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The Crown ESR 1000 reach truck from Goscor

FORKLIFTS: WORKHORSES OF EFFICIENT WAREHOUSES

The forklift is an entrenched and essential part of any sophisticated warehouse, the heart of the transport logistics value chain. It is therefore essential to select the correct forklift type for the job at hand and to be aware of the latest innovations in the field. This feature explores forklift selection, takes a look at the current forklift market and its drivers, and highlights the emergence and advantages of the electric forklift. By *Mark Botha*

The crucial factors to consider when choosing the right forklift for the job at hand, says Criterion Equipment divisional MD Brenton Kemp, include the application – whether special attachments or other measures of customisation such as additional valves, filtration systems or forklift management systems will be required, as well as the environment in which the forklift will be operated. The latter, he says, would depend on the nature of the floor surface and the height of openings, among others.

Other factors include the width of warehousing isles, and the height of the racking and angulation (gradient) at which the forklift will be used. He also notes factors such as loadable mass and lift height which determine the required machine capacity to get the job done, and the load centre of the goods being lifted, which impacts deration and the height to which loads can be lifted.

Other aspects for consideration include environmental factors or legislation governing propellant type, as is the case in the food industry where the use of electric forklifts is prescribed, and operating hours. These greatly impact residual values in the case of leases, and maintenance costs on the machine. Premium-tier models are therefore suggested for high-hour applications.

In the case of electric forklifts, and when deciding on whether to invest in traditional lead-acid or Lithium-ion batteries, shift patterns, hours usage and availability to charge should all be considered.

Kemp says it is "extremely important" to specify the correct machine for the application as using the incorrect propellant type, model or mast configuration, for instance, can impact the efficiency of the machine's operation.

Commodity prices

With the demand for forklift units on the rise during 2021, Manitou SA engineering/solutions manager Mishen Naidoo says the rising price of commodities impacted the cost of raw components to manufacture units. In response to this, he says, Manitou adopted a customer-centric approach and embarked on extensive supplier negotiations to ensure that the impact to the customer was minimised.

"This," he says, "allowed sustainable growth in this market segment, and minimum impact on the customer."

To Goscor Lift Truck Company (GLTC)

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