



THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

With 35 years of experience under its belt, NFT Specialized in Tower Cranes sits atop the market in the Middle East and beyond.

It all started for NFT back in the 1980s when chief executive Nabil Al Zahlawi, then working with the dealer for French crane manufacturer Potain in Saudi Arabia, took advantage of his knowledge of the brand to eventually become the dealer for the entire region.

Today, Abu Dhabi-based NFT employs 1,500 people, providing a centralised and specialised range of tower cranes, passenger hoists, construction equipment, tools and other systems.

With 35 years of experience under its belt, the company is well placed to

help solve the most complex logistics and engineering problems, offering customised solutions for all lifting needs thanks to its impressive in-house technical know-how.

NFT prides itself on being a home-grown player in the GCC construction market. Based in the capital of the UAE, it holds a strong regional presence in the Gulf and the Middle East. Globally, the company also has footholds in Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia and more recently the United Kingdom. It exports to any country in the world and is operational in 32 countries worldwide

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and continues to expand geographically.

The company's fleet is constantly growing and currently boasts over 2,000 new and used tower cranes, 500 plus hoists and a full stock of spare parts. The size and scale of its operation has allowed NFT to be ranked as the number one tower crane supplier in the world four years running (by IC Tower Index).

NFT is the exclusive dealer for Potain Tower cranes, GJJ/ORBIT and PEGA hoists. "Potain is a French brand so it's competing with European manufacturers," says Nagham Al Zahlawi, NFT's strategy & marketing

manager. "We do not compete with Chinese manufacturers because the structure, design, and quality of European cranes are far superior."

Models range from small self-erecting cranes with 700 kg/26m capacity, right up to a giant MD 3200, capable of carrying 26 tons at 85 metres with a 64 to 80 ton maximum load. Similarly, hoist models range from 1 to 4 ton lifting capacity and are offered with variable speeds ranging from 36m/minute to the world's fastest PEGA hoist with a speed of 120m/minute and 3.2 ton lifting capacity.

Thanks to its partnership with PEGA, NFT now offers a green concept with hoists featuring environmentally friendly options. For more price sensitive customers, it offers GJJ hoists, re-branded as ORBIT, a brand exclusive to NFT.

Market mover

NFT is currently experiencing more gentle levels of growth than it did back in the heady days of 2006-2008, Al Zahlawi says, when fleet turnover was impressively high. Despite the more challenging market conditions today the ►

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► company recently signed a big order with Samsung to deliver 30 tower cranes in the space of just six months for a major project in South Korea. And NFT is anticipating more major orders ahead of the start of the biggest event this region has ever hosted. “We’re optimistic because we believe in the vision of the UAE and we are hopeful that the Expo 2020 will bring a lot of opportunities,” Al Zahlawi says.

NFT was one of the first regional suppliers to introduce a rental model back in 1994 and today its business model is 60% hire and 40% sales. Another trend in the market is increased demand for used tower cranes. “The financial crisis happened so abruptly and many manufacturers failed to see the warning signs and could not cut production quickly, leaving them sitting on huge inventories of machines,” Al Zahlawi says. “Considering many buyers are now looking for bargains, the used market has been soaring over the past decade.”

NFT has moved to take advantage of this trend by introducing facilities at its new 300,000 square metre yard, where used tower cranes are refurbished to an almost pre-used condition. “The question for contractors is always: repair or replace? NFT proudly offers solutions for both,” Al Zahlawi says.

NFT anticipates demand for high capacity tower cranes to continue rising, pushing manufacturers to focus on bigger equipment. The company offers the largest Potain tower cranes as well as strong luffers with the MR 418 and MR 608 models. It also projects a rise in demand for self-erecting tower cranes to replace mobile cranes for the construction of low-rise establishments. Indeed, continued demand for villa housing as well as the increasing influence of environmental considerations are key drivers of innovation in the self-erecting tower crane and crane folding sectors, Al Zahlawi says. ■

NFT AT THE BIG 5 HEAVY

Like every event it participates at, NFT’s primary objective is to offer support to its existing customers.

“During the three days of the exhibition, NFT’s CEO, Sales and Operations team will be present and available to welcome all its customers at the stand,” says Al Zahlawi. “Second, NFT would like to promote its products and services to ensure more stakeholders are aware of what we do and how we do it. Finally, we hope to introduce ourselves to new customers from around the world. We’re looking forward to a successful event, especially now that we have an exhibition tailored for the heavy construction industry!”

NFT also plans to showcase its new yard to give customers an idea just how big its operation is. In terms of products, the company will be promoting two of Potain’s latest innovations: the MCH and the HUP. The MCH is the latest introduction in the top slewing range, where the luffing jib is powered by an exclusive new hydraulic cylinder. Power consumption is also reduced because it requires a smaller generator than conventional luffing mechanisms. Installation of the MCH is faster as hydraulic system components are connected at the factory for faster and easier erection. The MCH promotes cost savings while improving ROI by being ideal for congested urban job sites, saving time on erecting and dismantling the crane, and reducing costs related to logistics and delivery.

Another product NFT plans to promote is Potain’s latest self-erecting innovation, the HUP, which has four main features. It is versatile, offering up to 16 configurations for more lifting options. Secondly, its innovative movement technology enables unfolding in narrow and compact areas so the jib unfolds over the top to preserve space under the crane when working next to buildings. Thirdly, it is 100% “digital” in the sense that its remote control-powered erection and piloting delivers convenient and secure operation. Finally, the HUP guarantees higher ROI because crane erection and dismantling are fast and easy with minimum operator effort.