# Four Ways Materials Handling Organizations are Stepping Up Efficiency by Solomon Kelley

Article published on August 3rd 2012 | Business

Efficiency, efficiency, efficiency! It almost seems like these are the only words that materials handling organizations can say these days. Thereâ€™s a reason why. Material handling companies know that greater efficiency means greater profit margins. Efficiency, in other words, is all about the bottom line.

What are these organizations doing to achieve unheard-of levels of efficiency? More to the point, how can you improve efficiency in your material handling organization?

They are tracking their efficiency levels. Increasing efficiency doesnâ€™t start with going out and buying new forklifts, or building a new building. It is far simpler. First, you analyze the state of your current operations. Youâ€™ll never know how to improve unless you know what needs to be improved. If youâ€™ not running at peak performance, find out why. Start with a desk full of data, and begin crunching numbers â€" from overall utility costs vs. square foot of operating space, to the total labor expenses of a shift vs. orders processed within that shift. Once youâ€™ve gained a better perspective of the state of affairs, begin setting goals, tracking progress, and moving upward.

They are upgrading picking technology. Paper-based picking is going the way of the dinosaurs. With the advent of RF (radio frequency) in the material-handling industry, more and more companies are improving their processes, honing in on the location of SKUs, and flawlessly pulling off complex procedural maneuvers. Thereâ€™s something to be said for improved technology, and one of the first places to upgrade should be your picking process.

They are drastically minimizing downtime. Some material handling companies donâ€™t know what downtime is. Why not? Beginning with a goal of 0% downtime, these firms are putting processes in place that eliminate the need for it. First, planned maintenance is instated on all equipment, meaning that only partial and temporary downtimes are necessary. Second, a rigorous inspection process is introduced, meaning that any problems are caught far before they get serious. Third, power supplies are reinforced with surge protectors, batteries, and backup plans. Fourth, management is proactively coaching their workers to ensure top-level service all the time.

They are serious about training. At its core, efficiency is about people. There can be no efficiency without highly trained people working within a well-oiled system. The most important efficiency improvement that you can make is to spend more time, and better time training and coaching your employees. By increasing management connection with employees, and decreasing the frequency of errors, efficiency will rise.

â€œEfficiencyâ€• is a mantra, because itâ€™s important. Thankfully, itâ€™s not too complicated either. By these four suggestions, materials handling organizations may see their efficiency levels increase.

Article Source:
http://www.articleside.com/business-articles/four-ways-materials-handling-organizations-are-stepping-up-efficiency.htm - Article Side

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Solomon Kelley wanted to research a rotary and vibratory equipment when he needed to upgrade

his business and find custom designs. General Kinematics provides vibratory, rotary and a material handling equipment to many leading companies.

Article Keywords:
vibratory equipment, material handling equipment, materials handling equipment, screening equipment, vibratory

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