



The Materials Handling Partner Selection Process – Improving Profits Through Proper Vetting

There are many facets to your materials handling operations. And unless you are highly knowledgeable about all the aspects of materials handling and staying on the cutting edge of technology, you are losing synergy and spending thousands more every year by dealing with multiple materials handling vendors. Conversely, having a truly integrated partner that is a professional in all aspects of materials handling can save you tens of thousands each year, make your operation run much more efficiently, and make your job a whole lot easier.

It is one thing for a supplier to say that they sell and service forklifts, conveyors, racking and the many other products you utilize in your operation.

On the other hand, it is something completely different to understand the inter-working relationships between all of these facets, how they work together, and what portion of each should make up your materials handling operation. For instance, narrowing your aisles, going vertical, and choosing a different forklift might mean the difference between adding on, relocating, or staying put.

How would something like that affect your bottom line? Or, what are your options for unloading trailers? Do you use conveyors? If so, what does this mean to your lift truck operations? As you can see by these examples, having a partner that can offer the products for materials handling, in addition to the understanding of how they work together, can make a big difference to your productivity and bottom line.

How do you know if your current supplier(s) can provide you with solutions and alternatives for your operation? Many forklift dealers dabble in racking, conveyors, and the like, but their focus is on ITA market-share. Finding a solution that might involve more allied equipment and fewer forklifts, well...that simply isn't in their best interests. However, having a completely integrated partner means they are listening and interested in finding solutions. They are focused on finding the right combination of products and have little interest in how many of each lift truck they can sell you.

Following are a few questions that might help you determine if your current supplier(s) is/are a true partner, or really only specializes in one or two lines of materials handling equipment, and the rest will be sold based upon your perceived needs:

1. What is their experience? Ask for specific case studies where your supplier looked at an entire operation and recommended changes that resulted in adaptation and saved the client time and money. If they can't come up with one good solid case study that you can confirm through reference, then they are probably not a truly integrated partner option for you.
2. Do they have specialized departments for materials handling engineering? In order to truly specialize in materials handling, you must have on-site engineers using CAD that have experience, understand material handling, and can make recommendations that streamline your operation. Having a "guy or two" at a dealership that used to sell racking or conveyor systems does not make them a truly integrated partner.

Feature Article

From the authority on complete material handling



3. Listen to your partners. If they're talking about their lines "latest and greatest" features, they're not interested in providing you with options. An integrated materials handling professional will be listening to YOU, not talking products. Partners want to find out HOW you do it now, WHAT your plans are for the future, WHEN you want to implement them and WHERE. Anything else and they're serving their own company's best interest.
4. When was their last full install? Ask them when was the last time they installed a complete system for a client including racking, conveyors, lift trucks and the like. If it has not been within the last six months, they're probably not a completely integrated systems partner.
5. What shows do they attend, who attends, and how often? If your partner is going to bring you the latest technology, they need to know what that technology is, is not, and what it can do. And you can not learn this on a website or in a manual. You have to see it in action.
6. Ask to visit a site. If you think you have found a partner, ask to visit one of their installed sites and talk to their client. Seeing their recommendation in action and getting word straight from the source can cut clean through any sales "puffery."

Asking these questions and listening to the answers will help you determine if your current vendor or list of vendors can be narrowed to one truly integrated partner. Having a partner you can trust to stay on top of your materials handling needs provides you with options at all times to keep you optimized.

Cardinal Integrated Systems works in lock-step with Cardinal Carryor to listen to you and provide complete solutions for your materials handling. Whether it's a facility completely filled with racking, conveyor systems and cranes, or compacting space using vertical carousels and narrow aisle equipment, we are happy to supply either because our business model is not contingent upon just forklift sales nor conveyor and racking sales. You can be sure that from our engineering department to our integrated and materials handling sales professionals, we will all be working in your best interest to see the job done, and make your company our most recent customer testimonial.

One source, one call; let [Cardinal Carryor](#) and [Cardinal Integrated Systems](#) be your one partner for materials handling. Give us a call, you will be glad you did.

For more information contact us at 502-363-6644, or visit us on the web: www.cardinalcarryor.com