



IT'S A SWAP

Think Swap... from left Steven and Andrew Swap, co-managing director David Swap, and Cummins NZ automotive business manager Eric Carswell. Operations.

New Zealand company J Swap Contractors is a thriving family-run business with hundreds of pieces of equipment, including 200 trucks.

J Swap Contractors is a time-honoured New Zealand family company that operates more than 1000 pieces of equipment, including 200 trucks, over its five business divisions - transport, aggregates, civil construction, stockfood and bulk storage.

From humble beginnings more than 80 years ago, the company today – based in Matamata in the North Island's Waikato region – plays a key role in shaping the country's infrastructure, producing over three million tonnes of aggregate a year from its 12 quarries for road construction and other projects.

And that's just one aspect of the business. The J Swap name is prominent in other business sectors, including the supply of stockfood to North Island dairy farmers, where 800,000 tonnes of products are delivered yearly to over 2000 customers.

The company traces its roots back to 1934 when Joseph Swap began carting gravel from a stream running through the family's dairy farm; the gravel was in heavy demand for construction work at Matamata and other nearby towns and Joseph eventually had three trucks on the job.

The rest, as they say, is history. Joseph's two sons David and Lewis have led J Swap for a number of decades – in fact, each has clocked up more than 50 years' service with the company – and there are now also third and fourth generation Swaps in the business, bringing individual talents and a new way of thinking to the table.

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A strong working relationship has been established with the Cummins New Zealand team.



Top: A typical combination in NZ – 8x4 truck coupled to a five-axle trailer.
Right: One of the 65 Kenworths that spearhead the Swap transport task.

The family has built a great brand – a trusted brand. Their involvement in community events and projects, and their attention to detail and integrity, are second to none, resulting in a large loyal client base. Loyal is also a description that applies to J Swap employees who are acknowledged as being at the core of the company's success.

Strong relationship with Cummins.

A fleet of 65 Kenworths – among a total truck fleet size of around 200 units – spearheads the vertically integrated J Swap transport task. In days gone by, Cummins wasn't the preferred engine brand but in recent years the scene has changed.

Service manager Andrew Swap says a strong working relationship has been established with the Cummins New Zealand team and that the Cummins product – notably the ISXe5 – is “doing the job”.

Southpac Trucks delivers the service and parts support that underpins the J Swap preference for the Kenworth brand. The Kenworths are well utilised, operating at up to 58 tonnes with 8x4 trucks coupled to five-axle trailers – a common combination in New Zealand.

The diversity of products carried by the fleet also provides back loading, gaining an edge in efficiency.

When you've got hundreds of pieces of equipment to service – mobile crushers, a couple of hundred excavators, wheel loaders and graders, 200 trucks and so the list goes on – a well thought out maintenance strategy is obviously critical.

Not surprisingly, Andrew Swap has a 45-strong maintenance crew, including 15 specialising in trucks, to keep the gear running efficiently.

In recent years, the truck fleet has taken on a moving billboard approach as part of a brand awareness exercise, with many of the truck bodies and trailers adorned with bold murals and the clever ‘Think Swap’ messaging. “We're in a competitive environment in everything we do so we decided to raise the company profile, especially in rural areas,” says transport manager Steven Swap. A side benefit is that the vinyl sheeting applied to the bodies with the signwriting is easier to clean and keep tidy than the bare aluminium.

As J Swap Contractors closes in on a century of business, the ‘Think Swap’ slogan takes on even greater significance for a family company that has indeed become a great success story. ■