

Narrow Aisles, Big Results

Gaco Western, located in Waukesha, WI, is a manufacturer of spray foam insulation, silicone roof coating systems, and a variety of waterproofing coatings for pedestrians and traffic decking. Gaco products cover millions of square feet of commercial, industrial, and residential buildings. Over the past five years, the business has really been booming for Gaco, as the company has seen 20 to 25-percent growth year-over-year. While that robust growth has been great for the company, it did provide some logistical challenges for the company's warehousing and storage.



Very narrow aisle equipment from Aisle-Master

the south of our production facility and added an 85,000 sq. ft. warehouse to it.”

Even with an additional 85,000 sq. ft. of warehousing space, Reher and Gaco were cognizant of using that space as efficiently as possible. To ensure that they could do that, they called Wolter to help design and lay out the new area.

Prey looked at Gaco's new area and also their existing storage and recommended moving the storage from conventional aisles to narrow aisles.

“There was some apprehension in moving from 14 ft. aisles to 8 ft. aisles and from standard forklifts to narrow aisle forklifts,” says Reher. “We had just used standard forklifts and had primarily bulk storage on the floor in our existing facilities with very little racking. We had run in-to limitations stacking our products and felt that our storage was inefficient without a racking system.”

Wolter, who has worked with Gaco for years and is a trusted advisor of the company, laid out the advantages and disadvantages of moving to narrow aisles.



Mike Reher (L), Materials Manager for Gaco Western and Jim Prey (R), Account Manager for Wolter

“We had our production facility which included some storage space, plus we had three outside warehouses in the local area,” says Mike Reher, Materials Manager for Gaco Western. “Even with those three outside buildings, we had simply outgrown our storage space. So, about a year and a half ago, we purchased property to

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Mike Reher, Materials Manager for Gaco Western

“We have a long relationship with Wolter, and they have always given us good advice,” says Reher. “They stand behind their product, and they’ve always been there to support our needs. We had an open and frank discussion about the pros and cons of this system that they were proposing. They demonstrated the system and got us to the point where we were very comfortable with the decision we were making. This candid relationship was a big factor in us deciding to make this change.”

With the decision to use Steel King narrow aisle racking and Aisle-Master narrow aisle forklifts made, installation in the 85,000 sq. ft. expansion took about seven months. Installation took place simultaneously with construction, as the racks had to be designed to accommodate the fire suppression system in the warehouse.

With installation complete, representatives from Wolter came back in to train Gaco operators on the new Aisle-Master narrow aisle trucks.

“Wolter came out and did some training for our people and then we certified the people who would be the primary users of the Aisle-Masters,” says Reher. “Most forklifts use the rear wheels for steering but on the Aisle-Masters, it is the front wheels. That took a little adjustment period but within a week or two people were very comfortable driving the Aisle-Master and being able to pick and place pallets into the Steel King Rack. The adjustment period was much shorter than what we expected.”

He goes on, “I think that now, if people have a choice between grabbing the regular forklift and the Aisle-Master, they are just as comfortable grabbing either one. The equipment has been widely accepted and that has made this a huge success. We’re quite pleased with how this turned out.”

For Wolter, the most important thing was that Reher and the rest of the Gaco team be completely comfortable with what was a radical change in their storage. He answered all questions and laid out the advantages and disadvantages of each system. In the end, Reher and Gaco are extremely pleased with the result and their warehouse has gained valuable space for continued growth.



Narrow aisle racking from Steel King



Material Handling



Automation & Robotics



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Engineered Systems



Power Systems



Workplace Storage



Industrial Storage & Handling



Railcar Movers