

Wolter Helps PC Lumber Plug into Operational Savings with Linde Electric Forklifts

Challenge: To convert a busy lumber yard running a fleet of diesel and propane forklifts outdoors to Linde IP67 rated electric forklifts.



PC Lumber was founded in 1975 by Bill Armstrong in New Albany, IN. The current owner David Stemler started in 1977 as Bill's first employee and purchased the business in 1988. PC Lumber has expanded since then, with a large lumber yard in Sellersburg, IN and also an offsite mill shop. The New Albany location is mainly a home improvement center while the Sellersburg facility focuses on lumber, trim, window and door sales to contractors and building professionals. PC Lumber services a 100-mile radius from the Sellersburg yard.

The Sellersburg yard is over 14 acres of paved area with numerous covered storage outbuildings. Incoming trucks are delivering bulk materials to the yard to be unloaded and

stored, while a fleet of PC Lumber flatbeds and semis deliver up to 30 picked to order loads to customers in Indiana and Kentucky on a daily basis. To accomplish these tasks, PC Lumber was using 10 diesel and LP powered forklifts.

PC Lumber was in the process of converting their fleet of diesel forklifts to LP powered units when Wolter, Inc salesman Ed Sitzler called on their Yard Manager, Mike French. "When I first called on Mike French at PC Lumber, he said no to electric forklifts, but owner David Stemler's desire to make PC Lumber a greener business opened the door to evaluating electric forklifts," said Sitzler. "I knew that the Linde 387 Series, with its IP67 rating would perform in their paved yard in any weather condition, and I knew it would save them money in the long run."

"My biggest concern with the electrics was outdoors, which is natural. Any time you think of battery operated, there's concern," Mike French said. "I met with my salesman, Ed Sitzler, with Wolter, quite a few times, talking about this change over to the electric forklifts. He worked diligently to convince me this was really the right move. I was assured that Linde forklifts were made for outdoors and the weather." Ed then arranged for PC Lumber to demo a Linde 387 series truck.



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“The first thing was convincing my yard personnel, they were a little iffy, none of them had really run any of the electrics so this was a big test for us to see if we could win them over,” French continued. “It did not take ten, fifteen minutes for them to come aboard on these electrics.”

The operators loved the overall comfort of the Linde design, with its highly responsive ergonomic fingertip controls, roomy cabin and shock absorbing seat. They also loved the smooth, quiet, exhaust-free operation of the electric Linde vs the old-school internal combustion trucks they had been using.

“My next biggest concern was the winter weather. Sometimes it can shut us down just for the simple fact that my diesel and my LP forklifts had no traction once we got a couple of inches of snow or sleet,” French said. “My experience with the Lindes when these events occurred was the complete opposite, every Linde kept running. The weight distribution of the Linde, mainly because of the battery was all the difference in the world.”



Following the overwhelming success of the product demo, PC Lumber purchased two Linde 387 series trucks to replace aging IC trucks in the yard. A five-year plan to convert all

“ The move we made on the Lindes, was to me, the best move we could’ve made.

Mike French, Yard Manager

the forklifts to Linde electrics quickly became a two-year plan with a total of 11 Linde trucks currently in use at the Sellersburg yard.

One of the driving factors in the rapid change over to Linde electric forklifts was the cost savings PC Lumber was seeing in maintenance costs and in operating costs vs the IC trucks. “I can tell you that the operational costs have really dropped tremendously. The cost of just my PM services have actually dropped, I can honestly say 60-70%,” French said.

Operations Manager Tony Jenkins was quick to point out the reliability and productivity they’re getting from their Linde forklifts, “There’s not any downtime with the Lindes; they’re getting them out of the charging building in the mornings, and they’re putting them back in the afternoons – that’s it!”

Another key element in PC Lumber’s accelerated switch to Linde electric forklifts is obvious in the bottom line. “I can go back to June of ’22 when we first started the process, I looked at the propane bill and it was right around \$1,500 for that month,” said Jenkins. “Now it’s at \$190 that’s with 11 forklifts on staff so we’re saving \$1,200 a month compared to when we first started being all propane.”

Jenkins cited Wolter’s commitment to customer service after the sale and the bond their staff has forged with PC Lumber as essential for the continued success of their partnership. “Wolter to me is like family and they’ve treated us like family, and I feel like we’ve done the same with them.”



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