own warehouse packaging process in the correct sequence, from where it was transported to site to be installed in the correct order. “This is an important part of what we do because if you are unfamiliar with that process and try and do it yourself, it can become quite tricky,” notes Burger.

What gives X-Furniture a definite advantage in such cross-border projects is that it has all the necessary export codes and certification in place. All product was consolidated in three trucks in South Africa in sequence of the installation and construction progress.

“We knew the open plan areas and offices would be accessible first, so that was the first truck. Then all the items, for example reception furniture or soft seating, that could potentially get damaged because it was still a construction site was sent on the final truck,” says Burger.

X-Furniture managed this complex logistics operation with a single point of contact for the client, including a full-time team and project manager on-site to assist with the project from day one when the initial skids arrived, all the way to three weeks later when it was completely signed off.

“The aim is to make it as simple as possible for the client, from purchase order to sign-off. We take care of that entire process, from logistics to manufacturing and installation. Other clients or suppliers do not necessarily provide that service. For us, it is to make the project team’s life as easy as possible. That is from experience giving feedback as to what will work best. It is a challenge, but we always provide the best solution,” says Burger.

Commenting on the end result, Barloworld Equipment Marketing Specialist **Thamiso Manne** concludes: “We are the market leader with this Centre of Excellence. It is the pinnacle of our marketing and branding strategy for Botswana and the region. In terms of our customer base, our world-class facility will drive our services and solutions. At the end of the day, our facility will speak for itself.”

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**Notes to the editor**

To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click on the X-Furniture link to view the company’s press office.

**About X-Furniture**X-Furniture is a leading office furniture provider, with imported and locally manufactured solutions to suite our client’s needs, timing and budget. We help organisations and their partners to create work environments that support productive and engaged employees.

Through integrating furniture with architectural and audio-visual technology, holistically designed spaced can dramatically impact your bottom line.

Partnered with manufacturing facilities covering an area of over 400 000 m2 with more than 3200 employees, these facilities sit in environmental industry parks where the ecological environment is the most suited for both working and living. All these facilities implement JIT lean production management, contributing to large output, quick delivery, cost effective manufacturing and high quality!

X-Furniture is proud to be the Sunon authorised dealer in South Africa.

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