

MHE SPECIAL

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The 'Make in India' campaign can boost forklift industry

— Anil Lingayat, Executive Vice President & Business Head, Godrej Material Handling

In a price sensitive nation like India, since the initial cost for internal combustion forklifts is low, it is preferred by small and medium size companies. In developed countries though, electrically-driven forklift trucks are growing rapidly.



Q What is the approximate size of the Indian forklift truck industry and what have been the recent growth trends?

The size of the forklift industry is approximately 8,000-9,000 units per annum. The industry has been almost flat for the past three years. In India, as in most other countries, the growth of the material handling equipment industry is tied to that of the manufacturing and trading activity. There is strong correlation between manufacturing GDP growth and MHE sales. Besides, MHE is also linked to the distribution and logistics chain. These two sectors are yet to see government action in terms of GST implementation, land reforms and labour reforms. These have a big impact on manufacturing, logistics and distribution industries.

The government's 'Make in India' campaign is expected to spur local manufacturing thereby leading to setting up of new facilities which will require forklifts to support operations.

Also, the huge growth being witnessed in the warehousing sector especially to support the booming e-commerce segment will be another key driver for growth in forklifts industry.



tions. We also manufacture attachments of our own design to address a wide range of handling needs besides offering attachments made by international specialists when the application demands. We also represent global players like Crown Equipment and Hubtex among others, in India.

As market leaders we strive to offer the right solution to each customer to meet their needs. Since we have a wide basket from our own manufactured products and those of our foreign partners we can

address a wide range of user needs.

Material handling equipment is used in virtually all industries that make or distribute any physical product with some scale of operations. So while we supply our products to maybe two dozen industry sectors, we focus mainly on logistics and distribution, retail, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, heavy and light engineering.

Q How do electrically-driven forklifts compare with

CNG/LPG ones in terms of cost efficiency, power and environmental-friendliness?

At G&B, we manufacture both battery powered and IC engine forklifts. Depending on the usage and the requirement of the customer both type of forklifts have their own advantages. Initial purchase price of an electrically powered forklift is higher vis-à-vis comparable engine powered forklift but has relatively low operating cost compared to the latter. These are excellent for indoors use and also easier to operate. The added advantage of zero carbon emission makes it environment friendly.

In a price sensitive nation like India, since the initial cost for internal combustion forklifts is low, it is preferred by small and medium size companies.

On the other hand, the electrically-driven forklift trucks are growing at a fast pace in the environment and lower ownership costs.

Q What is your view on the availability of skilled operators for forklift trucks? Yes, there is a lack of skilled forklift operator in the indus-

try. In recent years, the OEMs have recognized the need to train more operators. Godrej Material Handling has set up their own in-house training center and training modules wherein operators are trained.

We have recently associated and have become one of the sponsors of the upcoming event: 'Forklift Operator of the Year 2015' which has already begun, having regional heats in Chennai, Pune, Mumbai and Delhi in September and Grand Finale in November at Gurgaon.

This competition is a search for the safest and the most efficient forklift operator in India. It is designed to test the skills of the operator in challenging environment, specially structured to push them to the limits. Alongside it educates them to drive safely, efficiently and help them emerge more knowledgeable on the aspects of forklift use.

Being a market leader, we consider it as a responsibility to spread the importance of right operator skills especially in the lift truck driving domain by spreading the message of Safety of Man, Machine and Materials. Higher productivity, Better Efficiency. ■

Q Tell us about the various forklift trucks made by Godrej and your major focus areas

We offer a wide spectrum of solutions across equipment types, capacities and technologies. Our range includes electric and diesel counterbalance forklifts up to 25 tonne capacity, warehouse trucks and special trucks for specific applica-



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