

FORKLIFTS:

Go Big or Go Home?



By Scott McLeod

Question

How do you know if the forklifts you operate are the right capacity for the job?

Answer

Although there are many factors that need to be considered when choosing the right forklift, capacity is always high on the list.

Choosing a forklift that has a capacity too low or too high for the application will likely negatively affect safety and it could put someone's life at risk. Most people understand this part.

However, there is another very important area that is often overlooked and that is PRODUCTIVITY.

For years, many businesses have been using the same capacity forklift without taking the time to look into whether there is a better, more productive way to operate their business.

Something To Consider

What if acquiring larger capacity forklifts allowed your operators to reduce the number of travel trips back and forth from production to the yard or flat deck trailer by as much as 50 per cent?

What if acquiring larger capacity forklifts allowed you to reduce congestion in the yard because trailers could be loaded faster?

What if acquiring larger capacity forklifts allowed you to reduce the fleet size by 20 to 50 per cent?



Would any of these scenarios interest you? I hope so.

Sometimes it helps to look at these things with a fresh set of eyes as though the business was just starting out and where every dollar of found cash could make or break the future success of the business.

In these times, running lean and mean is the name of the game so I would challenge you to look at your business differently, especially when it comes to forklifts.

Answering Yes To These Questions Means You Could Be A Candidate For Higher Capacity Forklifts:

Do your existing aisles, yard space or other turning radius restrictions allow you to accommodate a forklift that is marginally longer and wider than the forklifts you currently operate?

Are your existing ground surfaces able to handle the additional weight that a higher capacity forklift will impose? These values are typically expressed in PSI relating to tire floor loading or "footprint".

Do you have enough product volume per day to properly utilize a higher capacity forklift?

Does your forklift equipment travel long distances when picking up, transporting and placing loads?

Do you produce and handle a low

number of different types of products (sku's)?

Is your work volume relatively steady throughout the day, week or year?

Are you able to operate with the same capacity forklift for the majority of work required?

There is more to investigate and more to discuss before concluding whether or not this strategy is right for you.

That said, I hope you will take the time to contact an experienced forklift fleet management professional for help when it comes to evaluating this and other possible options as a means of taking cost out of your business.

The time is now.

Scott McLeod, President of Fleetman Consulting Inc., based in South Surrey, B.C., owns and operates an independent forklift fleet management and procurement consulting company that specializes in helping end users of forklift trucks take costs out of their forklift fleet. You can contact Scott by calling (604) 614-3530, email: smcleod@fleetmanconsulting.com or via the web: www.fleetmanconsulting.com

