

# **MHEDA**Journal

Expand. Educate. Elevate.

## ELEVATE SUCCESS

**MVP and MVS  
Award Winners**

**Dealers of Distinction**

**Member Anniversaries**

**Create a Culture of Trust**



Intelligent Innovation. Ultimate Productivity.



How you use your battery time  
will directly affect your bottom line...

When equipment in your fleet is at a standstill, you're losing time and money. Whether you operate a single shift or around the clock, you need a maintenance-free battery solution that's highly innovative and intelligent to maximize productivity, shift after shift.

There's no time to waste!

[www.dekareadypower.com](http://www.dekareadypower.com)





# ProDeck50 BIG OR SMALL, IT STORES IT ALL

When it comes to warehouse storage, it can be a jungle out there. ProDeck50 can help. Stronger and flatter than wire decking — with a weight-carrying capacity of up to 250 lbs. per square foot — it's perfect for storing heavy parts, small hand-stacked items and everything in between.

ProDeck50 isn't just tough. Its patented design is the industry's first single-piece pallet rack decking that's smooth and flat, and it offers a 50% open surface to meet NFPA13 fire and sprinkler codes.

DISCOVER PRODECK50 TODAY.



PERFECT FOR:  
AUTOMOTIVE | MEDICAL | FURNITURE  
RECORD STORAGE | PLUMBING

[WWW.WWMH.NET](http://WWW.WWMH.NET) | [SALES@WWMH.NET](mailto:SALES@WWMH.NET) | 888.650.9473

CHICAGO, IL | CHARLOTTE, NC | DALLAS, TX | HOUSTON, TX | ORLANDO, FL  
SAN BERNARDINO, CA | SEATTLE, WA | WILLIAMSPORT, PA



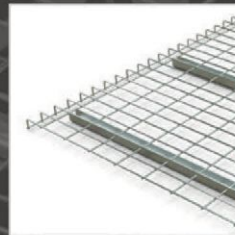




If we're late,  
we pay the freight!



Pallet Rack



Wire Deck



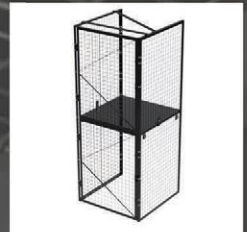
Rack Guard



Velox Machine  
Guarding



Welded  
Wire Cage



Storage Locker

## Quick Ship Guarantee

Our 48-Hour Quick Ship program guarantees your Quick Ship order will leave our dock in 48 hours, to ship anywhere in the continental United States. Contact us to learn more.



704.483.1900 | [HUSKYRACKANDWIRE.COM](http://HUSKYRACKANDWIRE.COM)







## Elevate Success

- 15 Member Anniversaries**  
Congratulations to these companies on their success in the industry.
- 16 Dealers of Distinction**  
Join us in recognizing these dealers who rank among the best in the world.
- 18 2025 MHEDA Convention**  
This year's event in Tampa, Florida, was one to remember.
- 20 Xact Warehouse Solutions Mentors Texas A&M Students**  
Kevin Kelley collaborates with students on their capstone projects.
- 22 Liz Richards Scholarship Winners Announced**  
Congratulations to Baker Bertrand, Cole Pollard and Riley Scott!
- 24 MVP and MVS Winners**  
Help us celebrate this year's MVP and MVS winners.

## Features

- 26 Navigating the Evolving SERP**  
A guide for material handling businesses.
- 30 Empowering Employees Against Cyber Threats**  
To stay ahead of cybercriminals, employees need regular training sessions.
- 37 Key Considerations in Succession Planning for Your Company**  
Are you prepared when it comes time to pass the torch?
- 40 How to Prioritize Growth Without Sacrificing Operations**  
Andrea Jones teaches strategies for growth initiatives.
- 46 Automation Integration**  
Finding the appropriate solutions for your customer.
- 50 Trust, Decoded**  
Former undercover police officer brings hard-earned insights to the material handling industry.



The *MHEDA Journal* is published quarterly: Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. Subscription rate is \$40 annually. MHEDA members receive this magazine as part of their dues.

The *MHEDA Journal* is published for  
**Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association**  
 118 S. Main Street, Suite 11  
 Wauconda, IL 60084  
 Phone: 847-680-3500 • Fax: 847-362-6989  
 connect@mheda.org

**The MHEDA Team**  
**Jamie Aiwohi**  
 Accounting/Office Manager  
**Kathy Cotter**  
 Director of Programs and Services  
**Susan Freibrun**  
 Senior Education and Meetings Manager  
**Rebecca Hein**  
 Networking and Executive Meeting Manager  
**Paige Keehn**  
 Marketing Specialist  
**Anna Marie Kendall**  
 Marketing and Communications Manager  
**Renee Murphy**  
 Database and Member Services Support  
**Katie Richards**  
 Membership and Advocacy Manager  
**Mary Strickler**  
 Director of Digital Marketing  
**Jeannette Walker**  
 Chief Executive Officer  
**Lori Zarling**  
 Director of IT and Office Administration

Editorial correspondence should be sent to Jeannette Walker, CEO, Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association, 118 S. Main Street, Suite 11, Wauconda, IL 60084. 847-680-3500; Fax: 847-362-6989 jwalker@mheda.org.

Advertising correspondence and materials should be sent to Jill Andreu, Publisher, The Wyman Company jandreu@thewymancompany.com.

Editorial submissions also can be sent to Editor Nicole Needles, nneedles@thewymancompany.com.

Published by:  
 © 2025 MHEDA. All rights reserved. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced by any means, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the publisher.

Published July 2025  
 Cover image: MKS/stock.adobe.com



## Departments

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>9 Chairman's Perspective</b></p> <p><b>11 From the Desk of Jeannette Walker</b></p> <p><b>12 Ask the Board</b></p> <p><b>55 Distributor Profile</b><br/>A past of service and a future of growth at Cisco-Eagle.</p> <p><b>56 Supplier Profile</b><br/>Rack Builders: built on experience, driven by relationships.</p> <p><b>57 MHEDA Members Give Back</b><br/>Shoppa's Material Handling partners with Susan G. Komen in bold breast cancer campaign.</p> <p><b>58 Emerging Leaders</b><br/>Reed Montgomery shares his career journey in the material handling industry.</p> | <p><b>59 Women in Industry</b><br/>Brianna Isenberg shares her journey from childhood curiosity to industry expertise, fueled by excitement for the future.</p> <p><b>60 Leadership Lessons</b><br/>Ryan Avery on the future of communication and leadership.</p> <p><b>64 Member Milestones</b></p> <p><b>66 New Members</b></p> <p><b>67 Q3 MHEDA Resources</b></p> <p><b>68 2025 MHEDA Calendar</b></p> <p><b>69 Advertiser Index</b></p> <p><b>70 The Last Word</b></p> |
|---|---|

## Online Resources

[www.mheda.org](http://www.mheda.org)

The flagship destination for all things MHEDA, including education, networking, membership information, cost-saving programs and more.

MHEDA's media website includes featured articles, videos, comments and searchable archives for users.

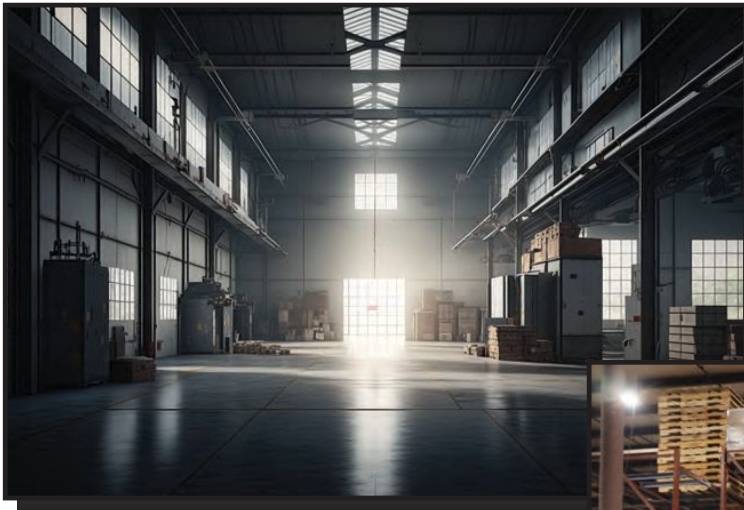
## Social Media



Look for us on social media and connect with the MHEDA staff, board and fellow members.



# Discover your perfect Storage Solution!



← Go From This

↓ ...To This



We all like choices...but finding the right one can be tricky. With so many storage options available, how do you know which is best for your space?

Don't worry! Consult an expert who can guide you through the options and help you choose the perfect solution tailored to your needs.

## Get started today and reclaim your space!

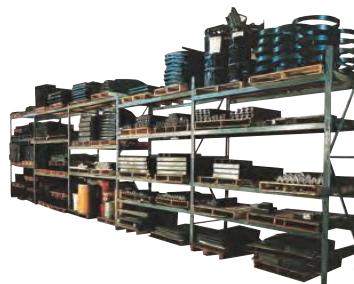
**Cantilever Rack**



**Roll-Out Shelf Rack**



**Pallet Rack**



**Reel Rack**



**MODERN EQUIPMENT COMPANY, INC.**

[meco.omaha.com](http://meco.omaha.com) • [sales@meco-omaha.com](mailto:sales@meco-omaha.com)



# BEST OF THE BEST

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 TOP PERFORMING DEALERS.



## DEALER OF THE YEAR 2024 THE A.J. GATES COMPANY

### LEADING OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Alliance Material Handling, Inc.  
Andersen Material Handling  
Anderson Forklift, Inc.  
Associated Supply Company, Inc.  
C & B Material Handling – South Dakota  
Connell Material Handling  
Forklifts Group – Toledo  
Hugg & Hall Equipment Company  
Lift Truck Sales & Service, Inc.  
Morrison Industrial Equipment Company  
Wolter, Inc. – East

### TOP DEALER PARTS SALES PERFORMANCE

Elite Material Handling

### LEADING PARTS SALES PERFORMANCE

Associated Supply Company, Inc.  
Connell Material Handling  
Florida Forklift  
Forklifts Group – Toledo  
Hugg & Hall Equipment Company  
Lift Truck Sales & Service, Inc.  
Southeast Handling Systems  
Summit Handling Systems, Inc.  
Wolter, Inc.

Bobcat Company is a member of the Doosan Group. Doosan is a global leader in construction, grounds maintenance and material handling equipment, power and water solutions, and engineering that has proudly served customers and communities for more than a century.

Bobcat®, the Bobcat logo and the colors of the Bobcat machine are registered trademarks of Bobcat Company in the United States and various other countries.

©2025 Bobcat Company. All rights reserved. | 1652





Nate Storey  
2025 Chairman of the Board  
President/Storage Solutions, Inc.

# Celebrating Excellence in the Industry

## Honoring MHEDA's 2025 MVP and MVS Award Winners



**AS WE NAVIGATE** through another remarkable year in the material handling industry, it is my distinct honor, as chairman of MHEDA, to recognize and celebrate an elite group of companies that have not only risen to the challenges of our evolving market but have also gone above and beyond to embody what excellence looks like. This year's Most Valuable Partner (MVP) and Most Valuable Supplier (MVS) Award winners represent the very best in our industry. See the complete list of winners on pages 24-25.

### A Celebration of Standards, Service and Significance

The MVP Award, earned by top-tier distributor companies, and the MVS Award, awarded to leading suppliers, are not handed out lightly. These honors are rooted in a rigorous set of criteria that demand real action, sustained commitment and documented results across all areas of business. They signify more than just participation. They reflect leadership, purpose and impact.

These awards aren't about what a company says it will do – they are about what a company has done.

