

What Electronics Operations Can Learn From a 45% Reduction in Material Handling Maintenance Spend

A national home-improvement retailer worked with Wolter to improve how televisions, monitors, appliances, & other damage-sensitive products moved through its distribution operation. The challenge was bigger than product handling alone. Equipment condition, attachment setup, service consistency & operator practices were all affecting reliability, cost, & the way product moved through the facility.

CUSTOMER	SITES	NEED	WOLTER SCOPE
National retailer & distribution network handling, in part, electronics, appliances, & other damage-sensitive products	Store-support & regional DCs; mixed fragile SKUs	Protect high-value, damage-sensitive products while maintaining safe, efficient throughput	Fleet, service, training, process analysis

GOAL: LOWER MAINTENANCE SPEND

What was achieved through an integrated approach to equipment, attachments, maintenance, battery practices, service, & operator training is a 45% lower maintenance spend.

CHALLENGE

The customer was moving a difficult mix of flat-panel TVs & monitors, boxed appliances & small electronics alongside other palletized products through the same operation. Damage-sensitive loads left little room for error, while inconsistent attachment setups, recurring service issues, & improper battery charging & discharging practices were creating additional

challenges for operators. The impact extended beyond product handling to downtime, repairs, equipment availability, & overall maintenance cost.

Instead of treating each repair or damaged load as an isolated issue, Wolter's team looked at the application as a whole. The goal was to understand what operators were dealing with on the floor, where equipment & operating practices were creating unnecessary challenges, & which recurring issues could be corrected through equipment selection, maintenance, attachment setup, battery practices, & training.

FREQUENT OBSTACLES IN THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY

- ▶ High-value, damage-sensitive inventory
- ▶ Tight tolerances for product handling
- ▶ High throughput expectations
- ▶ Limited tolerance for equipment downtime
- ▶ Complex storage & movement requirements
- ▶ Pressure to control maintenance & operating cost
- ▶ Need for consistent operator practices



Forklift attachments like carton clamps help to safely & efficiently handle delicate electronics & appliances

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Although the customer in this case operates in retail distribution, the operating challenges closely parallel those found in many electronics manufacturing & distribution environments.

SOLUTION

The work started on the floor. Wolter reviewed how the equipment was being used, how loads were being handled, how batteries were being charged & discharged, & where recurring service & handling issues were showing up. That field-level review helped separate problems caused by the application from problems that could be corrected through the equipment, attachments, a maintenance program, battery practices, or operator training.

FINDING THE ROOT CAUSES

Wolter's team walked the inbound, reserve, picking, & outbound areas with operations & observed the work as it was actually being done. The review included:

- ▶ Attachment setup & clamp pressure
- ▶ Fork entry & load positioning
- ▶ Operator visibility
- ▶ Product staging & movement
- ▶ Equipment use by application
- ▶ Battery charging & discharging practices

This helped identify where the application, equipment, & day-to-day operating practices were contributing to recurring issues.

MATCHING THE EQUIPMENT TO THE WORK

Rather than asking one truck to handle every application, Wolter matched equipment & attachments to the loads operators were moving. Electric sit-down & stand-up trucks provided improved visibility & control. Carton clamps & appliance-handling attachments were configured for the products being handled, while reach & narrow-aisle equipment was selected around rack & pallet requirements. Higher-capacity applications retained the capacity they needed.



Our Wolter experts match the right sized equipment to your needs - we have everything from turret trucks to IC forklifts.

ADDRESSING MAINTENANCE & BATTERY PRACTICES

The changes went beyond equipment selection. Wolter developed a maintenance & operating approach that included:

- ▶ Inspecting & maintaining trucks & attachments
- ▶ Monitoring hoses, pads, pressure settings, forks, & controls
- ▶ Identifying improper battery charging & discharging practices
- ▶ Correcting battery-management practices with the customer
- ▶ Providing consistent local technician & parts support
- ▶ Addressing recurring repair issues before they became larger operational problems

Together, these changes helped improve equipment availability, reduce recurring maintenance issues, & keep the equipment operating as intended over time.

TRAINING AROUND THE ACTUAL APPLICATION

Operator training focused on the equipment & loads employees handled every day, including load stability, attachment use, approach angles, consistent handling practices, & proper battery charging & discharging. Scheduled around the operation, the training reinforced

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the equipment, battery, & maintenance improvements already in place.

The result was a more consistent, integrated material-handling strategy. Rather than treating equipment problems, operator practices, & product handling as separate issues, the customer addressed them together. Maintenance spend decreased 45%, while the combined changes also reduced conditions contributing to downtime & product-damage risk.

WHAT CHANGED

- ▶ **45% Lower Maintenance Spend:**
The combined equipment, service, & maintenance changes reduced maintenance spend by 45%, providing a measurable result tied directly to the work performed.
- ▶ **More Consistent Equipment Performance:**
A maintenance program covering trucks & attachments, along with corrected battery charging & discharging practices, helped improve equipment availability while key components operated as intended.
- ▶ **Equipment Matched to the Application:**
Equipment & attachments were selected around the loads, rack, & pallet requirements instead of relying on one truck to handle every job.
- ▶ **More Consistent Service Support:**
Local Wolter technicians & parts support replaced a patchwork service approach & gave the operation a more consistent maintenance standard.
- ▶ **Training Tied to the Work:**
Operator training focused on the equipment, attachments, loads, & battery practices employees dealt with every day, reinforcing the changes made in the application.

A CONNECTED APPROACH

The improvement came from looking at the operation as a complete material-handling application rather than focusing on a single repair or piece of equipment. Equipment selection, attachment setup, maintenance, battery practices, & operator training were addressed together so the changes made in one area supported the others.

Wolter's team remained involved across the equipment, service, & training needs of the operation, giving the customer a more consistent approach to keeping trucks available, controlling maintenance costs, & supporting the people using the equipment every day.

COULD THESE ISSUES BE COSTING YOUR ELECTRONICS OPERATION?

- ▶ Recurring product damage
- ▶ Excessive equipment repairs
- ▶ Inconsistent clamp or attachment performance
- ▶ Battery-related downtime
- ▶ Equipment mismatched to the application
- ▶ Operator inconsistency
- ▶ Rising maintenance cost
- ▶ Poor fleet availability

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES WITH A MATERIAL HANDLING REVIEW

Wolter can review fleet performance, maintenance history, product-handling requirements, equipment utilization, battery practices, attachments, & operator considerations to identify opportunities to improve reliability, productivity, & cost.

Schedule a 30-minute conversation with Wolter today.



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