

## Hoist Does the Heavy Lifting

Hoist Liftruck relies on quality manufacturing and engineering expertise.

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## A Pioneer

National Instruments enjoys real success with virtual instrumentation.





The members of Hoist's engineering team have more than 75 years of experience working in the materials-handling industry.

# HOIST HELPS CLIENTS WITH THEIR HEAVY LIFTING NEEDS

BY ALAN DORICH

**B**ased in Bedford Park, Ill., Hoist Liftruck Manufacturing Inc. specializes in producing heavy-duty lift trucks that require low maintenance and are easy to operate. Supply Chain and Quality Manager Robert Fennewald says the company supplies the "most modern, up-to-date, durable lifting equipment in the marketplace."

President and owner Martin Flaska founded the company in 1994, when he purchased the rights to build cushion-tire forklifts from Silent Hoist and Crane in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Milford, Conn. Flaska brought the business to Illinois and transformed it into Hoist Liftruck. Today, the company operates a manufacturing facility in Bedford Park and an engineering office in Cleveland.

According to Fennewald, Hoist Liftruck offers "the best quality of any truck on the market today." In addition to using the best components, the company's engineers

strive to give its trucks a superior appearance, as well. "Quality is really the most important element Hoist has," he states.

Hoist utilizes state-of-the-art solid modeling CAD software with finite element analysis capabilities. This powerful tool not only aids engineers in creating more aesthetically pleasing designs, but also ensures that the designs can be easily manufactured, while also meeting the demanding structural requirements.

Additionally, the parts commonality across the Hoist product lines not only provides customers with superior parts support, but also provides the engineers with the opportunity to utilize various materials and processes, such as vacuum-formed composite covers for improved fit and finish.

## SEASONED VETERANS

Before starting Hoist Liftruck, Flaska founded Forklift Exchange Inc. in 1980. Initially, he operated the company from his house in Chicago's western suburbs, buying, selling and renting material handling equipment. Since then, the company has remained a leader in the wholesale market.

Under Flaska's leadership, Hoist Liftruck has added new »

## PROFILE

Hoist Liftruck  
Manufacturing Inc.  
[www.hoistlift.com](http://www.hoistlift.com)  
2005 sales: \$50 million  
HQ: Bedford Park, Ill.  
Employees: 120  
Products: Lift trucks  
Robert Fennewald, supply chain GM: "Quality is really the most important thing we have."



» computer numerically controlled machining centers and robotic welding units. In addition, the company has fully automated its manufacturing and welding departments.

Hoist Liftruck's engineering staff is comprised of both European and American personnel.

In addition, "the members of the engineering team have more than 75 years of experience working in the materials handling industry," the company states, noting that some members joined the company through its acquisition of such firms as Elwell-Parker.

Established in 1893, Elwell-Parker produced a variety of high-capacity materials-handling equipment and is widely credited with inventing the first electric forklift. According to Hoist Liftruck, many of the features and components found on today's modern materials-handling equipment have their origins in Elwell-Parker's designs.

Chief Engineer Bob Miller, a former Elwell employee who has worked for Flaska since 2000, says he has enjoyed the ability Hoist Liftruck has given him to do "something a little bit different every day."

#### A CHANGING BUSINESS

During the last six years, Hoist Liftruck has changed its focus. Initially, Flaska explains, the company offered its clients standard and customized lift truck products.

Now, "We've eliminated all of those customized products and

focused on rolling out some new trucks that are related to a couple of niche industries," he says.

This change of focus found the company producing lift trucks used for dry stacking boats in a marina, and products used for moving bulk freight. These new products, he says, have "replaced my custom business completely."

Miller praises Flaska for his vision in changing the company's operation. "Since we've refocused on what it is we do best, it's allowed us to streamline our processes [and] reduce our deliveries," he says.

Fennewald adds that Hoist Liftruck has introduced many different processes and procedures in the last six years, encompassing strategic sourcing, inventory, and quality control and operating procedures. In addition, the company has placed more requirements on its vendor base to provide Hoist Liftruck with the best materials.

In addition, Flaska says the company has maintained productivity in the past two years by putting time and quality standards on each position. With these standards, he explains, the company evaluates individual worker output weekly.

Flaska says he sees a bright future ahead for Hoist Liftruck. Because of the weight and size of its products, "I don't believe there will ever be an offshore competitor that will ever be able to ship from a lower-wage country," he says.

#### DRIVING FORCE

Hoist Liftruck strongly emphasizes customer service. Fennewald says the company has a responsive parts department and a sales force that deals with its customers on a regular basis.

The company also has set out to reduce its clients' downtime by offering its services 24 hours a day.

"From small components to complete drive lines and mast assemblies in its inventory, Hoist can deliver parts quick and, in most cases, the same day," Hoist Liftruck states.

Additionally, "We have an owner and a president of the company that basically takes any call from anyone, with regards to our trucks and the customer service we base our trucks on," Fennewald says. "He is the driving force to the customer response we have."

Miller also praises Flaska for being "pro-technology," and keeping the company up to date with state-of-the-art equipment. This emphasis has found the company installing RemoteTech on a majority of its trucks, which monitors vehicle functions and maintenance via sensors, as well as automatically alerts personnel of any issues.

Vehicle functions and some issues can be remotely adjusted to a customer's preference, such as vehicle speed and hydraulic controls. **MT**

# OVERALL CONSENSUS OF US?

Yeah. That's usually the response you'll see.

Owners, managers and operators praise Hoist on making durable, compact, maneuverable, comfortable and affordable liftrucks. Hoist's line of cushion-tire and pneumatic liftrucks range from 15,000-100,000 pounds and feature premium standard components, superior customer support and unmatched delivery times.



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Learn more about Hoist liftrucks at [www.hoistlift.com](http://www.hoistlift.com)

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