### What It Takes to Be a Most Valuable Partner or Supplier

Both the MVP and MVS designations are based on a company's performance in five essential areas of excellence:

- **Industry Advocacy** – Our award winners are champions for the future of the industry. They speak in classrooms, support internships, invest in workforce development and actively promote the material handling profession. Many contribute to MHEDA's own scholarship funds and student outreach efforts.
- **Customer Service and Safety (MVP) and Distributor/Dealer Advocacy (MVS)** – These companies don't just serve their clients or partners – they elevate them. MVP recipients have structured safety and service programs, while MVS winners actively support and recognize their dealer networks, sponsor MHEDA events and share educational resources to strengthen the channel.

- **Business Networking** – Engagement matters. Our winners attend key events, participate in peer networks and contribute to industry dialogue, strengthening not just their own companies but also the broader community.
- **Continuing Education** – Lifelong learning is a hallmark of an excellent company culture. From MHEDA conferences to webinars, certifications and LMS courses, our awardees are deeply invested in professional development and talent growth.
- **Best Practices** – From strategic planning and documented ethics policies to DEI initiatives, community awards and structured onboarding, MVP and MVS companies set the standard internally and externally. They aren't just operationally excellent, but they also exemplify organizational principles.

### What This Recognition Means

Receiving the MVP or MVS designation is a public endorsement of operational excellence: a commitment to continuous improvement and a deep-rooted investment in employees, customers, partners and communities alike. These companies serve as role models for our entire membership, proving that purpose-driven business is not just possible – it's powerful. They remind us that strong values create strong businesses and that giving back – through philanthropy, mentorship and education – drives the industry forward.

### To Our 2025 Award Winners: Thank You

On behalf of the MHEDA Board of Directors and our entire membership, I offer my sincere congratulations and gratitude to this year's MVP and MVS honorees. Your leadership, integrity and high standards reflect the very best of what our association and industry stand for. As we celebrate success in this issue of The MHEDA Journal, I can think of no better example than the achievements of these award winners. You are the proof that excellence isn't a goal but a way of doing business. Let's continue to learn from one another, challenge one another and grow stronger together.





**FAMILY OWNED • AMERICAN MADE  
TRUSTED PARTNER**

# Pallet Rack Systems

**Push Back • Selective • Drive-In • Seismic Base Isolation  
Flow • Pick Modules • Cantilever**



Proud members of:  
MHEDA, RMI & MHI

**American Steel • Superior Fit & Finish  
Project Management • Online Sales Tools  
Rack Configurators**

**RIDG-U-RAK®**  
*Famous for integrity for over 80 years*  
**Ridgurak.com** PROUDLY **Made in the USA**





Jeannette Walker  
MHEDA Chief Executive Officer

## Tools, Training and Insights for Q3 Success

curated page for the material handling industry.

New Cold War Two and the New Geopolitical Economy – In this eye-opening virtual keynote, economist and futurist Jason Schenker explores how Cold War Two® is reshaping global power dynamics and the key implications for the material handling industry. Geopolitical risks are becoming central to business strategy, with new trade barriers, tariffs, critical minerals policies, reshoring efforts and energy realignment impacting operations and investment decisions. MHEDA members must prepare for growing uncertainty, as well as significant opportunities for growth. This session connects the dots between grand strategy, industrial policy and the critical role the material handling industry plays in a rapidly changing global economy. Join us on Oct. 3, 2025.

New ITR Economics Webinar – MHEDA has partnered with ITR Economics to bring you important quarterly economic reporting on the material handling industry and the broader national economy for more than a decade. New this year, we are providing a virtual session with their economic expert, Connor Lokar. You don't have to wait for our annual Convention to hear valuable insight on the economy and how outside influences may impact the material handling industry. Join us for this webinar on Oct. 28, 2025.

There are many more programs available. Please check out our newly updated website to view a full list of programs and services. In addition to all of the new programs, we have recently launched a new initiative to focus on the individual Business Communities across all segments of the industry – Systems

**Here's to celebrating another year of progress – and to building the future of our industry together, the industry that moves the world**

Integrators, Storage and Handling and Industrial Truck Distributors.

These communities are developing dedicated spaces for peer learning, knowledge exchange and collaboration among companies that share similar business models, challenges and opportunities. Through curated events, roundtable discussions, webinars and targeted communications, we will provide members with industry-specific insights, educational programming and networking events to support members on issues most relevant to their business.

Whether you're navigating workforce developments, evolving technologies or shifting customer demands, MHEDA's business communities offer the support and shared wisdom needed to move forward with confidence. Our goal is to help members connect with ideas, information and with each other – so they can learn faster, make better decisions and grow stronger, together.

As we all know, our industry plays a vital role in the overall health of the economy. When material handling systems operate smoothly, businesses run more productively, consumers receive products faster and economic activity stays strong.

Here's to celebrating another year of progress – and to building the future of our industry together, the industry that moves the world.

**AS WE HEAD** into the 3rd quarter of 2025, there are many things happening at MHEDA to invest in the industry and in our members' success. From customized training programs and forecasting tools to benchmarking reports and economic insight, we continue to invest in the resources that help our members grow.

### Here are a few highlights of what is new:

Labor IQ – MHEDA members have exclusive access to custom compensation data. This cutting-edge platform processes salary data from 8.6 million W2 forms monthly. Simply fill in the online form with the specific role information, and you will receive a customized salary report in 48 hours. This unique MHEDA benefit is free to members!

Rack Systems Permit Education – This webinar will cover the essentials for permitting rack systems. This webinar is led by Rebecca Butao, a material handling expert with over 15 years of experience in warehouse operations, racking systems and project management. You will learn what type of permits are required for rack systems, how to navigate the permit process and how to prepare for a permit submittal.

Policy Matters – We watch policy development with experts so you don't have to. This new section of our website focuses on policy developments across the country and posts them in this

**“How has your organization implemented AI today, and how do you see it impacting your business in the future?”**

**AI is not just a tool for us – it’s a foundation for smarter, more agile business practices.**



**Nate Storey**

**President  
Storage Solutions, Inc.  
Westfield, IN**

At Storage Solutions, we’ve begun integrating AI into our operations by leveraging large language models to streamline written communications. These models assist with tasks such as drafting blog posts, internal updates and other written materials, helping us work more efficiently while maintaining a consistent voice and message across channels.

Looking ahead, we see AI playing a much larger role in transforming our business operations. One key area of focus is the automation of repetitive manual tasks. With the advancement of agentic AI systems capable of autonomous action based on goals,

we anticipate future applications that can handle routine workflows, data processing and customer interactions with minimal human intervention. This evolution will not only free up valuable time for our team to focus on strategic work but also improve the speed, accuracy and scalability of our services.

AI is not just a tool for us – it’s a foundation for smarter, more agile business practices. As the technology continues to mature, we’re committed to exploring responsible and effective ways to integrate it across our organization.



**Darin Boik**

**President  
Advanced Equipment Company  
Charlotte, NC**



**The AI bus isn't off in the distance, it's already speeding by. If you're not learning and adapting, you risk being left behind.**

At Advanced Equipment Company, we're using AI to handle specific tasks and free up time for more meaningful work, not to replace jobs. Most AI today falls under artificial narrow intelligence (ANI), which does one thing very well. Think spam filters, self-driving cars, IoT systems and vision-guided robotic depalletizers. These tools have been around for years, but adoption is moving faster than ever.

Since the release of ChatGPT, we've seen momentum shift toward artificial general intelligence, where machines may eventually handle a wide range of cognitive tasks. It's exciting, a little scary, and, once AGI is achieved, things will move even faster.

We've been experimenting with AI across operations. Our team uses ChatGPT to summarize documents, generate ideas, create spreadsheet formulas and analyze data – tasks that used to take hours now take minutes. We also built a RAG chatbot that answers technical product and parts questions, giving team members quick, accurate answers even if they aren't technical experts.

We automated shipping reports to push email notifications when items ship, freeing our team from repetitive updates and letting them focus on higher-value work.

Our approach is simple: evaluate tasks, score them based on time and automation potential and implement AI where it makes sense. I'm investing time to stay current because while ANI has been around for years, the pace now is exponential. The AI bus isn't off in the distance, it's already speeding by. If you're not learning and adapting, you risk being left behind.

And yes, I used AI to help write this. It's not cheating. It's a tool, and I'm

all about finding ways to free up more time.



**Lori Palmer**

**President**  
**REB Storage Systems International**  
**Darien, IL**

Our company has recently taken an exciting and meaningful step forward by integrating AI into our day-to-day operations, beginning with the implementation of Microsoft Copilot. This marks our first foray into leveraging AI to support and streamline internal workflows. Copilot is already playing a valuable role in helping us draft and refine communications, summarize meetings, schedule Teams appointments and track tasks based on email content. These enhancements are not only improving our efficiency but are also allowing our teams to focus more of their time and energy on high-value, strategic work.

As we continue exploring how technology can best support our goals, we're also developing automated tools for managing purchase orders. While these tools are currently rooted in standard process automation, they represent a strong foundation for future innovation. As our systems mature and our data

capabilities expand, we envision incorporating more advanced AI and machine learning into these tools. This would enable us to analyze and visualize complex data sets across projects, quotes, resources and timelines, empowering our teams with deeper insights and more informed decision making in real time.

What makes this evolution especially meaningful is that it's not just about technology – it's about people. These tools are designed to enhance the way we work, reduce repetitive tasks and free up creative and strategic bandwidth across the organization. We are committed to making thoughtful, responsible use of AI in ways that align with our values and support our broader mission.

This is just the beginning, and we're excited about the journey ahead.



**Van Clarkson**

**President**  
**Fairchild Equipment**  
**Menomonee Falls, WI**

Currently, we are just scratching the surface of AI's capabilities. We utilize it as a search engine, for marketing content, to improve written responses, basic legal reviews, etc. However, AI will be a game-changer for our organization. For instance, predictive maintenance powered by AI can analyze equipment usage data to forecast when equipment is likely to fail, allowing us to service proactively and reduce downtime.

In terms of sales and inventory management, AI can help us better forecast demand by analyzing historical sales data, seasonal trends

# BIG

## EFFICIENCY. THE RIGHT BUDGET.



and customer behavior. This means we can stock parts and equipment more efficiently, reduce carrying costs and improve order fulfillment times.

On the customer service front, AI virtual assistants can help answer common customer inquiries 24/7, streamline service requests and route them to the appropriate departments. This leads to faster response times and improved customer satisfaction.

Finally, AI can assist in route optimization for deliveries and technician dispatching, improving fuel efficiency and technician productivity.

By integrating AI across these areas, we can operate more efficiently, serve our customers better and ultimately stay competitive in a rapidly evolving industry.



**Pete Drake**

**Sr. VP Operations Americas  
Cascade Corporation  
Fairview, OR**

Our company is actively embracing artificial intelligence to enhance operational efficiency and product quality. We are currently leveraging AI technologies to inspect high-volume products, effectively eliminating the need for visual inspections. This shift not only increases consistency and accuracy but also frees up our employees to focus on higher-value tasks that require human creativity, problem-solving and innovation.

Looking ahead, we see AI as a powerful tool to improve customer satisfaction by delivering more reliable products and services and creating a workplace where technology empowers our people to do their best work.



# Happy Anniversary, MHEDA Members!

## 195 YEARS

Fairbanks Scales

## 180 YEARS

BITO Storage  
Solutions US, Inc.

## 105 YEARS

Rouse Services

## 100 Years

Adams Material Handling  
& Storage Systems

## 95 YEARS

Havis, Inc.

## 80 YEARS

A. M. Davis, Inc.  
Crown Equipment  
Corporation  
Heartland Steel Products

## 75 YEARS

Battery Builders, LLC  
Power Machinery Center  
SPG International LLC

## 70 YEARS

Advanced Equipment  
Company, Inc.  
Alliance Material  
Handling, Inc.  
Conger Industries, Inc.  
Dyna Rack  
EGA Products, Inc.  
Engineered Products, LLC  
Strong Hold  
Troax, Inc.

