

Powering Growth and Productivity

AP Exhaust Products upgrades lift truck fleet, boosts cost savings.

For more than 80 years, manufacturer AP Exhaust Products has supplied auto service professionals with a complete line of automotive, light truck, SUV and heavy-duty exhaust and emissions products. Today, the company's Goldsboro, N.C., headquarters ships up to 31,000 parts per day in a single-shift operation.

To move parts efficiently on the plant floor and within the distribution center, AP Exhaust Products relies on a fleet of *Raymond*® lift trucks, which are serviced through a maintenance package with Carolina Handling, an authorized Sales and Service Center of The Raymond Corporation.

Less Is More

Lift trucks have been an essential tool in AP Exhaust Products' material handling operations for more than 40 years. In 2010, AP Exhaust Products was experiencing significant growth and wanted to ensure its material handling equipment was positioned to aid the company during current and future expansion. As a result, the company decided to evaluate its lift truck fleet to ensure it was as efficient and cost-effective as possible.

"We previously purchased refurbished equipment, but the cost of maintenance became too high," says Ruth Long, vice president of AP Exhaust Products. "We decided to analyze our current costs and determine the return on investment for purchasing new equipment."

With help from Carolina Handling, AP Exhaust Products updated its existing fleet of LP and electric lift trucks to a fleet of new electric vehicles. The newly optimized fleet includes: *Raymond* Model 8400 pallet trucks, *Raymond* Model 4200 stand-up counterbalanced lift trucks, *Raymond* Model 7400 *Reach-Fork*® trucks and the *Raymond* Model 9600 *Swing-Reach*® truck. These trucks assist AP Exhaust in reducing the number of trips for delivering and receiving products within its facility, and increased lift and acceleration capabilities. As a result of the updates, AP Exhaust Products was able to reduce the sizes of its lift truck fleets in both the distribution center and the plant by 15 percent and 28 percent, respectively.



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“Our operators are thrilled with the new equipment,” Long says. “It’s easy to operate, and they are able to process more parts within the same time frame and have less downtime than we experienced with the previous fleet.”

In addition, Carolina Handling implemented a comprehensive maintenance management program to handle preventive and unscheduled maintenance needs for a fixed monthly cost. Through this program, AP Exhaust Products reduced maintenance costs between 35 and 45 percent.

Energy Use Plan Lowers Costs, Increases Productivity

Representatives from Carolina Handling also helped AP Exhaust Products customize and implement a complete power program for its lift truck battery charging, in which AP Exhaust Products pays a monthly fee for its battery power, and a third party handles battery charging schedules.

Through this program, AP Exhaust Products saved additional costs related to energy usage because the lift trucks are now charged during off-peak times when energy costs are lower. From a productivity standpoint, the program provides the flexibility to run longer shifts or add shifts if needed, because lift trucks are charged during planned downtime or other opportunities when they are not in use, reducing the need to stop to change batteries or LP tanks. Operators also don’t have to change batteries or drive to other areas of the warehouse to charge equipment.

“The revamped lift truck fleet has helped us move more parts within the same time frame, helping us provide on-time delivery to our customers, which is essential in our industry,” says Long. “With the additional cost savings we’re seeing from our reduced energy usage and fixed maintenance plan, we know our lift truck fleet is in a great position to support us as AP Exhaust Products continues to grow.”

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