

ZERO MUDA – OUR VISION

Toyota, often better known for its automotive brands, has also been the largest material-handling company in the world since 2001, after its initial merger with BT Rolatruc. In 2006, Toyota Forklifts and Sweden's BT Rolatruc were fully integrated to become Toyota Material Handling UK. Richard Hagan met with Richard Lewis, Sustainable Development Lead, to discover how unique Japanese philosophies are helping the company build a more sustainable world.

Today, Toyota Material Handling can add its leadership in sustainable logistics to its list of accolades.

Under the Vision of Zero Muda, Toyota Material Handling prides itself on delivering a complete package of professional warehousing solutions to its customers. Its forklift trucks, warehouse equipment such as racking, and its full portfolio of handling equipment including pallet handling trucks, reach trucks, automated guided vehicles (AGVs) and ancillary systems are primarily focused on helping companies around the world to move pallets and palletised goods.

Full scope emissions reduction

According to Richard Lewis, Sustainable Development Lead for Toyota Material Handling's UK office, the importance of sustainability in general cannot be overstated: "Climate change is a critical topic right now and sustainability is a huge

focus in terms of our efforts to fight it. The logistics sector is facing massive challenges ahead in dealing with this. Critical decisions must be made for warehousing and logistics operations, which must be streamlined in order to lower carbon footprints.

"To achieve that, it requires that the whole value chain be properly integrated – from our customer to us and all the way to our suppliers. It's going to be a race to zero emissions but also a race simply to survive for many businesses, too."

Within its sustainability efforts, Toyota Material Handling is a partner of the United Nations' Global Compact and has subsequently joined the UN Race to Zero. Part of the World Resources Institute's Centre for Sustainable Business. The company has also joined the Science Based Target initiative (SBTi) through its parent, Toyota Material Handling Europe. The SBTi 'defines and promotes best practices in emissions reductions and net-zero targets in line with





climate science.' Additionally, it assists companies to 'set science-based targets in line with the latest climate science' with the help of the SBTi's team of experts.

The UN Global Compact, meanwhile, is a non-binding, voluntary initiative that seeks to encourage businesses and firms worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies, and to report on their implementation.

In Toyota Material Handling's own analysis of its emissions in terms of its involvement with the SBTi, it identified its



own emissions scopes. While its Scope 1 and 2 emissions were within its own control, the company quickly established that a large proportion of its Scope 3 emissions originated in its customers' operations. "This provided an opportunity for us because our Scope 3 is our customers' Scope 1 or 2, so straight away there's a shared emissions goal," said Mr Lewis.

Efficiency through automation

Happily, Toyota Material Handling's products and services are available to help customers reach these emissions targets. Built around Toyota's well-known philosophy of 'Zero Muda' (a Japanese word referring to wastefulness), Toyota Material Handling sees itself as a partner in helping customers become as efficient in their operations as possible and, ultimately, to reduce their carbon footprint.

"We offer the full warehouse package, both in terms of physical products and in terms of technology," said Mr Lewis. "For



example, we offer a system called I_Site, which is a unique fleet management system for warehousing equipment. It offers a combination of technology, information, expertise and support that helps our customers manage their material handling equipment in the most efficient manner possible, every day."

Toyota Material Handling's approach to new technology also helps customers reduce their carbon footprint, be it switching

from IC engines to electric, I_Site, AGV's and even Hydrogen now being an available power source. The customer can rest assured that Toyota has the solution for their operations, both now and in the future.

Automation brings extra benefits as well as the ultimate in Zero Muda given the very serious safety hazards that can be involved with warehousing operations, there's a positive staff health and safety impact, too. ▽





Toyota Material Handling's AGVs can also produce sustained cost-savings on maintenance and spare parts costs for an organisation, according to Mr Lewis: "The parts on an AGV tend to last much longer. For example, the drive wheel on a reach truck tends to last three times longer, which equates to a lower carbon footprint for the manufacturer due to

fewer replacements, and lower cost to our customer."

However, customers do not need to buy an expensive AGV to make a positive impact on their sustainability programme: "We sell 30,000 hand pallet trucks a year," said Mr Lewis. "They're designed to last forever and come with a 99-year guarantee on the frame. It's an amazing



product and it's the greenest solution you can buy because its use does not generate any emissions."

Off to The Park

The company has proven the efficacy of its AGVs and related technology with a recent project in the United Kingdom. The project, at a site called The Park, required 29 reach truck AGVs. "As far as we're aware, it's the single largest deployment of Reach Truck AGVs in a single location," explained Mr Lewis. "It's proven to be highly successful and has been a game-changer for our automation offerings because we're collecting very useful data to help other industries. We hope to continue to build on that because it opens the door to other automated products as well."

According to Toyota Material Handling's expectations, the project at The Park was

only the first of many. "We know by now that automation will continue to increase," he said. "As companies continue to grapple with staff shortages while still looking to improve their efficiencies, we have the ability to help them plug those gaps with a comprehensive portfolio of robust, efficient solutions."

"Customers can buy in total confidence from Toyota Material Handling," Mr Lewis concluded. "Every product is durable and manufactured bespoke to your needs, to ensure that it keeps working for a lot longer than our competitors. We're backed by a fantastic service department of 500 technicians based all over the country who can reach everywhere."

"Whether our customers are big or small, we have a personal relationship with all of them. We are excited to forge even more relationships as we look to the future." ■