## 65 YEARS

Advanced  
Equipment Company  
Delta Materials  
Handling, Inc.  
Liftow Limited  
Millennium Industrial Tire  
Reno Forklift  
Tynan Equipment Company

## 60 YEARS

Bennett Material  
Handling, Inc.  
McCullough Industries  
Starrco Company, Inc.  
Towlift, Inc.

## 55 YEARS

A.J. Jersey, Inc.  
ACT Material Handling  
Cisco-Eagle, Inc.  
F-M Forklift  
Sales & Service, Inc.  
FMH Conveyors  
MHS Lift  
Patterson Lift Trucks, Inc.  
Prestige  
Shelf Master, Inc.  
Steel King Industries Inc.

## 50 YEARS

ABCO Systems  
Bode Equipment Company  
CFE Equipment Corporation  
Fredon Handling, Inc.  
Material Handling Inc.

## 45 YEARS

DIS Corporation  
J&L Wire  
Vesco Toyotalift

## 40 YEARS

Action Lift, Inc.  
Best Line Equipment  
Deluxe Systems of Florida  
Dysel Business Software  
Fairchild Equipment  
Green Cubes Technology  
Nilkamal Limited  
Nucor Warehouse Systems  
Seizmic Inc.  
Sioux Rubber & Urethane  
Trammell  
Equipment Company  
Welch Equipment Company  
Western Pacific  
Storage Solutions  
Xilin Material Handling LLC

## 35 YEARS

Deep South Equipment Co.  
Hubtex North America  
Pape Material Handling  
Ravas USA, LLC  
SpaceGuard Products  
Specialized Storage  
Systems, Inc.  
Storage Equipment  
Systems Inc.

## 30 YEARS

Briggs Industrial Solutions  
Custom Industrial  
Products, Inc.  
InCord  
Panel Built, Inc.  
Ryson International Inc.  
Structurack Inc.

## 25 YEARS

All-Star Tire Co., Inc.  
First Financial  
Equipment Leasing  
Forkliftaction Media  
Herk & Associates  
KMC Equipment  
VitalEdge Technologies Inc.  
Wholesale Pallet Rack  
Products WPRP

## 20 YEARS

Apex Companies  
SEIL Rentals SA DE CV  
Stein Service & Supply  
Sugar Creek Enterprise  
TAB Industries, LLC  
Trew (Hilmot)  
West Point Rack, Inc.

## 15 YEARS

Worldwide Material  
Handling

## 10 YEARS

Atlanta Warehouse  
Solutions  
Concentric Storage  
Systems  
FLEXSPACE  
Forklift-Simulator, Inc.  
J Bennett Recruiting, LLC  
Port City Industrial  
UgoWork

## 5 YEARS

Perceptive Processing  
Stryten Energy  
Two3 Solutions  
Vsimple

# MHEDA Celebrates Dealers of Distinction

**WE ARE PLEASED** to recognize members who have been selected by their suppliers and manufacturers as Dealers of Distinction, a designation that ranks these companies among the best in the world. Below are this year's dealers. Congratulations!

## **ADRIAN'S SAFETY SOLUTIONS DEALERS OF EXCELLENCE**

Apex Material Handling  
Associated, a Raymond Company  
Cisco-Eagle Inc.  
Crown Equipment Corporation  
Global Industrial  
McGee Equipment Company  
Raymond Central  
SJF Material Handling  
Source 4 Industries Inc.  
Traffic Safety Warehouse

## **BOBCAT COMPANY MATERIAL HANDLING DEALER LEADERSHIP GROUP**

The A.J. Gates Company – Ohio  
Alliance Material  
Handling, Inc. – Maryland  
Andersen Material Handling – Florida  
Anderson Forklift Supply, Inc.  
– Montana  
Associated Supply  
Company, Inc. – Texas  
C & B Material Handling  
– South Dakota  
Connell Material Handling – Missouri  
Elite Material Handling – Texas  
Florida Forklift – Florida  
Forklifts Group – Ohio  
Hugg & Hall Equipment Company  
– Arkansas  
Lift Truck Sales & Service, Inc.  
– Missouri  
Morrison Industrial Equipment  
Company – Michigan  
Southeast Handling Systems  
– North Carolina

Summit Handling Systems, Inc.

– Connecticut  
Wolter, Inc. – Georgia  
Wolter, Inc. – Wisconsin

## **CLARK MATERIAL HANDLING DEALER OF EXCELLENCE**

**– MASTERS AWARD**  
Darr Equipment Co.  
– San Antonio, Texas  
E&E Industries  
– San Diego, California  
Holly Material Handling  
& Equipment – Tulsa, Oklahoma  
National Lift Truck – Chicago, Illinois  
Starlift Equipment Company, Inc.  
– New Haven, Connecticut  
TRI-LIFT Industries  
– Greensborough, North Carolina

## **NEW DEALER OF THE YEAR**

E&E Industries – San Diego, California

## **2024 DEALER OF THE YEAR**

TRI-LIFT Industries  
– Greensborough, North Carolina

## **HAWKER DEALER OF EXCELLENCE**

BCIAL S.A. de C.V. - Mexico  
Electrical Energy  
Systems – Canton, OH  
Lift Industrial  
Battery – Deerfield Beach, FL  
Miami Industrial Trucks – Dayton, OH  
Thompson  
& Johnson– East Syracuse, NY  
Wells Industrial Battery – Choctaw, OK

## **HYSTER COMPANY DEALERS OF DISTINCTION – NORTH AMERICA**

Alta Material Handling  
– Eastern Michigan,  
Western Michigan,  
New England North  
Berry Material Handling  
Burns Industrial Equipment  
– Pittsburgh  
Deep South – Legacy, Oklahoma  
Eastern Lift Truck  
– Baltimore-Washington DC-  
Delaware, North New Jersey,  
Philadelphia-South New Jersey  
Fairchild Equipment – Wisconsin South  
Gregory Poole – Carolinas, Virginia  
LiftOne – North, South, West  
MH Equipment – Great Plains, Illinois,  
Indianapolis, Iowa, Kentuckiana,  
Ohio North, Ohio South  
Papé Material Handling  
– Central Washington, Eugene,  
Fremont, Fresno, Portland,  
Seattle, Spokane  
Wajax – West

## **DEALERS OF DISTINCTION – LATIN AMERICA**

Avelino  
Tattersall  
LMA





### **HYUNDAI MATERIAL HANDLING THE PEAK PERFORMERS AWARDS**

Hurricane Industrial  
Lift Solutions  
M&L Industries

### **THE SUMMIT AWARD**

Leavitt Canada

### **THE APEX AWARD**

Thompson Forklift

### **THE CHUCK LEONE AWARD FOR DEALER OF THE YEAR**

Lonestar Forklift

### **MITSUBISHI LOGISNEXT AMERICAS**

#### **DEALERS OF EXCELLENCE**

Bailey Co.  
Darr Equipment Co. (South)  
Equipment Depot – Illinois  
Equipment Depot – Kentucky  
Equipment Depot – Ohio  
Equipment Depot – South Texas  
Fallsway Equipment  
Fraza Company  
G&W Equipment  
Miami Industrial Trucks  
Morrison Industrial Equipment  
Quinn Co.  
Ring Power Lift Trucks  
Toromont Material Handling – Ontario  
Towlift Material Handling – Ohio  
TRACSA  
Wiese USA

### **TOYOTA MATERIAL HANDLING THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD**

Brodie Toyota-Lift,  
Lawrence, Massachusetts  
Conger Toyota-Lift,  
Green Bay, Wisconsin  
Hull Toyota Lift, Elkhart, Indiana  
ProLift Toyota Material Handling,  
Louisville, Kentucky  
Shoppa's Material Handling,  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Southern States Toyotalift,  
Tampa, Florida  
The Lilly Company,  
Memphis, Tennessee  
Thompson & Johnson Equipment Co.,  
East Syracuse, New York  
Toyota Lift of Houston, Houston, Texas  
Toyota Material Handling Solutions,  
Santa Fe Springs, California  
Toyota Material Handling Systems,  
Suwanee, Georgia  
Watts Equipment Company,  
Manteca, California  
W. D. Matthews Machinery Co.,  
Auburn, Maine  
Welch Equipment Company,  
Denver, Colorado  
Williams Toyota Lift,  
East Sparta, Ohio

### **UNICARRIERS FORKLIFTS PREMIER CLUB WINNERS**

Dyna-Lift – Montgomery, Alabama  
H&K Equipment – Coraopolis,  
Pennsylvania  
Lift Solutions Inc. – Omaha, Nebraska  
MHS Lift, Inc. – Pennsauken,  
New Jersey

Montacargas Truck S.A. De C.V.

– Tepotzotlan, Mexico

Montacargas Galeria

– Nuevo Leon, Mexico

Parkway Systems – San Antonio, Texas

Quality Forklift Sales & Services

– Shakopee, Minnesota

Select Equipment Sales

– Buena Park, California

### **YALE LIFT TRUCK TECHNOLOGIES DEALERS OF EXCELLENCE – NORTH AMERICA**

Alta Material Handling – Eastern  
Michigan, Western Michigan, New  
England Central, New England North,  
New York Metro  
Arnold Machinery – Arizona  
Berry Equipment Handling  
Black Equipment – North, South  
Burns Industrial Equipment – Pittsburgh  
Deep South – Legacy  
Eastern Lift Truck – Baltimore,  
Washington, D.C., Delaware,  
Philadelphia, South New Jersey  
Gregory Poole – Carolinas  
LiftOne – North, South, West  
Medley Material Handling – West  
MH Equipment – Iowa, Ohio North  
Papé Material Handling – Eugene  
Riekes Equipment – Legacy  
Voss Equipment  
Yes Equipment & Services – Wisconsin

### **DEALERS OF EXCELLENCE – LATIN AMERICA**

Briggs Mexico  
Disagro



Elevate Success

# ENERGIZE

FOR TOMORROW

## A Powerful Week in Tampa

**THANK YOU TO** everyone who joined us in Tampa for MHEDA's 2025 Annual Convention and Exhibitor Showcase, held April 26-30 at the JW Marriott Tampa Water Street hotel. More than 640 material handling professionals from more than 234 companies came together for a week filled with energy, innovation and connection — all under the theme “Energize For Tomorrow.”

Throughout the Convention, attendees had the chance to explore the latest solutions in the industry. The Exhibitor Showcase was packed with innovations designed to help members stay ahead of industry trends.

Our speaker lineup offered something for everyone. Daymond John, entrepreneur and “Shark Tank” investor, opened the event with an inspiring keynote on building a winning mindset. Former White House CIO Theresa Payton led a timely session on cybersecurity and AI threats, while Ben Nemtin encouraged us to dream big and take action. AI expert Zack Kass gave us a glimpse into the “Next Renaissance,” helping us better understand how artificial intelligence will impact our industry in the years ahead.

Members also rolled up their sleeves during MHEDA's Give Back activity, assembling activity bags for children who have been hospitalized. Breakout sessions tackled key topics like workforce development, mental health, change management and leadership strategies. And when it came time to network, members connected over golf, city bike tours and the unforgettable opening and closing parties.

A huge thank you to our 2025 Board of Directors and Manufacturer Board of Advisors and Convention Chair, Darin



Boik, for his outstanding leadership in making this event possible.

We're so grateful for the passion and ideas you brought to this year's Convention – and we're already

looking forward to what's next. Mark your calendar for the 2026 MHEDA Convention, happening May 2-6 in Nashville, Tennessee.







# Xact Warehouse Solutions Mentors Texas A&M Students

**Kevin Kelley collaborates with students on their Capstone projects.**

*By Nicole Needles*

**FOR KEVIN KELLEY**, vice president of Xact Warehouse Solutions, partnering with Texas A&M students on their Industrial Distribution capstone project is far more than a business decision — it's a way of giving back to the university that shaped him.

"I love Texas A&M. Not only did I get an excellent education there, but it was an incredible experience for me at that time of my life," said Kelley. "When an opportunity to give back was presented to me, I took advantage of it."

