



## VANS AT THE READY

Renault Trucks' Master chassis has a choice of three body styles in its Ready for Business LCV range: tipper, dropsides or Luton. It has teamed up with VFS to build the bodies, and both chassis and body come under its three-year warranty. In addition, CoolKit provides temperature-controlled panel van conversions, including fridge and freezer van options (pictured above).

The new VW Crafter design also has a range of bodies under its 'Engineered To Go' and 'Engineered For You' banners (see also pp28-29).

Based on the TGE, its rebadged version of the Crafter, MAN anticipates launching a Vans to Go range of ready-built tippers, dropsides and Lutons in 2018. Just as on the heavy side, the benefit will be reduced lead times and a body built by an approved supplier. "This will also mean that the entire vehicle will be supplied with the same three-year unlimited mileage warranty as the base chassis," says a spokesman. MAN's target audience is expected to be retailers.

# Off the rack

Once described as niche, the market for quick-turnaround, ready-made trucks is one most manufacturers ignore at their peril. By Chris Tindall

**T**he expansion of IVECO's ready-bodied truck range earlier this year was a sign that the market for quick-turnaround vehicles is thriving.

Building on its DriveAway range of existing 3.5- and 7.5-tonne models, the manufacturer is now offering several new trucks. They include 12-tonne boxes and curtainsiders on both its standard and low-height Eurocargo chassis, 18-tonne Eurocargo rigids with curtainside bodywork and tuckaway tail-lifts, as well as a 26-tonne Stralis with a choice of day cab or high-roof sleeper cab and a curtainside body and tuckaway tail-lift.

IVECO has also moved into the temperature-controlled sector, teaming up with Paneltex and Carrier Transicold to make 7.5-, 12-, 18- and 26-tonne models available. In the construction sector, it is offering 18-tonne Eurocargo skiploaders from a choice of three bodybuilders, with the ability to include additional customer-specified options

post-build. IVECO has also introduced 32-tonne Trakker 8x4 chassis with hookloader bodies from Boughton and Hyva, plus tippers from Abba, Boweld and Kel-Berg. Tipper grabs are also available. Rounding off the range is a 16-tonne left-hand drive Eurocargo road sweeper with Johnston bodywork.

The expansion represents an investment of more than £11.5 million; IVECO clearly believes shorter delivery times and less hassle for customers is a winning combination on dealer forecourts.

But it's not the only manufacturer that understands the benefits of ready-made vehicles.

Renault Trucks' Ready for Business range targets the company's strategic industry sectors: construction, utilities, passenger vehicles, refrigeration and horse boxes. It has a range of pre-converted vehicles: tippers, dropsides and Lutons, as well as curtainsiders and even cherry pickers.

Grahame Neagus, Renault Trucks UK and Ireland head of LCV, says: "We are providing a very high-end spec solution to people who want the best quality body, but might not be able to afford the time to wait."

Neagus says the range is proving popular among customers who have just won a contract or have an operational issue that requires them to act fast. "Some vehicles are available immediately, some later, but ideally it's [up to] four to five weeks. That might sound like a long time, but on a build that normally takes 22 weeks, it's not long at all."



MAN 8x4 fitted with tipper, crane and TGS cab

And he adds: "It's a necessity to have it as a product offer, as far as we are concerned. It's the immediacy of need. It's the difference between winning a contract or potentially losing out to another manufacturer."

Meanwhile, MAN's 'Trucks to Go' has now been running for five years and offers "almost immediate" delivery of pre-built rigid vehicles ranging from 7.5-tonne boxes and curtains through 18-tonne skips to heavyweight tippers (left) and hookloaders. And Mercedes' stock of ready-made construction vehicles includes Antos and Arocs 1824 4x2 skiploaders and Arocs 3240K 8x4 hooks, tippers and tipper grabs, as well as factory-fit Fuso Canter tipper bodies and dropsides.

Richard Waterworth, Isuzu Trucks' head of sales, says it has pushed its



3.5-tonne product hard, and regularly checks in with bodybuilder TGS to ensure vehicles are in stock on its premises and customers can see "exactly what it is they are buying". He adds: "Each customer has their own needs. We still do bespoke builds, but a generic spec fits the vast majority of operations."

Isuzu Truck's Driveaway range includes its 3.5-tonne Grafter, with short or long wheelbase dropsides (below). It is also doing 7.5-tonne tippers and dropsides, as well as boxes and curtainsides at this weight, and an 11-tonne tipper.

Richard Cook, MD of Isuzu dealer Warrington Vehicle Centre, says it focuses on Driveaway products because it makes the job easier for the customer and the salesforce: "Since Whole Vehicle Type Approval [came in], there are more stages to go through. Bodybuilders are so busy and there are so few of them; every time you ask a question it could be two days before you get an answer."

**OTHER BENEFITS**

A simpler, integrated supply chain, rather than speed of delivery, is the main advantage for some customers. Under its Paccar Bodies offering, DAF Trucks offers LF and CF vehicles for sale on short notice, for 7.5-, 12- and 19-tonne trucks with aerobody, box bodies and curtainsiders (above) and a range of cabs. Phil Moon, DAF marketing manager, describes the service as a "one-stop shop" for customers, giving them a complete vehicle without having to introduce any secondary bodybuilders into the process.

He cites Royal Mail as an example: "It is very prescriptive in what it wants. That favours us in terms of production; we have a consistent specification over a mass production. Large volumes mean a bigger potential to save money and time. If we are delivering 50 vehicles identically specified, mass production gives us some scale.

"From the customer's perspective, they can have the vehicle delivered to them wherever they want it. It doesn't have to be delivered to an intermediary point, so it gives the customer consistency. It saves that stepping-stone approach to delivery."

DAF also offers quick-turnaround vehicles for construction. "We have a pipeline of chassis going to a bodybuilder," Moon says; it works with Thompsons and Hyva. "That means a customer can look for a skiploader, hookloader, tipper or a tipper grab and choose one of those and get it in a much shorter lead time."

He adds: "For big customers with a lot of repetition, it makes sense. It's taking away the need for the customer to be a super-updated engineer designing their own truck." **TE**



Two 3.5-tonne gvw Grafter chassis cabs display options available for construction customers