

VELOCITY VIDEO CASE HISTORY

A DC VELOCITY SPEED CHALLENGE

Awesome for Ashby

Toyota forklifts provide the muscle to keep up with the lumber demands of contractors in California's Bay Area.

WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN IN THE LUMBER BUSINESS since 1888, you've learned a thing or two about delivering top-notch customer service. Today, Ashby Lumber serves the Bay Area of Northern California from two locations in Berkeley and Concord. The company provides quality building materials to both contractors and do-it-yourselfers. Lumber, siding, trims, decking, fencing – it can all be found in Ashby's large yards. And keeping all of these materials on the move and prepared for fast customer pickup and delivery is the job of Toyota forklifts.

"We have 25 Toyota forklifts now between the two yards, but it began about a dozen years ago with just one Toyota truck," recalls Dan Easley, retiring general manager. "That truck took the punishment in our yard and just seemed to be built better than the other forklifts that we had at the time."

Within just a few years, Ashby had converted its entire fleet to Toyota forklifts.

A COMPLETE FLEET

The forklift fleet at Ashby consists of a variety of vehicles. An electric stand-up reach truck works in the warehouse, where pallets of products are stored in racks. The multi-stage mast on the vehicle extends to reach the upper levels of products. Light hauling around the yard is performed using Toyota's Core IC Pneumatic forklift models.

The bulk of the work, though, is done with Toyota's Mid and Large IC Pneumatic diesel-powered models, which have capacities ranging from 6,000 to 15,000 pounds. The main workhorses are 10,000-pound-capacity units deployed for moving materials around the yard and for truck loading and unloading. Each unit puts in 10 to 12 hours of precision work daily.

"The dual front ends on these forklifts make them very stable," explains Easley. "We can pick up just about anything in the yard without worrying about the capacity."

A major part of their work is to unload vendor trucks bringing in new lumber and materials. These efficient vehicles can muscle heavy

loads skyward to reach the tops of lumber stacks in the yard and within the outdoor sheds. Special lumber forks, which are thinner and wider than standard forks, easily slide between layers of lumber without damaging the product. These forklifts also load Ashby's fleet of delivery trucks as well as customer trucks that drive in daily to pick up their lumber and other materials.

The lift trucks' solid pneumatic tires provide a comfortable ride for drivers working outdoors all day while moving over uneven pavement, without the risk of puncture. Easy-to-reach controls and ergonomic seats also provide comfort over a long shift.

"I've worked here for 16 years, and I drive a forklift all day," says yard supervisor Jesus Sanchez. "The seat is really comfortable, and the control is easy."

These diesel forklifts are also very efficient, which helps in cutting costs in both fuel and maintenance while still meeting California's strict emission standards.

SUPERIOR SERVICING

Ashby Lumber relies on Toyota Material Handling of Northern California to supply its forklift fleet and to keep it running in top condition.

"We are unloading and loading probably 50 to 75 trucks a day. A forklift that is down is detrimental to our business," says new general manager James Wiley.

That's why Toyota Material Handling of Northern California provides regular planned maintenance on the entire Ashby fleet.

"Toyota has provided excellent service for us," says Wiley. "They have one service tech that calls on us exclusively. He knows all of our forklifts, and he is like one of the members of our own team. The guys trust him. He is there whenever we need him, and he's ahead of the game in preventing issues before they occur. It's just made the maintenance of these forklifts awesome for Ashby."

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 the Toyota fleet in operation at Ashby Lumber, go to dcvtv.com and click on the Velocity Video on Channel 2.