That opportunity came through a colleague, a former customer who

introduced Kelley to Tom Hollis, capstone instructor and coordinator at Texas A&M. After learning about the students' project goals, Kelley knew Xact Warehouse Solutions could play a meaningful role.

Since then, Kelley has served as a mentor to a team of Texas A&M Industrial Distribution students working on a capstone project designed to address a real-world challenge: developing a business case and return on investment (ROI) tool for capital expenditure (capex) projects. This tool aims to help small- and medium-

sized businesses justify investments, particularly in warehouse and distribution automation.

## **Hands-on Guidance for Real-world Impact**

Kelley's involvement is hands-on. Every two to three weeks, he meets with the students, offering guidance, reviewing their progress, and helping them align their academic work with the realities of the distribution industry.

"I provide guidance, direction, and review their work progress. It gives the students the opportunity to provide





Serving our clients with excellence requires that we embrace education and learning about technology and solutions offered within our industry

a practical solution to a real industry problem — not just theory,” Kelley explained. “They get to be out in the industry and see what’s really going on out there.”

The capstone timeline runs across the academic year, beginning in January when the project was introduced to the students. Xact Warehouse Solutions became actively involved in mid-February, and Kelley plans to attend the team’s final presentation at Texas A&M this December.

Though the project is ongoing, Kelley has already seen a positive impact on the students and the quality of their work.

“After speaking with their capstone sponsor, Tom Hollis, I learned that their first-semester presentation was one of the best presentations in their class. It really stood out among other presentations from their peers,” Kelley said. He credits the students for their hard work and thoughtful approach.

### A Partnership With Mutual Benefits

The benefits of the collaboration extend beyond the students. For Xact

Warehouse Solutions, the project offers a valuable outcome — a practical ROI tool that will support clients looking to modernize their operations.

“When this is all said and done, this project will allow us to have a tool to support our clients and help them justify projects that will make improvements, particularly related to automation,” Kelley said. “Helping small to medium-sized businesses find a path to automation is a passion of mine, and at the end of this, we’re going to have a good ROI tool that’s going to help us do that.”

Other industry peers and suppliers have already expressed interest in the results of the project. “They’re very interested to see how this project’s going to turn out. I’m excited to see the fruits of all the students’ hard work,” Kelley added.

### Commitment to Community and Education

Another beneficial aspect of this venture is that supporting educational projects aligns closely with Xact Warehouse Solutions’ values and mission.

“Serving our clients with excellence requires that we embrace education and learning about technology and solutions offered within our industry,” Kelley said. The company regularly takes advantage of resources provided by MHEDA, of which Xact is an active member.

“Our whole team participates in industry training offered through MHEDA to become more familiar with what’s going on in the industry. We also regularly participate in community give-back opportunities,” Kelley noted. These efforts include volunteering at local food banks, serving at thrift stores and participating in MHEDA’s own give-back initiatives during conferences and other events.

### Looking Ahead

While Kelley is focused on supporting the students as they complete their capstone project, he’s also looking forward to how the tool will help Xact Warehouse Solutions better serve its customers.

“I’m very thankful for this opportunity to be part of the capstone project,” Kelley said. “We’ve got a lot to gain from this, too. This ROI tool is going to facilitate making it easier for our customers to know all the different things to look at when they’re trying to justify a project. I think that’s going to be really powerful.”

And just as the students are eager to deliver their final presentation in December, Kelley is equally enthusiastic about seeing the results of their work. “It’s been a great experience so far,” he reflected. “I’m looking forward to the completed project and to seeing how it helps our clients move forward on their path toward automation.”

# Congratulations to This Year's Liz Richards Scholarship Recipients!

**ESTABLISHED BY MHEDA**, the Liz Richards Scholarship Fund honors the legacy of Liz Richards, who dedicated 28 years to enhancing the material handling industry's presence in academia. This fund aims to attract and support top talent to sustain and strengthen material handling businesses for the future.

Each year, the fund offers two to three scholarships, each valued at \$5,000, to undergraduate students pursuing careers in the material handling, logistics, or supply chain sectors. These scholarships are awarded in partnership with The Material Handling Education Foundation, Inc. (MHEFI).



**Cole Pollard** - "Receiving the MHEFI scholarship is a great honor and a reflection of how much I've grown since joining the Industrial Distribution program. Being awarded the MHEFI scholarship feels like a big 'you got this' from the industry I hope to be part of, which is truly motivating. I'm proud to be part of the ID program, which has built my confidence, given me real-world experience and connected me with mentors who've pushed me to grow. I'm incredibly thankful for this opportunity and excited for what's ahead!"



**Riley Scott** - "Receiving the Liz Richards Honor Scholarship is such an honor and a blessing. It is my first scholarship from an outside organization! I transferred to Industrial Distribution in January of 2024, and it is by far the best academic decision I've made here at A&M. The professors are so great, and without their help, I would have never gotten a scholarship like this. Thank you, MHEDA and Ms. Richards! Gig 'Em!"



**Baker Bertrand** - "Material Handling may not be the most exciting industry to others, but with all the new innovations, I can't wait to be a part of it all."



**LIZ RICHARDS**  
SCHOLARSHIP FUND

## How MHEDA Members Can Support the Fund

MHEDA members and their associates can contribute to the Liz Richards Scholarship Fund by making tax-deductible donations. Any amount is appreciated and will be acknowledged. Contributions can be made through the MHEDA scholarship fund contribution page.

## Scholarship Eligibility & Application

Applications for the 2025/2026 term are accepted annually from November 15 to January 31. Please refer to the MHEDA scholarship page for the most current application dates. ●

For more information or to apply, please visit the  
MHEDA scholarship funds page: [mheda.org/scholarship-funds](https://mheda.org/scholarship-funds)







# CONVEYOR SYSTEMS & ENGINEERING, INC.

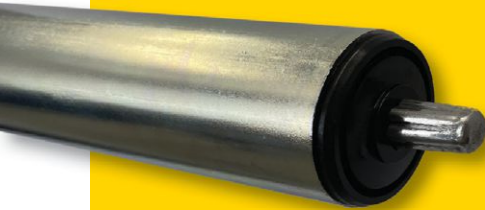


### Extruded Aluminum Conveyors with Adjustable Supports

- Plastic Covers on All Sharp Edges
- Aesthetically Pleasing for High Visibility Areas
- Available in Gravity and Powered or Using Other Rollers
- Light Weight using PVC Rollers with Aluminum Frames and Supports

### Stainless Steel Conveyors with Adjustable Supports

- Washdown Equipment
- Food Handling
- Corrosion Resistant
- For Wet, Humid, Corrosive or Hygienic Applications
- Available with Stainless, PVC or Galvanized Rollers



### Tapered Hex Axle Rollers

- Reduces Frame Wear
- Reduces Noise
- Easy to Install with Both Ends Spring Loaded
- Extends the Life of the Conveyor Frame
- Fits Frames punched for 7/16" Hex Holes and gets wider at base
- Ideal for Replacement Rollers



### 1000 Series

- Impact Loads
- Corrosives
- High Capacity
- Washdown



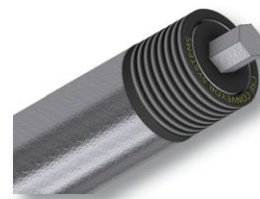
### 2000 Series

- Corrosives
- Light Duty
- Economic
- Polypropylene
- Delrin
- Washdown



### 3000 Series

- High Speeds
- High Capacity
- Precision
- Stainless and Carbon Bearings
- Washdown



### Poly-V Series

- Distribution Centers
- High Speed Applications
- Decreased Noise
- Precision Bearings

All CSE Rollers Have Multiple Options for Axle Sizes and a Variety of Tube Sizes Available

Please call **Conveyor Systems & Engineering, Inc.** for consultation on your next project or a quote on conveyors, components or custom gravity or powered conveyor equipment.



**ConveyorRollers.com**

**1-800-5-CONVEY (1-800-526-6839)**

# Congrats to Our MVP and MVS Winners!

## 2025 MVP Award Recipients



**AK Material Handling Systems**  
Maple Grove, MN (15th Award)

**All Lift Service Company**  
Willoughby, OH (11th Award)

**Alliance Material Handling Inc.**  
Jessup, MD (7th Award)

**Arnold Machinery Company**  
Salt Lake City, UT (4th Award)

**Atlas Toyota Material Handling**  
Elk Grove Village, IL (9th Award)

**Cardinal Carryor, Inc.**  
Louisville, KY (10th Award)

**Carolina Handling, LLC**  
Charlotte, NC (5th Award)

**Concept Storage Solutions, Ltd.**  
Vaughn, ON Canada (8th Award)

**Conveyer & Caster – EFI**  
Westlake, OH (8th Award)

**DACO Corporation**  
Kent, WA (3rd Award)

**Eastern Lift Truck Co., Inc.**  
Maple Shade, NJ (13th Award)

**Elite Material Handling**  
Grapevine, TX (12th Award)

**Fairchild Equipment**  
Green Bay, WI (11th Award)

**Fallsway Equipment Co.**  
Akron, OH (13th Award)

**Frontier Forklifts & Equipment**  
Pearland, TX (10th Award)

**Gregory Poole Lift Systems**  
Raleigh, NC (15th Award)

**HODGE**  
Dubuque, IA (10th Award)

**HTX Material Handling**  
Houston, TX (4th Award)

**Mathand, Inc.**  
Woodstock, GA (11th Award)

**Maybury Material Handling**  
E. Longmeadow, MA  
(15th Award)

**MH Equipment Company**  
Peoria, IL (12th Award)

**Morrison Industrial Equipment Co.**  
Grand Rapids, MI (15th Award)

**REB Storage Systems International**  
Darien, IL (4th Award)

**Riekes Equipment Company**  
Omaha, NE (15th Award)

**RMH Systems, Inc.,**  
Waukegan, IA (10th Award)

**SEIL Rentals**  
Saltillo Coahuila, Mexico  
(7th Award)

**Southeast Industrial Equipment**  
Charlotte, NC (9th Award)

**Southern States ToyotaLift**  
Tampa, FL (4th Award)

**Storage Solutions Inc.**  
Westfield, IN (6th Award)

**Systems in Motion**  
Elgin, IL (13th Award)

**Thompson & Johnson Equipment Co.**  
E. Syracuse, NY (9th Award)

**W.W. Cannon, LLC**  
Dallas, TX (11th Award)

**Tri-Lift Industries, Inc.**  
Greensboro, NC (6th Award)

**Warehouse1**  
Kansas City, MO (13th Award)

**Wolter Inc.**  
Brookfield, WI (14th Award)

**Xact Warehouse Solutions, LLC**  
Cedar Park, TX (5th Award)

**Zion Solutions Group**  
Bogart, GA (3rd Award)





**MHEDA's Most Valuable Partner (MVP) and Most Valuable Supplier (MVS) awards celebrate excellence and commitment within the material handling industry. These prestigious awards recognize companies that exhibit exceptional dedication to their customers, employees and community, setting them apart as leaders in their field.**

## 2025 MVS Award Recipients



**Advance Storage Products**  
Huntington Beach, CA (4th Award)

**Cascade Corporation**  
Portland, OR (10th Award)

**Cornerstone Specialty Wood Products, LLC**  
Cincinnati, OH (10th Award)

**Crown Battery**  
Fremont, OH (5th Award)

**East Penn Manufacturing Co. Inc.**  
Lyon Station, PA (10th Award)

**ITC Manufacturing, Inc.**  
Phoenix, AZ (1st Award)

**Mitsubishi Logisnext Americas**  
Houston, TX (1st Award)

**Modern Equipment Co. (MECO)**  
Omaha, NE (2nd Award)

**Morse Manufacturing Company, Inc.**  
East Syracuse, NY (10th Award)

**Nashville Wire Products**  
Nashville, TN (10th Award)

**Rack Builders, Inc.**  
Quincy, IL (6th Award)

**Site-Seeker, Inc.**  
Marcy, NY (8th Award)

**SpaceGuard Products**  
Seymour, IN (9th Award)

**Steel King Industries Inc.**  
Stevens Point, WI (10th Award)

**Thombert, Inc.**  
Newton, IA (10th Award)

**Tinnacity LLC**  
Amlin, OH (2nd Award)

**TVH**  
Olathe, KS (10th Award)

**UNEX Manufacturing, Inc.**  
Lakewood, NJ (10th Award)

**Wholesale Pallet Rack Products (WPRP)**  
E. Stroudsburg, PA (5th Award)

**WireCrafters LLC**  
Louisville, KY (8th Award)

*Interested in applying? For more details and to apply for these esteemed awards, visit MHEDA's website at **[mheda.org/awards](https://mheda.org/awards)**.*



# Navigating the Evolving

# SERP

## A Guide for Material Handling Businesses

By Devon Hoffman

**There are some actionable steps tailored specifically for material handling businesses to help your business thrive in this new environment.**

**THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE** is constantly shifting, and recent seismic shifts in Google's Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) fundamentally alter how businesses gain visibility online. Understanding these changes isn't just beneficial for the material handling industry – it's crucial for staying ahead in the race for customer attention. AI Overviews, prominent shopping results and a wealth of other rich SERP features increasingly occupy the valuable above-the-fold real estate, pushing traditional organic listings farther down the page. This new reality demands a strategic evolution in your SEO and content marketing efforts.

