



CUSTOMER RESULTS



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Bobby Arman
Operations Improvement
Manager, Spicers



IFOY AWARD
forklift truck solutions
of the year 2013

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SPICERS

With damage costs reduced by over 90%, Crown is the five star choice for leading stationery wholesaler Spicers.

Offering over 17,000 items from its product portfolio and operating from eight strategically located distribution centres, Spicers is one of the UK’s largest wholesale providers of stationery and office supplies. Following acquisition by venture capitalist firm Better Capital, Spicers wanted to improve efficiency and reduce cost in its MHE fleet – and after an extensive tendering process chose a fleet of new Crown equipment, all fitted with the innovative InfoLink® fleet management system.

With a turnover in excess of £330M, Spicers is supplying office products to a network of authorised dealers across the UK, supporting them through a market leading e-commerce solution. All products come in from manufacturers to Spicers’ Central Distribution Centre (CDC) at Sawston, Cambridgeshire. The CDC then replenishes goods stocked at the six Regional Distribution Centres (RDCs) on a daily basis, which in turn provide a same or next day service to office products dealers in their geographic area. Finally a Dealer Distribution Centre (DDC) in Smethwick, West Midlands provides a service whereby products are picked, wrapped and dispatched on behalf of dealers and sent directly to their customers.

The new fleet of Crown equipment, acquired on a contract hire basis, has already made a significant improvement to the operational efficiency at Spicers. “We owned our previous fleet of materials handling equipment. Due to age, a lot of the equipment had become very expensive to maintain,” explained Spicers’ Operations Improvement Manager, Bobby Arman. “We embarked on a tendering process for new equipment to be acquired on a contract hire basis. We are not truck people – we needed professional advice to get the correct fleet for our business and this is where Crown shone. Working with

Crown’s National Account Manager, Steve Rumbelow, we assessed the operational activities across our eight sites and quickly realised that through better utilisation of our MHE fleet, huge efficiency savings could be made. This would bring an immediate and dramatic reduction to our running costs as well as reducing the number of units we required. For Spicers, cost of maintenance and repairing damaged trucks had become hugely expensive as their fleet became older. Steve Rumbelow explained: “When we initially looked at the Spicers’ fleet, in many cases they had more than one truck on site to ensure availability when they had a breakdown.

KEY FACTS

FLEET
REDUCED BY OVER
40%

DAMAGE COST
REDUCED BY OVER
90%





Power and Performance

The Crown WP powered pallet truck features in all sites. Dubbed the “workhorse of the warehouse”, the WP combines power and performance with manoeuvrability and ease of operation and is at home whether unloading from the back of a lorry or moving loads across the dock. Spicers also use the WP for order picking in the RDCs.

Our proposal reduced the number of trucks by supplying key trucks with two batteries, ensuring availability across double shifts. All trucks were also fitted with the InfoLink® fleet management system, giving Spicers a common reporting platform across all sites, and visibility so they can identify how trucks are being used and ensure they are being optimised to the full. The upshot of the evaluation process was that we reduced the fleet by over 40%.”

Spicers’ CDC at Sawston receives products direct from manufacturers and operates a mixed fleet of Crown equipment including WP 3000 and WT 3000 powered pallet trucks for loading and unloading, GPC 3000 low-level order pickers for bulk picking and the ESR 5000 reach truck. The ESR 5000 Series has given Spicers’ operators a distinct performance advantage: class-leading ergonomics, superb visibility and application flexibility allow operators to work faster and more comfortably without compromising safety.

In its Greenwich RDC, Spicers have adopted a fleet of Crown TSP 6000 VNA trucks. Featuring the MonoLift™ mast, the TSP Series reaches lift heights at faster speeds (up to 0.61 metres/second), enabling Spicers to gain maximum benefit from every pallet location. Spicers’ operators are also noticing the benefits of the new equipment. Within the operators cabin, Crown’s MoveControl™ seat features integrated armrest controls for shift-long support and four seating positions for unsurpassed visibility and comfort while maintaining safety with precision control of all truck functions. Safety-first floor presence pedals require the operator’s feet to be in place before the truck can commence work – there’s even a microcellular anti-fatigue floor mat to reduce the risk of discomfort and back stresses. Multiple compartments provide convenient storage for documents, tools and other operator needs. During picking operations, postural support for the operator is provided by a work-assist rail and side gates. The Intelligent Braking System (IBS) automatically adjusts braking force to allow for lift height and other key variables to give better control and minimal mast sway. An additional fleet of TSP 7000 VNA trucks with a lift height to 15 metres has been delivered into the Smethwick DDC.

A key factor in the decision-making process was the innovative fleet management system InfoLink®. Bobby Arman explains: “InfoLink allows us to monitor exactly what each truck is doing so we can manage our fleet better. Our last fleet had a simple keypad access system – now our drivers have access cards and InfoLink® stores all the data. If a driver does not have the correct driving licence for a truck, InfoLink® won’t let him move it – a driver can no longer just jump on the truck. The result is a significant reduction in damage to the trucks, the racking and the building itself. Whereas accidents might not have been reported, InfoLink® now monitors, records and reports on everything that is happening with the truck and driver.”

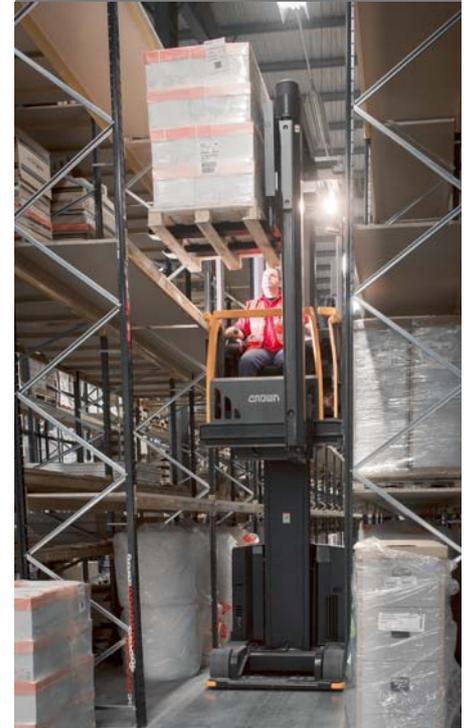
As well as the health and safety benefits, Spicers has also experienced a significant improvement in driver productivity and a reduction in damage and operating costs.



Bobby Arman sums up: “With InfoLink®, we can now clearly monitor what the drivers are doing, ensuring their productivity is correctly managed and challenged – it has given us visibility. As well as the operator efficiency improvements, there have been additional financial benefits as we’ve experienced a 90% reduction in damage billing. It’s fact – Crown really has helped to reduce our operating costs.”

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“My perception was that Crown produced very strong and solid trucks, but they would be big and bulky. When the demonstration machines arrived, I was surprised to see they were no bigger than their competitors. Our experience with our previous fleet was of plastic covers that get knocked and damaged very easily – which meant that they began to look worn out in their first couple of years. The Crown trucks are different – they’re manufactured to a much higher standard with lots of metal covers instead of plastic. This was a key point for us as we felt the trucks would last better and be more reliable in our busy working environment.”

Bobby Arman
Operations Improvement
Manager, Spicers

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