



MR PLANT HIRE: CREATING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Plant Planet sit down with Steven King, Managing Director of Mr Plant Hire, to discuss all things Mr Plant Hire; from his new role in the business to their vision for the future.

IN THIS issue of Plant Planet, we sat down with Steven King, Managing Director of Mr Plant Hire. Steven joined the business as the new Managing Director. The company felt that having undergone a change of leadership following the retirement of Martin Lawrence, the time was right to refresh its look in readiness for the ambitious growth plans ahead.

Starting from the beginning, Steven took us through the history of the company and how it all started...



"Mr. Plant Hire has been going for just over 40 years. In fact, our 40th anniversary was last year. The business was started by David Elston and Martin Lawrence. The two of them ran it as a private business, which specialized, to start with, in small plant and tool hire, but found a bit of a niche serving the M & E - mechanical and electrical markets.

From there they built the business up to four locations over the years.

"They've always been keen on a strong, local presence and service. It's quite a big business but it's also quite compact in the way that it operates. I took over earlier this year."

Steven has a vast amount of experience already within the industry and went on to tell us a little about his experience and what he hoped to bring to his new role in the business.

"Previously, I worked with Elliot for three years in the modular building space as business development director and from then I joined GGR as sales and commercial director. I started my career with Sunbelt Rentals as a manager for 21 years, until I decided it was a good opportunity for a career change. I joined Mr. Plant Hire back in August last year. Martin embedded me into the business and helped me understand more about it, and he let me take it from there..."

From early on, my plan was to refresh the brand. It's a great business. It is very solid and very well set up, but I felt that we needed a bit of a polish to bring it

into the modern world.

Martin has been fully supportive and I still speak to him about things. He's remained quite close to the business even though he's retired."

Steven went on to comment on the reasons behind the refresh and some ideas he has had behind it.

"The construction world wants to modernise and the construction market needs to modernise. I didn't want to completely lose the name Mr. Plant Hire. It's been going for 40

years and it's our name, so we decided to emphasise the initials MPH.

"THE CONSTRUCTION WORLD WANTS TO MODERNIZE AND THE CONSTRUCTION MARKET NEEDS TO MODERNIZE"

We'd like to bring forward the MPH abbreviation so that it becomes a bit more prevalent than the full Mr. Plant Hire name.

We've also got new trucks on the road that have a new livery, and it was that modern, crisp image that we want to continue with, rather than the previous images of white vehicles. →



STEVEN KING, MANAGING DIRECTOR,
MR PLANT HIRE

We had a lot of discussions with the management team and with the wider staff as well and eventually we all settled on the

“WE HAVE A SOUND HISTORY BUT WE HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FUTURE.”

same logo without telling each other what we were looking at. Even some outside influences, such as family members, all came back to that same logo. Which out of the 15 or 20 logo's on the page to all agree on one image, made us confident that we made the right decision.”

Steven rightly pointed out how far the industry has come over the last few years and how now we must adapt to the many different

influences impacting the industry and the role it plays in the current climate.

“We have a sound history but we have to acknowledge our future. That's

something that we've got to be really mindful of.

I can see the development of a more professional aspect. We've had a new website done in line with the new branding, we've got the new identity on the vehicles and gradually we'll refresh.

For me, I like to avoid the term rebrand as it suggests to me that we're ashamed of something that we've been in the past and we're

absolutely not! We're very proud of our business and its history, but simply, times change and the business needs to change with them.”

With the refresh in mind, Steven highlighted some of the core aims and values that he wants to remain at the heart of the brand.

“We wanted to keep the name Mr Plant Hire, because at the end of the day, it's the name that we've traded under for 40 years. We want to look a little bit more polished but at the same time, we are still a relatively compact local hire company in London. We want to keep that image as well as that view of our customers.

Gradually, we are getting national coverage and actually quite a sizeable group. →



I think 50 million turnover is the goal."

Mr Plant Hire not only has ambitious plans to modernize, but also to grow the company and its dedicated team.

"WE'RE PROUD OF OUR BUSINESS AND ITS HISTORY, BUT SIMPLY, TIMES CHANGE AND THE BUSINESS NEEDS TO CHANGE WITH THEM"

Steven adds: "Directly, the aim was to modernise. The bigger goal was around attracting the talent. We have such a great team, and this was an opportunity in my first Managing Director role and it was only when I looked a little deeper, I

realised the scale and the quality of the business beneath.

I just thought as I joined the business, if that's going to present a challenge for me to attract the right people to the business, it's

felt that the biggest attraction to the role for him was the fact that he felt he could make such a big difference in the business.

When discussing growth and expansion, Steven highlighted just some ideas that he was hoping to look at expanding.

"We've got some ambitious growth plans. I'd like to expand further

something I've got to change. John Mitchell, Marketing Manager,

into London, or get better coverage in North London, with maybe one or two other locations, and then I'd like to look more towards the home counties, maybe down on the south coast.

Being a bit more specialist and having more growth around more locations would be the biggest thing. The flexibility of the business is fantastic. I've never worked in a business so nimble and so open to ideas.

We'd like to grow our plant and our business a little bit more, to have a better presence and maybe move into some of the more specialist material handling and niche markets.

We're currently launching a safety division/safety element to the business. We've actually expanded our lifting quite massively. Although we don't badge ourselves up as having a

lifting division, we have an access division, a plant division, and an M & E division, and within the M & E division is a very strong lifting business. In the future, we will perhaps turn that into a specialist badge of itself."

The last few years proved to be a busy and challenging period for many within the industry, with a variety of factors influencing the market. Steven reflected on how the business endured some of these influences and the current challenges of the market.

"I joined just after COVID, but again, (David and Martin) brought the business through COVID and we are currently having our best ever year on the back of it. While obviously, nobody would ever want it to happen again, there were actually some positive effects of COVID in terms of, understanding the strength of our business and actually getting the team to pull together.

While Brexit has not directly impacted us as a business, it has had an effect on the market that we serve in within London construction. But London construction is always so busy, it's a solid market to be in. The pressures of inflation really are the unseen challenge. Our cost of doing business is rising in line with inflation, but our rental prices aren't. The biggest challenge is aligning prices with the current rising costs in our profession.

Every year, it is far more expensive to buy. And it's quite evident in a rental business because when you replace items at X amount of years, you can see

what you're buying them for now, it's 20-30% higher than you were about buy them for back then. That's the biggest pressure that any rental company will face. It's getting a fair price for the quality of equipment and the service that we provide.

Looking to the future, Steven took us through some of the new developments that Mr Plant Hire are looking at in their vision for the time ahead.

"Obviously, the M&E sector is something that we are heavily focused on. I'd quite like us to look into the glazing and curtain walling, for service in terms of the lifting and the handling equipment. perhaps we will at some stage look to diversify out of some of the construction markets.

But for now, we've got the product, we've got the reputation.

The solid foundation that Martin and David set up in the

"WHAT WE'VE GOT NOW IS A STRONG CULTURE IN THE BUSINESS THAT'S FULLY SUPPORTED"

business has given us a really good reputation, and a strong view of our customers. I think what we've now got is a strong culture in the business that's fully supported.

It's the best job I've ever had and a great place to work where we do everything we can to make it a great place to work, and that obviously reflects in the service and the way we treat our customers as well." ■



HGV'S DISPLAYING THE NEW MR PLANT HIRE LOOK