Due to these recent changes and the impact of SERPs, there are some actionable steps tailored specifically for material handling businesses to help your business thrive in this new environment.

### **The New Face of Search: What's Changed?**

Gone are the days when a simple list of ten blue links dominated the

search results page. Today's SERP is a dynamic mix of features designed to provide users with immediate answers, transactional options and rich information directly on the results page.

Perhaps the most significant recent change is the introduction and expansion of AI Overviews. These AI-generated summaries appear at the top of the results for many queries, aiming to provide a concise answer, drawn from multiple sources. While they offer quick information to users, they can also significantly reduce clicks to traditional organic listings, particularly for informational searches.

For product-related searches, visually-driven shopping results, carousels and grids are more prominent than ever, often appearing above organic results. This highlights products with images, pricing and availability, directly influencing purchasing decisions before a user even visits a website.

Rich snippets, including "People Also Ask" boxes, video carousels and featured snippets (which pull a direct answer or summary from a webpage),



# GOOGLE'S SERP EVOLUTION

**2014**

## FEATURED SNIPPETS

Google introduced featured snippets to provide users with quick, direct answers pulled from websites—appearing above organic results in a "position zero."

**2016**

## ADS MOVED ABOVE ORGANIC LISTINGS

Google redesigned its ad placement by moving paid search ads from the sidebar to the top of the SERP, pushing organic results further down.

**2019**

## FAVICONs

Google added site favicons to mobile search results, aiming to help users identify sources more easily and emphasize branding.

**2021**

## CONTINUOUS SCROLL

Google introduced continuous scrolling on mobile, eliminating pagination and allowing users to browse more results seamlessly.

**2025**

## E-E-A-T REMAINS CRITICAL

Prioritizing trustworthy, high-quality content from credible sources to improve search results' reliability and contextual richness has led to algorithms promoting strong EEAT signals - impacting rankings and visibility of key features.

**2015**

## PEOPLE ALSO ASK

The "People Also Ask" box began showing related questions and expandable answers, encouraging deeper search engagement.

**2018**

## VIDEO CAROUSELS ON DESKTOP

Video results evolved into swipeable carousels on desktop, enhancing visibility for multimedia content directly in search.

**2020**

## FREE PRODUCT LISTINGS

To support retailers, Google opened its Shopping tab to free product listings, leveling the playing field for e-commerce visibility.

**2024**

## AI SEARCH GENERATIVE EXPERIENCE (SGE)

Google's SGE began using generative AI to deliver synthesized overviews and answers, transforming the way users interact with search.

are designed to answer user queries instantly. While they can drive targeted traffic when your content is featured, they also contribute to the "zero-click search" phenomenon, where users get their answers without ever leaving the SERP.

For businesses with a local presence, the local pack displaying nearby businesses on a map with key

information remains a critical SERP feature, often appearing high on the page for location-based searches.

The collective impact of these features is clear: increased competition for visibility and a diminished prominence for standard organic listings. For material handling companies, relying solely on traditional ranking strategies is no longer sufficient.

## Adapting Your Strategy for the New Digital Landscape

Success in the evolving SERP requires a multi-pronged approach that prioritizes user intent, leverages new technologies and focuses on providing value in easily digestible formats.

The rise of AI Overviews and rich features means that potential customers searching for material handling solutions might find answers to their initial questions or browse product options directly on the SERP.

This can impact the traditional sales funnel, requiring you to capture attention and provide value earlier in the buyer journey. The long sales cycles common in the material handling industry mean that initial searches might be highly research-oriented, making your content's appearance in AI Overviews or featured snippets crucial for establishing expertise and brand awareness.

### Take Action

**Regularly analyze the SERP for keywords relevant to your products and services.** Use tools such as SEMRush to see which SERP features are triggered and identify which competitors appear in them. This provides a clear picture of the competitive landscape and the opportunities you might miss.

## Practical Strategies for SEO and Content Marketing Adaptation

To thrive, your digital strategy must adapt to prioritize visibility within these new SERP features while still optimizing for traditional rankings.

- **Optimize for Featured Snippets:** Structure your content to directly answer common questions about your products and services using clear headings, bullet points and concise paragraphs. Think about the "what, why and how" of material handling solutions.
- **Enhance Product Feeds for Shopping Results:** If you sell equipment or parts online, ensure your product feeds are

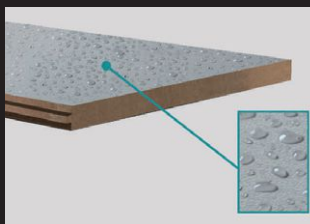
# resinDEK®

## NEWLY RELEASED PRODUCTS

### ResinDek® WR

Water Resistant Flooring Panel:

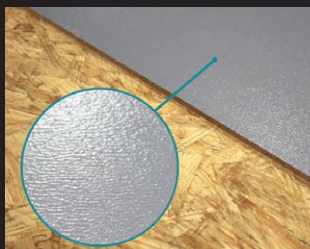
- Designed for temporary outdoor exposure up to 120 Days, in new build, high humidity and limited washdown applications
- Meets MR90 standards for moisture resistance



### ResinDek® ReShield™

Overlay Flooring Panel:

- Instant floor performance upgrade without disruption to existing operations
- 1/4" panels install directly over most level substrates including plywood, OSB, chipboard and unfinished ResinDek floors



## FLOORING FOR AGVS, AMRS & PALLET JACKS



**513.772.5560**

info@resindek.com | resindek.com



© 2025 Cornerstone Specialty Wood Products, LLC® All rights reserved.



comprehensive, accurate and regularly updated with high-quality images, detailed descriptions, pricing and inventory information.

- **Prioritize User Experience:** Google prioritizes websites that offer a seamless and fast mobile experience. Ensure your website is mobile-responsive, loads quickly and is easily navigable.

#### Take Action

##### Implement Schema Markup.

Use schema markup (structured data) to help search engines better understand your content, products, services and business information. This increases your chances of appearing in rich snippets and other enhanced listings. [Technicalseo.com](#) has a good tool for this.

#### Leveraging AI, Featured Snippets and Local Search

AI is not just changing the SERP; it can also be a powerful tool in your marketing arsenal.

#### Take Action

##### Leverage AI for Content Ideas and Optimization.

Use AI tools to brainstorm content topics based on your industry's trending questions and help optimize existing content for clarity and conciseness, making it more suitable for featured snippets. ChatGPT is the most popular tool you may have heard of (and may already use).

##### Maximize Local Search

**Visibility.** Claim and optimize your Google Business Profile listing with accurate and complete information, including services offered, hours and location. Encourage customer reviews and respond to reviews and questions in a timely manner. Build local citations on relevant online directories.

**The rise of AI Overviews and rich features means that potential customers searching for material handling solutions might find answers to their initial questions or browse product options directly on the SERP.**

#### Creating Content That Coincides With Search Intent

Search intent is becoming more nuanced. Users are looking for specific answers and solutions, not just general information.

#### Take Action

##### Develop In-depth, Solution-oriented Content.

Go beyond product specifications. Create content that addresses your target audience's challenges and how your material handling solutions provide answers. Remember to keep EEAT (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness and Trustworthiness) in mind when creating content. This could include case studies, white papers, comparison guides and detailed "how-to" articles.

##### Focus on Long-tail Keywords.

Target longer, more specific keywords that indicate a user is further along in the buyer journey and has a clear intent. These often have less competition and higher conversion rates.

#### Utilizing Data for Informed Marketing Decisions

In the new SERP landscape, data is your compass. Monitoring and analyzing performance is essential for refining your strategy.

#### Take Action

- **Track Key Metrics.** Monitor metrics such as organic traffic, click-through rates from different SERP features, keyword rankings (paying attention to which features you appear in) and conversions originating from organic search. Google Search Console is a good tool for tracking these key metrics.
- **Analyze User Behavior.** Use analytics to understand how users interact with your website after arriving from search results. This can inform improvements to your content and website structure.
- **Attribute Conversions.** Implement robust conversion tracking to understand which keywords and content drive leads and sales, allowing you to allocate resources effectively.

The expanding search landscape presents unique challenges and opportunities for the material handling industry. By understanding the impact of new SERP features like AI Overviews and adapting your SEO and content marketing strategies to prioritize user intent, optimize for rich results, leverage AI and make data-driven decisions, your business can not only maintain but also enhance its organic visibility and connect with customers in this dynamic digital age. The time to adapt is now, so take action. ●

#### About the Author

*Devon Hoffman has over ten years of experience in marketing and currently serves as a digital marketing specialist at Site-Seeker. His innovative and client-centered methods effectively generate positive results for the businesses and organizations he works with and supports.*

## Empowering Employees Against

# CYBER THREATS

To stay ahead of cybercriminals, employees need regular training sessions.

By Nick Fortuna

By fostering an environment where employees are comfortable reporting issues and discussing potential risks, organizations can create a more proactive and resilient security posture.

**AMID MOUNTING CYBERSECURITY** threats, well-trained employees can be a key component of a robust defense system. But without regular training sessions, those same employees can become a major liability, providing juicy targets for sophisticated cyberattacks, according to Theresa Payton, a featured speaker at this year's MHEDA Convention.

Payton, a former White House chief information officer, said employee training is essential for building a "strong cybersecurity posture," but companies often approach training in the wrong way. IT departments send out simulated phishing emails to "catch" employees who fall for the scams, then "punish or shame them for their mistakes," she said.

"This approach sets up a culture of fear and discourages openness, which can actually hinder the development of a security-conscious workforce," Payton said.

