

The Followmont five

QUEENSLAND-BASED FOLLOWMONT TRANSPORT IS A VALUES-BASED ORGANISATION THAT HOLDS ITS STAFF AND SUPPLIERS LIKE JOST AUSTRALIA TO A SIMPLE, YET STRICT SET OF STANDARDS TO ENSURE SUPERIOR SERVICE.

Almost 35 years ago, Followmont Transport was born in Brisbane as the brainchild of Alan Salpietro and Bernie Tobin. Starting out delivering magazines from a small office, the company now boasts four workshops, 650 staff members and a fleet of around 800 pieces of equipment that collectively clock up over 75,000km every night. The business still remains in family hands with Bernie's son, Mark Tobin, who explains that deliveries no longer purely consist of magazines in Brisbane, with the

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Followmont fleet now taking “everything from envelopes to fruit to every town in Queensland and New South Wales”, Mark says. “Although the business has grown and changed since its early days, it is still built on the same five values: service, passion, unity, innovation and integrity.” First in his list, Mark says service is the most important contributor to business success. “Do it today, not tomorrow. It’s personal,

not commercial,” Mark states. “We’ve had clients with us since day one and it’s because of our service attitude. We deliver thousands of consignments every night, in full, on time with 98 per cent compliance. If we don’t meet that, then I am quick to fix the problem because a business takes years to build but only seconds to destroy with bad service.” The high expectations for service don’t just apply to Followmont staff. Mark says



Followmont's Mark Tobin.

he expects the same dedication to service from his suppliers, whether it is Kenworth and Mack for his prime movers, Vawdrey Australia for his trailers or JOST Australia for his Lubetronic JSK 37CW greaseless fifth wheels and Modul landing legs. “We’ve been using JOST equipment as a

standard from day one. It has always been a high quality, low maintenance product, but building a good product is one thing. In my business, a focus on service and hands-on relationships is crucial,” Mark says – adding that when it comes to JOST Australia, that expectation is consistently met. “It doesn’t just sell and walk, JOST actually makes sure the product is taken care of correctly by getting involved at a workshop level. A team comes out every six months or so to make sure we have the training we need, which is especially helpful for the young guys in the workshop.” Mark says Followmont is big on providing opportunities for young people wanting to pursue a career in transport, whether by training for Certificates in transport and operations or by bringing them on as apprentice mechanics. “My passion for transport means I am thoroughly involved in the survival of the industry, and part of that is training the next generation to the standards we expect today,” Mark says. “I’m passionate about training and development right across the board, from driving to management. I’m huge on having the right people in the right place, and providing them with the tools and information they need to keep up with the company as we evolve.” Mark says that trailing equipment in the fleet has also changed dramatically as the industry advances with increasingly innovative equipment. “We’re always looking for what’s new in the market and investigating ways to improve asset utilisation across the fleet,” Mark

says – adding that the search brought Followmont to Performance-Based Standards (PBS) approved trailing gear. “We have a lot of PBS equipment in the fleet because it’s important to make the most of your trailer capacity,” Mark says, referring to his fleet of 36-pallet B-double drop deck curtain-siders with up to 168m³ capacity. “We’ve got another seven sets of the double drop decks on the way right now as the business grows. We don’t get rid of our assets, but once a trailer has had its day it’s downgraded to short haul. We make the most of what we have.” The five Followmont values all rely on the last, most important value, Mark says, which is the integrity of the people in the business – the variable that everything else hinges on. “The secret to success is having the right people, right culture, right values. It’s not original and it’s not even really a secret, but sometimes companies forget that people are the key,” Mark says. “Everything in your business can change, from the cargo to the destinations. But it’s the culture that keeps it alive.”

Contact
 JOST Australia
 501 Mt Derrimut Road
 Derrimut, Victoria 3030
 Ph: 03 83688222
 Web: www.jostaustralia.com.au



JOST LubeTronic
 The JOST LubeTronic automatic system keeps the JSK 37CW fifth wheels on the Followmont fleet adequately lubricated by electronically dispensing high performance grease, minimising maintenance and eliminating manual greasing.

