

Technology wipes out another daggy job

Mark Fenton-Jones

Crawling inside the barrel of a ready-mixed concrete truck to chip away accumulated concrete with a jackhammer must rank as one of the worst jobs.

But it is necessary as concrete gradually builds up on the inside surface of every truck's agitator — the mixing drum and its blades — reducing the concrete carrying capacity and increasing the weight carried by

the truck. The usual method of removing so-called dead concrete is by "de-dagging", whereby a labourer is given a jackhammer and climbs inside the cement truck's barrel.

Not surprisingly, this can be a dangerous job because falling chunks of dried or "dead" concrete, sharp agitator blades and the accidental rotation of the drum can cause injuries, and even death to a jackhammer operator.

Moreover, long periods in a

cramped, confined space with a jackhammer also leads to repetitive strain injury, silicosis and loss of hearing.

Agi-Kleen, an Australian company, believes it has found a cheaper and more efficient system.

The company has acquired the exclusive rights to the Blasters Ready Jet technology, developed in the US, which uses a high-pressure water jet system for removing the build-up of dead concrete.

Agi-Kleen claims the system can remove dead concrete in two hours and requires fewer operators than manual de-dagging, which can take up to eight hours.

Several concrete suppliers have started using the cleaning system which, according to Agi-Kleen, has removed more than 500 tonnes of dead concrete.

The company is supporting the expansion of its operations through the appointment of more franchisees.

SME courses offered

Industry & Investment NSW and Deloitte Private are offering Business MasterClass 2011, a program for SMEs and privately owned businesses in western Sydney. The first in the series begins tomorrow.

Business gets chatting

Salesforce.com has started a private social network, chatter.com, for Australian businesses.

Affiliate program

Occupancy.com launched its accommodation affiliate program, which pays referral commissions to affiliate websites that link to Occupancy.com sites. It provides access to more than 25,000 properties on TakeABreak.com.au and rentahome.com.au.

Sites take pain out of planning

Technology wipes out another daggy job

Mark Fenton-Jones

Crawling inside the barrel of a ready-mixed concrete truck to chip away accumulated concrete with a jackhammer must rank as one of the worst jobs.

But it is necessary as concrete gradually builds up on the inside surface of every truck's agitator — the mixing drum and its blades — reducing the concrete carrying capacity and increasing the weight carried by

the truck. The usual method of removing so-called dead concrete is by "de-dagging", whereby a labourer is given a jackhammer and climbs inside the cement truck's barrel.

Not surprisingly, this can be a dangerous job because falling chunks of dried or "dead" concrete, sharp agitator blades and the accidental rotation of the drum can cause injuries, and even death to a jackhammer operator.

Moreover, long periods in a

cramped, confined space with a jackhammer also leads to repetitive strain injury, silicosis and loss of hearing.

Agi-Kleen, an Australian company, believes it has found a cheaper and more efficient system.

The company has acquired the exclusive rights to the Blasters Ready Jet technology, developed in the US, which uses a high-pressure water jet system for removing the build-up of dead concrete.

Agi-Kleen claims the system can remove dead concrete in two hours and requires fewer operators than manual de-dagging, which can take up to eight hours.

Several concrete suppliers have started using the cleaning system which, according to Agi-Kleen, has removed more than 500 tonnes of dead concrete.

The company is supporting the expansion of its operations through the appointment of more franchisees.

SME courses offered

Industry & Investment NSW and Deloitte Private are offering Business MasterClass 2011, a program for SMEs and privately owned businesses in western Sydney. The first in the series begins tomorrow.

Business gets chatting

Salesforce.com has started a private social network, chatter.com, for Australian businesses.

Affiliate program

Occupancy.com launched its accommodation affiliate program, which pays referral commissions to affiliate websites that link to Occupancy.com sites. It provides access to more than 25,000 properties on TakeABreak.com.au and rentahome.com.au.

Telcoinbox plans

Telecommunications wholesaler and franchisor, Telcoinbox, plans to focus on acquiring small to medium telecommunications businesses, in particular Internet Service Providers experiencing sluggish business growth and margin squeeze.