Payton, the founder and chief executive of the Charlotte, North Carolina-based cybersecurity firm Fortalice Solutions, spoke at MHEDA's Convention about the importance

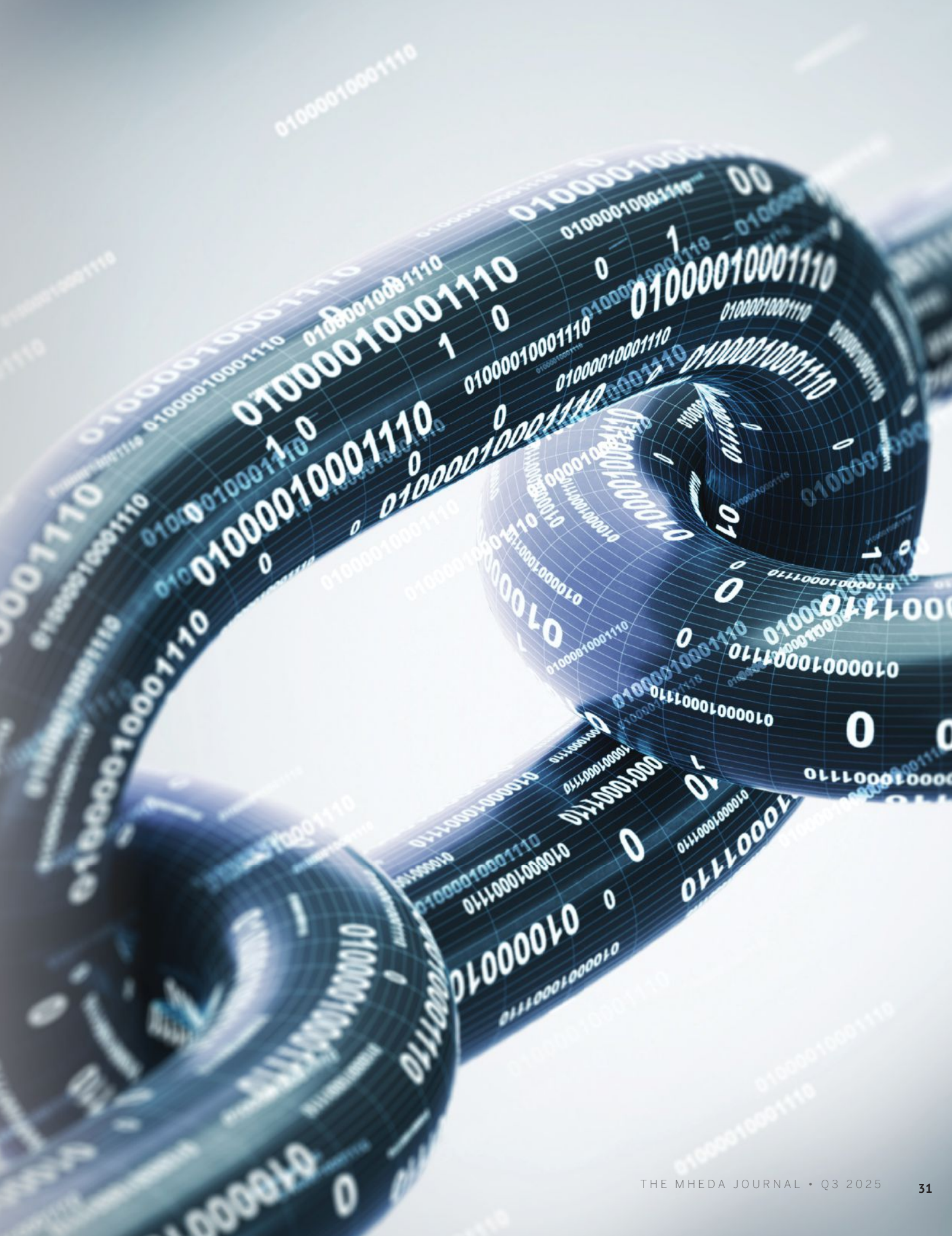
of "investing in both technology and people" to safeguard operations.

Payton said companies should focus on creating "engaging, ongoing training that fosters a culture of reporting, learning and openness." Rather than trying to catch workers who make mistakes, companies should incentivize them for positive behavior, such as reporting suspicious activity to supervisors and demonstrating good cybersecurity habits.

"This way, employees feel empowered to act as the first line of defense rather than feeling like they're being set up for failure," Payton said. "By fostering an environment where employees are comfortable reporting issues and discussing potential risks, organizations can create a more proactive and resilient security posture. This cultural shift will help ensure that security remains top of mind, not just during training sessions but every day."

Training should be interactive to promote the retention of information, and it should be specific to each employee's role at the company, covering the real-world scenarios that they're likely to encounter. That









# LIFTOW TURNS 65!

## Celebrating a Legacy of Lifting Canada.

Since 1960, Liftow has proudly supported Canadian industry as the largest Toyota forklift dealer in North America. For 65 years, we've helped businesses move forward with premier products, trusted expertise, a lasting legacy and commitment to exceptional service.

Thank you to our employees, customers, and partners for being part of this incredible journey.

Here's to many more years of  
**"Elevating Everything".**



# Liftow

[www.liftow.com](http://www.liftow.com)





includes well-established tactics such as ransomware, phishing and internal bad actors as well as emerging threats such as realistic-looking deepfakes.

Using voice and video cloning, cybercriminals can convincingly impersonate company executives or create fake identities to trick employees into divulging sensitive information such as login credentials, Payton said. Since cybercriminals are always refining their tactics and embracing new technologies, training should be part of the onboarding process and “reinforced regularly” throughout an employee’s tenure, she said.

“It’s not enough to just make them aware of the risks,” Payton said. “We need to give them the tools to recognize threats and take the right actions when they see something suspicious. Cybersecurity should also be woven into the fabric of the company culture, making it a continuous, evolving conversation.”

## Develop a detailed step-by-step process for identifying, containing, eradicating and recovering from an incident.

### Practice the Fundamentals

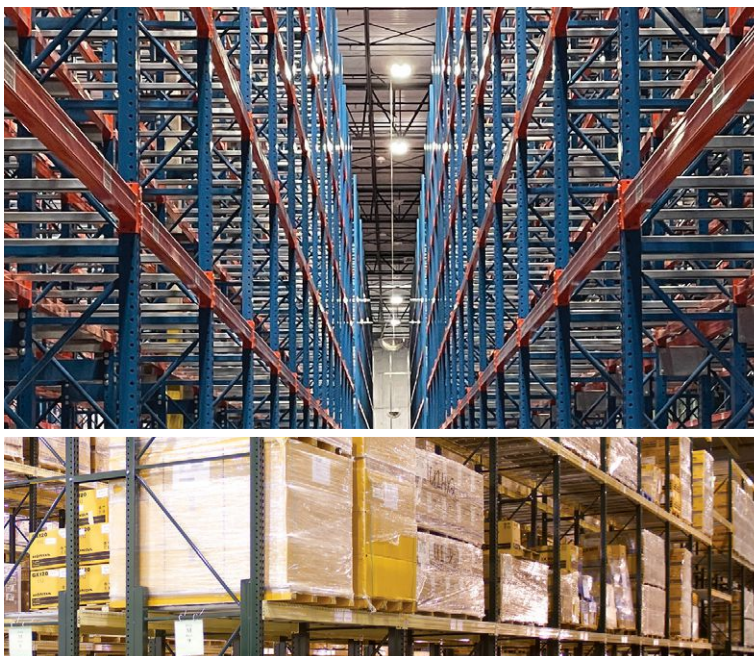
Small- and mid-sized businesses often face the challenge of balancing cybersecurity risks against their limited resources, so they should start by “focusing on the basics,” Payton said.

That includes practicing a “digital disaster” in which the company loses access to its computers and data. Companies should have a comprehensive incident response plan that includes accessing data backups to reestablish operations and

contacting vendors and customers to alert them to the breach.

Payton said a key best practice is to follow guidance from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The NIST’s Cybersecurity Framework, available on the agency’s website, details the five pillars of organizational readiness – identify, protect, detect, respond and recover – providing a structured approach to managing incidents.

“The key is to define clear roles and responsibilities in advance, establish communication protocols and develop a detailed step-by-step process for identifying, containing, eradicating and recovering from an incident,” Payton said. “Regularly testing and updating the plan through tabletop exercises ensures that everyone knows their role and can respond swiftly when an attack occurs. Additionally, having a post-incident review process will allow



## SIMPLY BETTER RACKING.

Steel King’s SK2000 racking is an industry leader. It’s closed tubular construction, heavy-duty horizontal bracing and three- rivet connections make it 250 times more damage resistant than open-back racking.

Let Steel King deliver the racking solutions to meet your operation, space, and budget needs.

Use the QR code to  
learn how Steel King  
is simply better



[steelking.com](https://steelking.com) | 800-826-0203



**STEEL KING®**  
BUILT TO DELIVER

“

Sold my customer  
cheap batteries.  
They failed.  
Like our relationship.

”

89% of customers likely switch  
providers after a negative  
experience.\* Bundling new  
equipment with bargain batteries  
jeopardizes customer operations  
and your relationships.

**Is it worth the risk?**  
**When it comes to power,**  
**EnerSys® can help you**  
**choose wisely.**



Find out more: [www.enersys.com/throughput](http://www.enersys.com/throughput)

© 2025 EnerSys. All rights reserved. Trademarks and logos are the property of EnerSys and its affiliates unless otherwise noted. Subject to revisions without prior notice. E.&O.E.

\*As reported on Gitnux.org

**EnerSys®**  
Power/Full Solutions



for continuous improvement of the incident response plan.”

Implementing multifactor authentication for critical systems might feel costly or cumbersome, but it’s a highly effective security measure, she added.

“It’s also important to prioritize risk, understanding which assets are most critical and focusing efforts on protecting them first,” Payton said. “Cybersecurity doesn’t have to be prohibitively expensive. It’s about prioritizing the right measures and building security into your operations from the start.”

### A Target-rich Environment

Material-handling companies are facing new cybersecurity challenges as the industry integrates more automated systems and Internet of Things (IoT) technology into operations, Payton said. These devices significantly expand the “attack surface” for cybercriminals by increasing the number of interconnected devices that can be targeted.

Complicating matters, many IoT devices lack robust security protocols, making them vulnerable entry points for attackers, she said. In a simple example, cybercriminals could exploit a vulnerability in automated equipment within a warehouse, gaining access to sensitive control systems that could paralyze operations or manipulate the management of inventory.

“The greater the reliance on these systems in critical infrastructure, the higher the risk of cyberattacks that could disrupt not just operations but the entire supply chain,” Payton said. “To mitigate these risks, companies must adopt a proactive, security-by-design approach for all new automated systems and IoT devices.”

That comprehensive approach includes four main components, according to Payton:

- Secure device design: ensuring that devices have built-in security features such as strong authentication and encryption.
- Network segmentation: isolating IoT devices and automated systems

## To mitigate these risks, companies must adopt a proactive, security-by-design approach for all new automated systems and IoT devices.

from the rest of the IT network to contain potential breaches.

- Continuous monitoring: implementing monitoring systems to detect anomalies in real time and respond swiftly to any security incidents.
- Regular vulnerability testing and patching: establishing a routine for testing automated systems and IoT devices for vulnerabilities and applying security patches.

“As these innovations become more deeply embedded in operations, businesses must evolve their cybersecurity strategies to stay ahead of increasingly sophisticated threats,” Payton said. “Looking into the future, the risks tied to IoT and automation will only become more pronounced.”

Cybersecurity experts fear that widespread use of industrial robots could lead to gridlock in the event of a major cyberattack that spreads among businesses, Payton said. She noted that the market for industrial robots is expected to hit \$39 billion next year, with robots driving 24/7 operations across factories, warehouses and retail operations.

Driven by artificial intelligence, automation promises to reduce human error and promote safety and productivity, but cybercriminals surely will target these robots’ operating systems, Payton said. Production could be brought to a halt abruptly, or even worse, robots could be reprogrammed to produce defective goods, damage infrastructure or injure workers.

If companies are infiltrated by cybercriminals and don’t pay ransom, they could suffer significant financial and reputational damage, Payton said.

Highlighting another risk, she said cybercriminals are targeting IoT devices

to mine cryptocurrency surreptitiously. Hackers can embed mining software into device firmware or apps, siphoning off power and computing resources from operations. This “shadow mining” silently drains energy, degrades performance and increases operational costs. Victims may notice rising energy bills or device slowdowns but fail to recognize the hidden mining activity, Payton said.

That vulnerability illustrates the need for manufacturers to equip IoT devices with end-to-end encryption, AI-driven anomaly detection and advanced patching protocols. Meanwhile, businesses should deploy firewalls and network-traffic monitoring tools to block malicious activity and prevent stealth mining.

