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Move Yourself self serve game breaker

This year's Fast Mover winner, Move Yourself Trailer Hire shows how business model innovation puts technology in the shade.

Founder and Chairman, Bill Cowie, invented the Move Yourself kiosk system which takes the customer through the vehicle selection and payment process in easy steps, streamlining the hire process to make it as fast and simple as possible through online booking, self serve kiosks and call centre service.

In the mid-1970s Bill ran South Australian based trailer manufacturer, Delta Engineering and was content to do just that until he "got sick" of being asked for loans of his products because no hire trailers could be had in Adelaide.

"I remember it was a Friday. We had already had two people come in to ask if they could hire trailers. I said 'The next buggie who comes in - hire him one.'"

By day's end, Bill was in a new business.

Hiring through service stations came about when a client wanted to return a trailer on a Sunday when Delta was closed. Bill arranged with the 24-hour BP servo next door to accept the return. Soon, demand saw the arrangement formalized on a percentage basis.

Inquiry prompted the next innovation, in the mid-1970s, when a client asked if Delta offered any enclosed trailers for furniture transport. Bill said, "You want to move yourself, mate?" Exactly so; two weeks later Delta offered Australia's first fully enclosed trailer for hire and the Move Yourself brand was born.

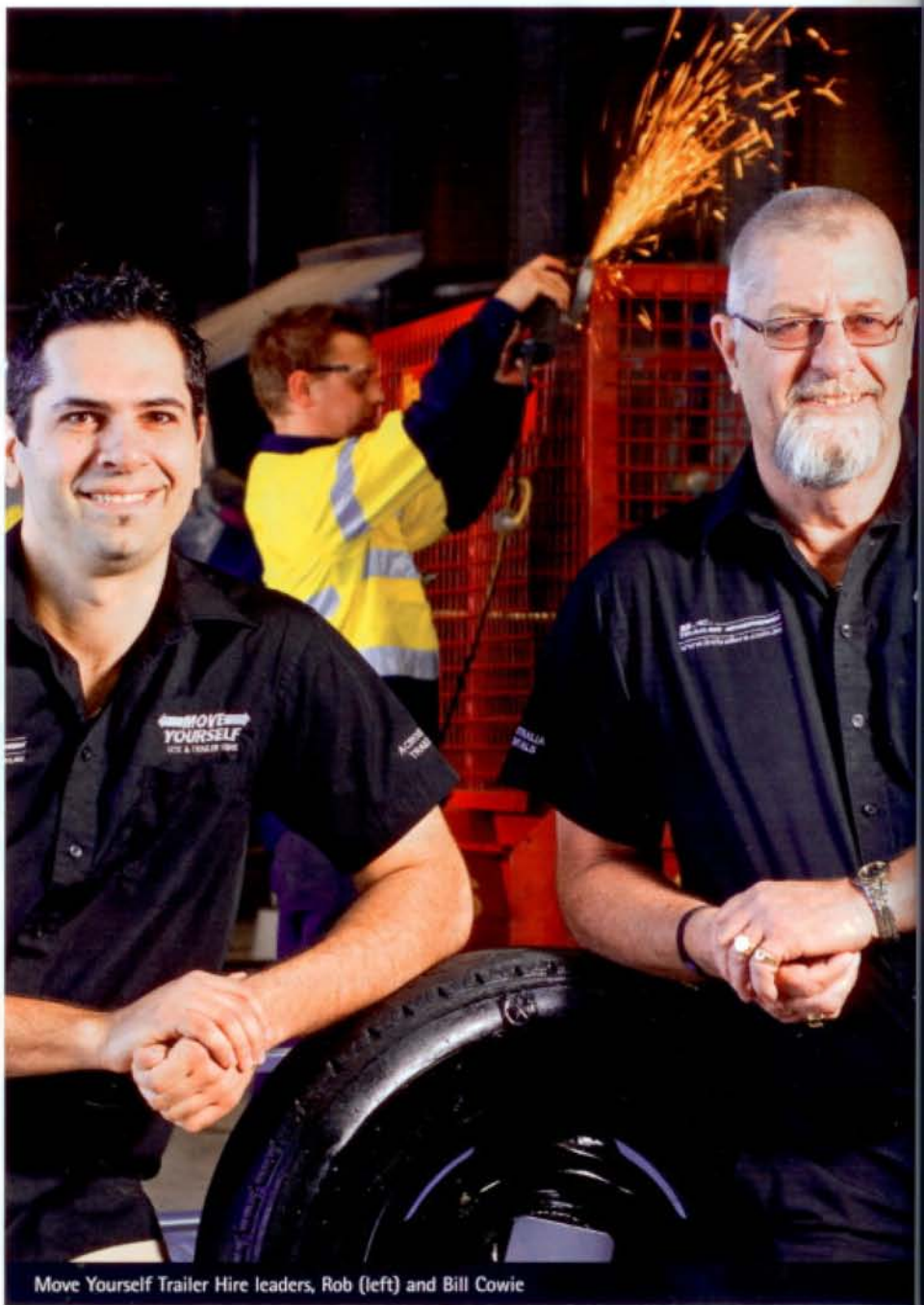
Expansion was slow; the major breakthrough came 15 years ago at Christmas time, when Bill invented the kiosk system in a stroke of inspiration. He woke up in the night with the plan in his head, and the next day built the prototype.

The move was a response to problems with manual hire systems - serious barriers to growth. Weekend queues at servos challenged servo operators to fill out paperwork. Hire details went incomplete. Traffic fines were open to dispute. Servo owners were hesitant.

The Move Yourself self-serve kiosk removed those barriers at a stroke. The first field site, at Mackay went on-line and proved the concept even using then-current dialup internet.

"After that, we grew like you wouldn't believe," Bill says.

Wireless broadband gave more scope for expansion and Move Yourself was the first to introduce a driver's licence scanning function to bring hire processing time down to one minute.



Move Yourself Trailer Hire leaders, Rob (left) and Bill Cowie

In coming months, Bill says, Move Yourself kiosks will support a "huge rollout" of truck and ute hire around Australia where the kiosks open and check vehicle details at point of hire, then check details again at the point of return, seamlessly.

Move Yourself Trailer and Ute hire now offers vehicles at almost 1000 locations around Australia with many more in the process of affiliation. The Cavan-based firm also offers truck hire and lawnmower hire at many locations and operates a service fleet.

"Our main areas of business are all over Australia. We give each site the opportunity to be utilized through our

website and call centre," says GM, Rob Cowie.

"(The kiosk system) has made the oil companies keen to deal with us as it takes care of a number of duty-of-care issues and offers great reporting systems.

"As a result of making Trailer Hire on site much faster and more streamlined, it has become very profitable and has opened the door to basically all sites the major oil companies have for us to supply trailers to.

"We have been talking to interested parties in the UK, USA & NZ, but do not need these to grow further. There are still great opportunities for us here in Australia."