Mining investments

Twenty-five per cent of funds invested on the Australian Small Scale Offerings Board in the last two months went into the mining and minerals sector, followed by IT (24 per cent) and the green and health sectors at 13 per cent each.

Business support

The number of calls to the federal government's Small Business Support Line hit 25,000 this week, while Enterprise Connect's latest round of the Workshops, Industry Intelligence and Networking (WIIN) service, is about to begin.

Stable values

Despite a lower volume of businesses offered for sale, values were relatively stable in the December quarter, according to the BizExchange Index of private business values.

Hunger pains

Restaurateurs are worried that they will not be able to pass on escalating costs to diners. Galaxy Research's latest data for the American Express Dining Insight Report found that more than 80 per cent of respondents are concerned about the rising costs associated with running a restaurant, while 74 per cent also worry about reduced consumer spending.

Sites take pain out of planning

Michelle Higgins

When it comes to planning a holiday, travellers can either spend hours online figuring out where to go, which flights and hotels to book, and what to do when they get there, or they can call a travel agent to figure it out for them.

Now, a new breed of members-only websites is offering something in between.

Call it the curated search. These hybrid sites aim to eliminate much of the annoyance of online trip planning by winnowing the selection of hotels and destinations to an edited list, which has been vetted to appeal to the sensibilities of affluent travellers. Instead of 600 hotels in Los Angeles, for example, you may get only 11.

An added attraction: travellers are offered the personalised help of offline experts to customise their vacation.

The sites include Jetsetter.com, which introduced an edited list of hotels and holidays that have been reviewed by Jetsetter correspondents. Unlike the hotel deals that are offered through the site's popular flash sales, these accommodations can be booked at any time. Jetsetter is also testing a program that — for a fee of about \$US150 — pairs members with travel writers who have been to the selected destination.

MyLittleSwans.com, a new high-end travel site, focuses primarily on family travel with suggested itineraries for more than 30 destinations, based on vacations taken by the founder, Katrina Garnett, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur, and her family. Members can duplicate those experiences, which include camel rides in Morocco and tango lessons in Argentina, or work with the same operators and guides the family used on their



Good to get away ... customised travel sites that do the sifting for you are attracting travellers.

Photo: ISTOCK

trips to customise a new vacation.

NextGreatPlace.com, a start-up, is creating a matchmaking service for travellers seeking high-end holidays at screened resorts, villas and other properties. And at least one members-only site, RueLaLa.com, has teamed up with Virtuoso, an upmarket travel agent network, to offer members who book luxury travel deals a free consultation.

The sites are aimed at travellers frustrated with sites that fail to simplify the planning and booking process.

MyLittleSwans was partly born of Garnett's own frustrations. Booking sites, she says, didn't offer insider access, and many agents didn't have

the local insight of an on-the-ground tour operator. "I was always calling different travel agents and asking, 'Have you been there?' They'd say no. I'd know more about a place before booking a trip than they would."

The old infrastructure needs to be taken apart for online travel.

Katrina Garnett, MyLittleSwans.com

So after years of friends copying her family vacations, she created the site, which lists her itineraries and puts travellers in touch with tour operators and local guides she has vetted.

"The old infrastructure needs to be taken apart for online travel," says Garnett, referring to the searches that require travellers to sift through hundreds of options. "People are looking for what's trusted and vetted."

Indeed, a study by Forrester Research found that in the first three months of 2010, the number of leisure travellers in the US who liked using the web to plan and book their holidays dropped to 47 per cent, down from 53 per cent in 2007.

Overall the growth of online leisure travellers is expected to slow, increasing by just 3 per cent between 2009 and 2014.

The New York Times

“If you run a fast growing business (or want to be one) you will be hard pressed to find a better forum of like minded and spirited people. 10 out of 10!”

Wayne Homschek
CEO, Pie Face

Find out about the BRW Fast Club at
www.brw.com/fastclub or call 02 9282 1562

BRW.
fastclub