“By embracing advanced technologies such as AI-driven threat prediction and zero-trust architectures, and remaining proactive in testing, patching and monitoring systems, material-handling companies can confidently navigate the evolving cybersecurity terrain,” Payton said. ●



### Article Takeaways

#### 1. Make Training Ongoing

**and Positive.** Regular, engaging training builds a security-minded culture without fear or blame.

**2. Focus on the Basics.** Use simple, proven practices like multifactor authentication, password policies and incident response plans.

**3. Secure Automation and IoT.** Protect connected devices with strong design, monitoring and regular updates to prevent attacks.

INDUSTRIAL BATTERIES • CHARGERS • PARTS • SERVICE • MAINTENANCE • & MORE

*The Industry's*

# Best Kept Secret

*for 75 Years*



*Higher Quality.  
Longer Life.  
More Power.*

---

(630) 851-5800  
sales@batterybuilders.com  
www.batterybuilders.com







# Key Considerations in Succession Planning for Your Company

*By James Thompson*

**AS THE BABY** boomer generation approaches retirement, we are witnessing an unprecedented shift in business ownership. Over 7 million privately held companies in the U.S. are owned by individuals over the age of 55, and it's estimated that \$16 trillion in assets will change hands in the next 15 years. For the industrial automation and material handling sectors, the wave of leadership transition is already well underway, and with it comes both challenge and opportunity.

Regardless of whether an owner plans to sell or pass the business to family or internal leaders, a well-designed succession plan is critical

to preserving the legacy, value and continuity of the business.

## **Why Succession Planning Matters**

In industrial automation, many companies are seeing increased competition from private equity-backed firms entering the market. While some owners may consider a sale to these entities, others wish to preserve independence or transition leadership internally. A thoughtful succession plan provides options – whether for sale, generational transfer or employee ownership – ensuring business

continuity and protecting years of hard work.

Succession planning isn't just about finding the next CEO. It involves legal, financial, operational and strategic elements that must align to ensure a smooth handoff. Key stakeholders typically include owners, attorneys, accountants, wealth advisors and M&A professionals. Here are essential considerations as you prepare your company for a long-term leadership transition:

### 1. Know Your Potential Successors

Whether internal or external, identifying potential successors early gives you time to train and mentor them. Successors might be family members, key executives or even external leaders brought in as part of a planned transition. In cases where a full or partial sale is considered, potential successors may include strategic acquirers or financial buyers.

**Succession doesn't always mean selling 100% of your company. Owners can transition leadership while retaining equity, sell a minority stake or even structure a management buyout or employee stock ownership plan.**

Understanding who could lead the company – and how they align with your values – is central to the succession conversation.

### 2. Understand What Drives Business Value

Industry-specific metrics can significantly influence how successors and investors view your

company's potential. In material handling, for instance, companies with a comprehensive service offering (engineering, implementation, aftermarket service) typically command higher valuations and are more resilient. Even if a sale isn't on the immediate horizon, aligning your management team with performance targets that drive enterprise value is smart succession planning.

### 3. Explore All Transition Options

Succession doesn't always mean selling 100% of your company. Owners can transition leadership while retaining equity, sell a minority stake or even structure a management buyout or employee stock ownership plan. The goal is to build a plan that matches your financial goals, timeline and desired involvement post transition. Flexibility in your succession strategy allows you to adjust based on evolving goals or market conditions.



# BUILDING COMPLETE SOLUTIONS TOGETHER!



**MOUNT IT.**  
GamberJohnson.com  
PrecisionMounts.com



**POWER IT.**  
LindElectronics.com



**CARRY IT.**  
InfoCase.com

What More Can Team GJ Do For You?





#### 4. Work With Trusted Advisors

Succession planning is not a one-size-fits-all process. A strong team – including investment bankers, CPAs, estate planners and legal counsel – can help you map out the right path. Advisors who truly understand your industry will bring insight into best practices and common pitfalls, ensuring that the next phase of your company's life is thoughtfully executed.

#### 5. Plan for Tax and Legal Implications

The structure of a business transition – whether through asset transfer, stock transfer or internal succession – carries significant tax consequences. A well-advised owner will consult tax professionals early to model various scenarios and maximize long-term wealth preservation. In many cases, planning well in advance can unlock significant tax advantages for both the outgoing and incoming leadership.

#### 6. Don't Underestimate Working Capital and Financial Readiness

Even if a full sale is not planned, the business must be financially sound and operationally ready for new leadership. That means clear, timely financial statements: a strong understanding of working capital needs and robust internal systems that don't rely on the owner's daily involvement. If a sale is part of the plan, ensure your books can stand up to due diligence. But even for internal succession, solid financial management increases confidence in long-term viability.

#### 7. Create a Timeline and Communicate

One of the biggest risks in succession planning is waiting too long. A good plan often takes three to five years to implement fully. Owners should define a timeline, identify leadership gaps and begin transitioning responsibilities gradually. Communicate your intentions early with family, staff and partners. Avoiding surprises ensures continuity and builds trust across the organization.

#### Final Thoughts

Succession planning is not just about stepping away – it's about future-proofing the business you've built. Whether your goal is to preserve the family legacy, reward loyal employees or prepare for a strategic transaction down the road, a proactive and structured plan ensures your business thrives in the next chapter. ●

#### About the Author

James Thompson is the managing director at Alexander Hutton, a Seattle-based investment banking firm. James holds an MBA from the University of Washington and is a former CEO, CFO and SVP of UK-listed HaloSource. He is a board member at Brown Strauss, Inc. For questions related to the content of this article, you may contact James at [jt@alexanderhutton.com](mailto:jt@alexanderhutton.com) or at 206-852-6359.

Relationship

**RB Rack Builders Inc.**  
Ingenuity Quality Integrity



We build the  
world's best storage rack for  
the world's best customers

you!

(847) 330-1724    [www.rackbuildersinc.com](http://www.rackbuildersinc.com)

## How to Prioritize

# GROWTH

## Without Sacrificing Operations

*By Nicole Needles*





Growth doesn't have to be chaotic. With a simple framework, clear priorities, visual accountability and a willingness to start small, teams can make steady progress without burnout.

**DRIVING STRATEGIC GROWTH** while maintaining daily operations can feel like juggling chainsaws – especially for material handling leaders under pressure to evolve in a rapidly changing industry. Andrea Jones, speaker and founder of AJC® and The Executagility® Company, understands that tension all too well.

Jones has a strong foundation in science, engineering and business. She started at Intel Corporation in 2000 after getting her bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon. While working full time in her first year, she completed her MS program in Semiconductor Chemistry in 2001. In 2004, she attended MIT in Boston for her MBA/Master's in Engineering dual degree through the Leaders for Global Operations program. She finished this program in 2006, returned to Intel and began to consult.

From the start, she was determined not to be the kind of consultant who offers advice and walks away. Her approach has always centered on execution, seeing initiatives through to completion and ensuring measurable

results. Today, she continues to help organizations align around priorities and build momentum with a focus on follow-through, not just planning.

At this year's MHEDA Convention, Jones led a workshop on this simple framework with tips all coming from her company's Executagility Model®. She shared with attendees practical strategies leaders can use to prioritize initiatives, allocate resources and take action – without burning out their teams.

### Start With a Simple Framework

Jones encourages leadership teams to set aside 90 minutes each quarter to list every initiative they want to pursue, no matter how big or small. Then, they apply a clear set of criteria to prioritize those ideas.

She uses three simple questions to help leaders get started: "Will this help us grow? Improve operational efficiency? Create happier customers or employees?" Jones suggests tweaking these criteria based on current realities. For example, "Tariffs might still be an issue next quarter," she explains. "So maybe your filter becomes: What doesn't cost extra money? What's relevant no matter what happens with tariffs? What leverages new technology like AI?" This process helps teams sort "someday" ideas into what will truly move the needle right now.

One common mistake that leaders make when tackling growth, Jones said, is when they try to bite off more than they can chew. They immediately start assigning tasks or giving objectives with only a vague idea of where they want to end up. This can lead to frustration and confusion, ultimately putting a halt to the project while disrupting daily operations.

To avoid this, leaders should ask, "What are we really trying to achieve?" From the answer to this question, create a short-term, and more importantly, specific plan that everyone on the team shows they understand. If teams don't know where they're going, they won't be motivated to get there.

"This level of clarity acts like a GPS. Once you have it, every project, every task, every meeting becomes easier to evaluate. Is it helping us get closer to our vision, or is it a distraction? Without that filter, even well-intentioned teams can veer off course," Jones said.

### Visualize the Load

Once priorities are set, Jones urges leaders to assign a sponsor to each initiative and visualize who's doing





# HAWKER FLEX® SERIES

## The Power of HAWKER FLEX®-IBILITY

The HAWKER FLEX® series of batteries include TPPL (Thin Plate Pure Lead) and Lithium Ion advanced motive power battery chemistries. These batteries offer exceptional flexibility and productivity to meet your changing motive power needs, without the maintenance!

Constructed with Thin Plate Pure Lead (TPPL) technology, HAWKER FLEX® TPPL batteries are designed to meet and exceed your operation's demands and thrive with frequent recharging.

We also feature the HAWKER FLEX® Li3 modular lithium battery for the most demanding operations and delivering the ultimate in battery performance and motive power capability.

#### HAWKER FLEX® TPPL & Li3 Battery Benefits:

- 30-40% more energy efficient than their flooded counterparts when paired with a HAWKER® charger
- Significant water savings being virtually maintenance free
- TPPL is 99% recyclable
- More frequent charging delivers longer life
- Shorter recharge times
- Perfect for charging whenever not in use
- Ideal for multi-shift operations
- Increased reliability and dependability
- Maximize forklift performance
- Longer battery life
- Lowest total cost of operation



To learn more about the HAWKER FLEX® Power Series, call 1-877-7HAWKER to contact your local HAWKER® representative. (U.S. and Canada only)



AM-HFPS-AD Rev AC September 2024

© 2025 Hawker Powersource, Inc. All rights reserved. All trademarks and logos are property of or licensed to Hawker Powersource, Inc. and their affiliates. Subject to revisions without prior notice, E. & O.E.

 **HAWKER®**  
WHERE POWER AND DATA CONNECT  
[www.hawkerpowersource.com](http://www.hawkerpowersource.com)



what. Is the same person listed on five projects? That's a red flag. "They're probably not going to have time for all of them," she said.

Her advice: Start small. "If you're really worried, just pick one thing to focus on for the first quarter. That's it."

Starting small is the best way to go, but how can leaders prioritize and vet projects so that they can create a clear vision for the rest of the team? The series of criteria mentioned earlier, utilized by Steve Jobs, can narrow down the long list of company goals. If the project is not aligned with the company's immediate objectives, is not realistic given the budget and staff and does not give the company a competitive advantage, it can be set aside.

"For example, this quarter a company might say: 'Yes, we want long-term growth, efficiency and happy customers. But right now, tariffs are volatile, and we can't add new expenses,'" Jones said. "That means their criteria might include low-cost initiatives, internally focused improvements that are valuable regardless of external shifts and a way to take advantage of emerging technology, like AI."

This process turns a giant wish list into two or three high-impact, achievable initiatives. Then, you assign a sponsor to each one and map out who's doing what. And most importantly, you make sure you're not overloading the same person with multiple high-priority projects. This visibility helps ensure the plan is not only strategic but also realistic.

### From Overwhelmed to Operational Success

To illustrate the power of this process, Jones shared a success story from her time as a consultant. A president of a \$40 million company had just completed an ERP implementation and found himself overwhelmed by 37 unspoken improvement ideas and the need to land major new accounts. His team was confused by his sporadic requests, unsure how to act on the flurry of daily directives.

Jones stepped in to guide them through the prioritization process, using the same simple criteria. They quickly landed on two key initiatives, including clearing a backlog of over 3,000 invoices created during the ERP transition.

Each day, they held 15-minute stand-ups using a shared Excel sheet to track commitments and blockers. One recurring obstacle? Interruptions.

"Turns out everyone was being constantly interrupted by managers who didn't realize they were part of the problem," Jones said. The solution: signs and curtains during focus hours. "It was simple, but it worked."

