

Case Study: Peerless Pump



Based in Indianapolis, Ind., Peerless Pump Company is one of the largest manufacturers of centrifugal pumps and systems for liquid applications.

Pumping Up Forklift Operator Visibility

Peerless Pump wanted to improve visibility for its forklift operators. What the company got was improved visibility for its operators, as well as improved visibility into its entire operation.

Based in Indianapolis, Ind., Peerless Pump Company is one of the largest manufacturers of centrifugal pumps and systems for liquid applications. Formed in 1923, the company specializes in the design, manufacturing and servicing of various types of large built-to-order and engineered-to-order centrifugal pumps for various industries and applications, including municipal, agricultural, industrial and fire protection.

The company recently reconfigured its business, resulting in a number of changes in its 300,000-square-foot Indianapolis facility. During this time, the company took a close look at its lift truck fleet to see where improvements could be made. One area was operator load-handling visibility; specifically at the second rack level, when the reach mechanism is at eye level on their current reach trucks.

“The nature of our business means we are moving a lot of large parts and heavy loads in a manufacturing environment filled with diverse movement and fast-paced activities. Loads comprised of heavy diesel engines and large column pipes, for instance, can often weigh as much as 1,500 pounds,” said George Pickett, manufacturing manager of facilities and

Case Study: Peerless Pump

horizontal pump business for Peerless Pump. “It is important that our operators have optimum visibility to do their jobs efficiently and safely. With the types of loads we are dealing with, a dropped load could quickly result in personal injury, equipment damage or a chain reaction resulting in one of our racks collapsing.”

Peerless Pump is highly focused on safety and ergonomics and committed to ensuring its operators receive the training they need to operate equipment. For this reason, they saw the visibility concern as an opportunity to improve their operation.

“We have a wide range of operators of varying height who operate our reach trucks. When our operators lifted loads to or from the second tier of our racks, the mast and reach mechanism obstructed the view to the rack and load,” said Scott Patterson, general manager of horizontal pump business for Peerless Pump. “We encountered this issue with the trucks we currently used in the facility, as well as all the ones we tested during our review process. We were beginning to think that this was just one of those things that we were going to have to live with.”

Peerless Pump turned to Crown Equipment for a solution. At the time, the vast majority of the company’s fleet was supplied by another vendor. Crown saw this as an excellent opportunity to invite the company to its New Bremen, Ohio, headquarters to preview an

innovative narrow-aisle reach truck that Crown would be introducing in early 2011. The Crown RM 6000 is the industry’s first narrow aisle reach truck with a mono mast and the first pantograph reach truck that can reach 505 inches and deliver up to 1,000 pounds more capacity at height.

The MonoLift™ mast of the Crown RM 6000 provides improved visibility at nearly all rack levels. This is due in part to the fact that the mast is offset seven inches to the left of the operator and narrows the higher it goes. Further, Crown reshaped the reach carriage to create a larger window at eye level giving the operator a better view of fork tips and load. The load backrest was modified by designing a notch in the upper right-hand corner so that operators could easily scan at ground level from their position in the forklift.

After testing the truck with operators of varying heights, Peerless Pump executives saw that obstructed views at the second tier level were not an issue with this truck, and subsequently agreed to purchase eight of the trucks for its Indianapolis facility. Six months after the installation, Peerless Pump has seen a noticeable difference.

“Not only do our operators have greater visibility to do their jobs more safely and efficiently, we’ve noticed that they are also less fatigued at the end of their shifts. With our previous trucks from another vendor, the operators were continually bending and



Peerless Pump’s headquarters is located in Indianapolis, Ind.



Case Study: Peerless Pump



With Crown, Peerless Pump found a true partner and improved visibility for its forklift operators.

leaning back to see around the mast,” said Pickett. “With the Crown RM 6000, they no longer need to stand in awkward positions, and they now have the option to sit down, which in itself is a whole new experience for our operators. When we first got the trucks, none of them wanted to sit down. They were accustomed to standing. Now, all our reach truck operators choose to sit down in order to save a lot of wear and tear on their knees and feet.”

In addition to solving the company’s visibility issue, Crown also became a total value partner in the effort to increase efficiencies; something Peerless Pump very much appreciated.

“With Crown, we found a true partner that was interested in more than just selling some trucks,” said Patterson. “While our initial focus was on improving visibility during stacking for our reach truck operators, Crown offered to help us find a better way to move our material and be more efficient with our trucks. The company is a key name in lean manufacturing and they are always improving upon their own manufacturing process – so we jumped at the chance to gain their insight.”

A team of Crown experts spent six hours in the Peerless Pump facility, assessing how the trucks were utilized and watching the way the operators worked and the movements they made. At the end of the assessment, Crown offered a number of suggestions that would help the company better utilize its existing fleet.

“Our experience with Crown has been a positive one for our operators and our operation. The company offered the right solution and gave us honest recommendations. The craftsmanship and quality of their trucks is unmatched, and the advice and education they provided is invaluable,” said Patterson. “We still have quite a number of legacy trucks in the facility and at least once a week I have an operator come up to me and ask when we plan to replace it with a Crown truck.”

Contact Information:

Crown Equipment Corporation
44 South Washington St.
New Bremen, OH 45869 USA
Tel 419 629 2311
crown.com

Copyright 2011 Crown Equipment Corporation