



Preparing for the economic recovery

Is your materials handling operation ready?

We've all been doing more with less during the recession, and the trend doesn't seem to be easing any time soon. However, the economy is on the rebound. 2010 is poised for growth and the world is regaining its foothold. Companies have taken measures to ensure solvency during the recession, but as we pull out of it, orders are going to rebound. Now is the time to take inventory, literally and figuratively. Don't let those latent factors that remain in hiding take a big bite out of your bottom line once business improves.

Is your company organized? What has been marginalized to save money during the recession? When your business picks up, is it ready to move the goods and provide the services. Are these items that have been cut back in the past going to cost more than was saved?

There are some obvious areas like staffing, inventories and capital equipment/expenditures that are fairly easy to assess. But it's the little things that might not be on the top of your mind that can come back to haunt you. So you don't have a much larger bill later, we will address a few key areas you want to pay attention to.

Training

We're not talking typical job training, but more specifically forklift operator training. During the recession, employees may have been reassigned, moved to other facilities or different material handling equipment. OSHA requires that everyone who operates a forklift, regardless of whether it's daily or just once, must be trained on that designated equipment and training is site specific. Evaluate now and make sure everyone is caught up on operator training so that when business rebounds you're not taken by surprise.

Maintenance

There's no doubt that most equipment has spent more time sitting over the past two years, and planned maintenance has been deferred. Whether equipment is sitting or being used, it needs to be inspected daily for safety and at regular intervals to prevent costly breakdowns.

Download our detailed checklist to see some of the problem areas that can be much more costly later. Have a good fleet survey completed now and get your lift trucks on a regular planned maintenance (PM) to prevent costly repairs later.

Maintenance is not just for forklifts. What about other equipment in your facility? Whether it's an automated shrink-wrap machine, overhead crane, or something as simple as a dock door, it's better to have it in good condition than to have it fail during the middle of a busy workday. Take inventory now. Walk your facility, make a list of equipment, find out when it was last serviced. Or, simply call one of our material handling professionals and we'll do it for you. Either way, it is a good time to prepare your facility for the business that is sure to follow the recovery.



Equipment

Do you have enough or perhaps too much? Is your fleet appropriate for the products you're handling? Could there be a better way to move your products? Has your company had to adjust your equipment needs during the recession? Have you been left with obsolete equipment and a fleet that is in need of analysis? Companies like Cardinal Carryor can assist you with disposal of obsolete equipment while providing a full range of equipment from narrow aisle to IC pneumatic forklifts.

In addition, with improvements in electric technology, lower operating costs and smaller carbon footprint, it may be a good time to examine switching from IC equipment.

Application

Is your warehouse set up to accommodate the product you're handling, or could you save hundreds of thousands by switching to a VNA (very narrow aisle) application? See our [feature article from January](#) that highlighted how a Louisville based company did just that.

Having the proper mix of racking, conveying equipment, lift trucks, and warehouse space is key to having an efficient operation. [Cardinal Integrated Systems](#) works closely with its parent company [Cardinal Carryor](#) to provide complete turnkey warehouse solutions.

Economic indicators point to a mild to moderate recovery in the US. Some are poised for significant rebounds this year. Is your company prepared? Consider these key points when you begin to evaluate your materials handling operation now and in the future. If you have any questions, or want to look for a truly integrated partner, we are here to assist.