

VELOCITY VIDEO CASE HISTORY

A DC VELOCITY SPEED CHALLENGE

Tracking success

Stemco moves to T-Matics Command to better monitor performance and provide driver accountability for its Toyota forklift fleet. The decision is already paying big dividends.

AS A MANUFACTURER OF PREMIUM PRODUCTS for commercial trucks, Stemco knows something about precision. The company's wheel end components, brakes, and suspension products are all precisely engineered to make roadways safer.

That same desire to provide safer vehicles also translates to the forklifts the company uses in its operations. That's why Stemco added T-Matics Command, Toyota's vehicle management system, to 10 Toyota forklifts at its Longview, Texas, manufacturing plant.

The trucks in Longview are worked hard, which is why Stemco chose Toyota in the first place.

"We've been using Toyota for 15-plus years," says Jim Reynolds, plant engineer in Longview. Before choosing Toyota, he brought in different forklift brands and allowed the operators to try them out. "Our operators favored Toyota," he says.

Management has also favored Toyota forklifts, due to their productivity, reliability, and low total cost of ownership.

DAMAGE CONTROL

The forklifts perform a number of duties in Longview, including moving materials to metal stamping and assembly cells, removing waste products for recycling, and loading and unloading delivery trucks. Several of Stemco's forklifts also leave the building to move heavy dies used in manufacturing to separate storage buildings. Between the outdoor work and the manufacturing facility's rugged environment, the forklifts take a lot of abuse – in fact, more than they should.

"Stemco has always been one of those customers that have tried to do what's best with what's available at the time," says Mark Sherrow, territory manager for Lift Truck Supply, the Toyota dealer in Eastern Texas (www.lifttrucksupplyinc.com). He says that after analyzing service records, Stemco and Lift Truck Supply noted heavy costs for unanticipated damage caused by running into racks and overhead doors or hitting obstacles and potholes when working outside. "There was just a lot of neglect and abuse," notes Sherrow.

Within a six-month period in 2016, Stemco had \$66,000 in repair bills

for unexpected damage. The damaged components included brackets, seats, forks, lights, and more. "We started the T-Matics this year, and we put that on the trucks so we could make the operators more accountable for how they operated them," says Reynolds. "And since we put the T-Matics on, those kinds of problems have virtually gone away."

Damage claims – or the lack of them – are proof that drivers are being more careful with the vehicles. In the first six months since moving to T-Matics, there were no major claims. That's quite a difference from the previous year, allowing for a very fast return on investment. Impact sensors on the T-Matics-equipped vehicles also calibrate automatically, per vehicle. This helps to reduce false alarms and the over-reporting of impacts.

MEASURED RESPONSE

But the real benefit is that drivers are operating more safely as a result of the continuous data that T-Matics provides. "We are getting the hours that the truck is operating. We get who is operating it, when they operated it, and how they operate the truck," says Reynolds.

In addition to promoting safety, the data allows Stemco to balance work as needed. Heavily worked vehicles can move to areas with less demand – to lengthen their useful lives and to meet lease agreements.

Another task that T-Matics now performs is directing drivers in their pre-shift vehicle checks. Using a display on the vehicle, the system walks drivers through visual inspections of 19 key parts and systems, including the condition of the tires, forks, horn, brakes, and lights. Using T-Matics to perform the pre-checks electronically has also eliminated a large amount of paperwork previously used to gather this information. That adds up, considering that this is a three-shift operation and that each driver must perform the checks as he or she starts every shift.

"That's a big benefit and is an OSHA requirement," says Reynolds. "It's a good way to help us ensure that they are doing the pre-check before they get on the trucks."

For more information on Toyota's full-service product line of forklifts and warehouse equipment, visit www.ToyotaForklift.com/forklifts.



To see a video of T-Matics and the Toyota forklifts in operation at Stemco, go to dctv.com and click on the Velocity Video on Channel 2.