By the end of the 10-week period, the backlog was cleared, on top of their regular invoice workload. Even better, the team has kept up the sprint process ever since.

"I talked to Brad, the president, in April," Jones said. "They've been sprinting for 48 months straight. We worked with them for five or six months, and they've kept going on their own. That's ROI."

### Use AI as a Thought Partner

Jones notes that leaders don't have to do it alone. She often uses AI tools like ChatGPT to "spill out" ideas and have them summarized.

"I'm an auditory thinker and visual learner," she said. "So being able to say it out loud, see it in writing and reflect on it helps me avoid becoming overwhelmed."

In fact, her team is currently working on developing AI tools that will guide this entire prioritization and execution process.

"We're building it because who else is going to do it?" Jones said.

### One Thing. That's It.

Even with the process broken down into simpler steps, some leaders may still be hesitant to take on a growth initiative. When they start to think of all of the things they want to accomplish or backlogged projects they'd like to catch up on, it starts to feel like a pipe dream.

Jones offers clear encouragement: "Here's the good news: you don't have to do everything. You just have to do one thing."

## Vertical Conveying Simplified



**Vertical Sortation, Cold Storage? Ryson's equipment has already become essential in developing and sustainable warehousing trends.**

Ryson Spirals need less floor space than conventional conveyors and are faster and more reliable than any elevator or lift. Ryson makes a full line of spiral conveyors that can satisfy most vertical conveying needs.

Our Wide Track Model comes in a slat widths of 30" & 36" and can provide an elevation change of up to 35 feet with only one drive. They also have the ability to induct and divert loads at intermediate levels, making them ideal for multi-level operations.

For more information, visit [www.ryson.com](http://www.ryson.com).



[www.ryson.com](http://www.ryson.com)  
(757) 898-1530



She points to bestselling books like “The One Thing” by Gary Keller and the work of strategist Dan Sullivan as reinforcement that singular focus is a proven path to success.

She also emphasizes the psychological relief of writing things down. “People try to prioritize in their heads, but that’s more overwhelming than putting it on a whiteboard or a piece of paper,” she said. “When it’s visible, it doesn’t get lost. That’s why people use sticky notes—so they won’t forget.”

Once all of the thoughts and ideas are out, the only thing that matters is narrowing down the options with the processes Jones laid out, and doing that well in the next quarter. Taking small steps can help familiarize leaders with the process and can also be an encouragement to continue down the path to success.

### Grow as You Go

In a fast-paced industry where change is constant and demands are high,

Jones offers a grounded, practical approach for leaders striving to grow without losing control of daily operations. Her message is clear: Growth doesn’t have to be chaotic. With a simple framework, clear priorities, visual accountability and a willingness to start small, teams can make steady progress without burnout. Whether it’s leveraging AI for idea generation or carving out time each quarter to reset and refocus, the key is not doing everything – it’s doing the right things well. One initiative at a time.

### Ready to Execute Growth?

Visit the Executagility® website for training and resources, including the Field Guide that provides the processes in this article in module format for easy comprehension and completion. Please visit [executagility.com/books-training](http://executagility.com/books-training) or contact [andrea@executagility.com](mailto:andrea@executagility.com) to learn more. ●



### Article Takeaways

#### 1. Use a Simple Framework.

Prioritize initiatives each quarter using clear criteria tied to current business needs.

#### 2. Make Work Visible.

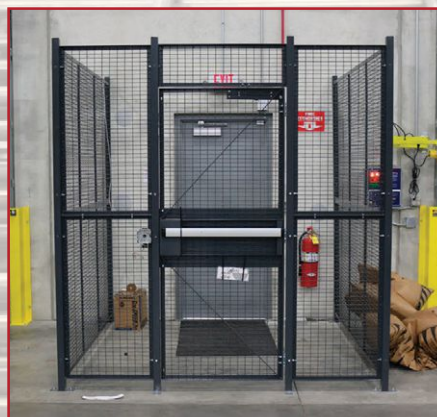
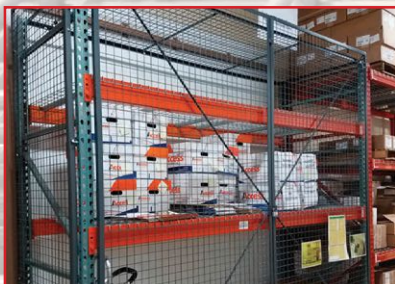
Assign owners, map responsibilities and avoid overloading team members.

#### 3. Start Small.

Focus on one high-impact initiative at a time to build momentum and avoid burnout.

# WireCrafters®

## KEEPING YOUR EMPLOYEES SAFE SINCE 1967.



[www.WireCrafters.com](http://www.WireCrafters.com)

AMERICAN MADE  
WITH U.S. MATERIALS





**XP1000**  
**From the ground up**

Engineered with advanced technology, the Trelleborg XP1000 tire is designed for maximum-intensity material handling operations, offering unrivaled mileage, stability, and comfort across warehouse floors, port yards, and demanding workshop environments. The deep tread, Pit Stop Line®, and advanced fiber compound ensure long-lasting performance, reduce waste, and optimize fuel efficiency, driving sustainability across all operations.

trelleborg-tires.com

Trelleborg Tires. From the ground up.

**SELECT ALL IMAGES WITH TVH PARTS** X



**WITH ACCESS TO OVER 50 MILLION PART NUMBERS,  
YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO GUESS AGAIN.**

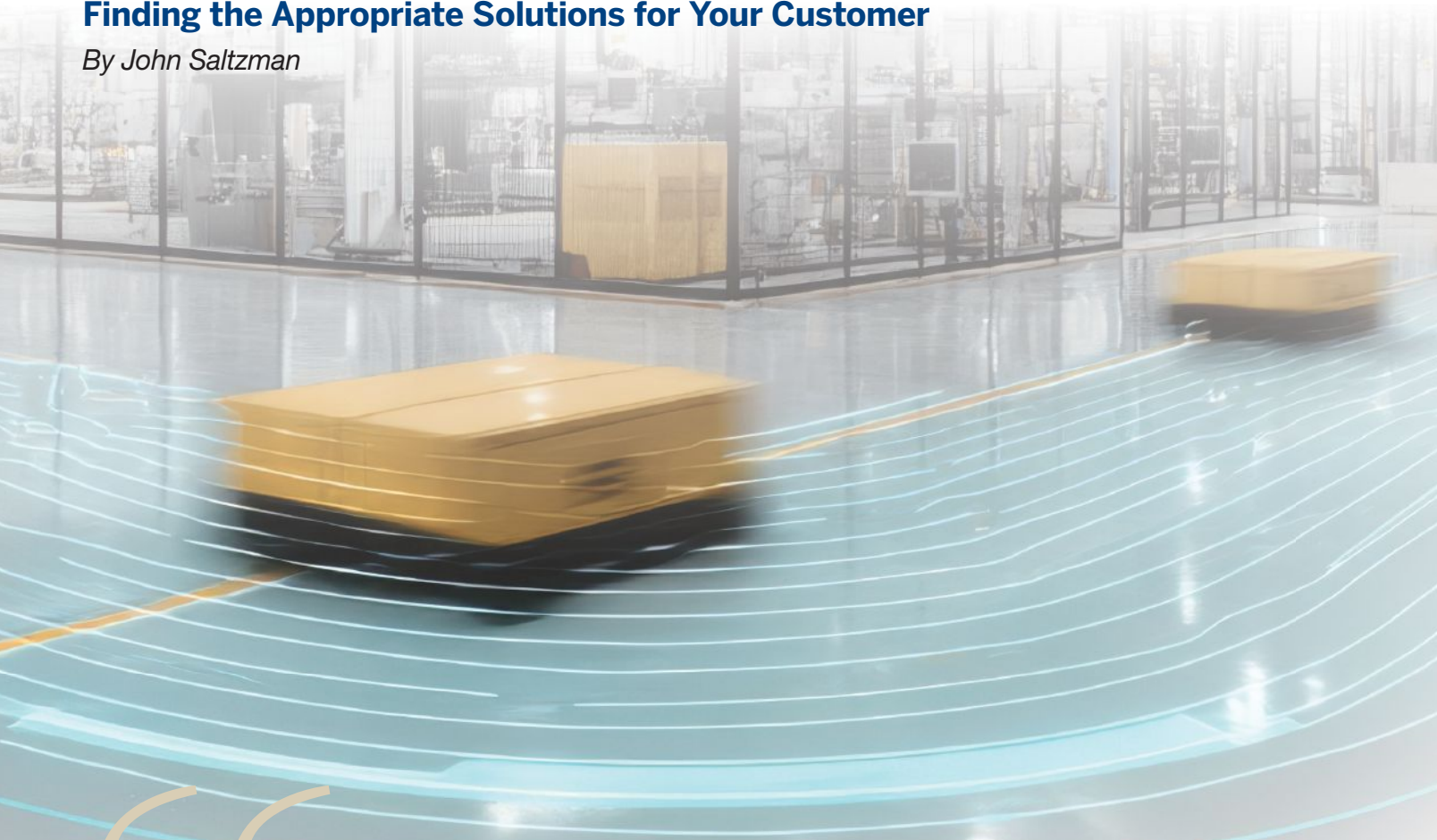
At TVH, we make it easy to find the parts you need for your material handling equipment. Explore our wide range of products, including forks, hydraulics, drive train, steering components, and more, on our e-commerce site today!



# AUTOMATION INTEGRATION

## Finding the Appropriate Solutions for Your Customer

By John Saltzman



The best systems empower teams by reducing repetitive tasks and enabling higher-value work, but this requires a thoughtful change management process.

**WITH THE CONSTANT** advancement of automation technology, material handling companies and their customers face a common challenge: selecting and integrating solutions that align with operational needs. While the marketplace is flooded with automation tools, success hinges not on what is available, but on what is appropriate for a specific facility and its goals, with sight of long-term success.

Below are key strategies MHEDA members can use to help customers navigate automation decisions with confidence.

### Evaluate Facility Requirements and Operational Goals

Automation integration should begin with a comprehensive understanding of the facility, including its layout, throughput requirements and any existing constraints. Every operation has unique demands shaped by factors such as order volume, SKU variability, staffing levels and fulfillment models. Before jumping into automation solutions, it is important to first evaluate how the current processes and resources operate.



## Encourage customers to begin with a thorough operational assessment:

- 1** What processes are currently manual and prone to error? Identifying these areas helps pinpoint where automation can provide immediate relief, reducing human error and increasing consistency.
- 2** Where are the workflow inefficiencies or bottlenecks? These may be points where the flow of materials or information slows down, limiting throughput and overall performance. Automation can often smooth these friction points.
- 3** Are there space limitations or labor shortages driving the need for automation? Understanding whether there are physical constraints in the facility or a lack of available skilled workers helps guide decisions about whether to pursue automation that maximizes existing space or increases workforce capacity.

By aligning automation efforts directly with operational pain points, the solution becomes more than just a shiny new technology. It is a practical investment that directly addresses the facility's most pressing challenges, ensuring that the system deployed is both efficient and scalable for long-term success.

### Use an Agnostic Mindset

One of the most valuable practices in automation selection is reviewing a variety of technologies with objectivity. We encourage technology reviews to be neutral, where quality integrators and consultants can explore the full range of solutions available. This would range from robotics and conveyor systems to warehouse management software and



PHOTOS COURTESY OF S&H SYSTEMS

control systems, with the evaluation based on its performance fit.

This approach helps:

- **Avoid bias toward any single technology or supplier.** When companies become too attached to a particular vendor or technology, they may overlook potentially better options. A technology-agnostic mindset ensures that the focus remains on finding the best solution for the specific needs of the business.

- **Create tailored solutions for specific business cases.** Every operation is unique, with its own set of challenges and goals. By evaluating a

broad range of technologies, integrators can develop highly customized solutions that meet the precise requirements of the business, rather than forcing a one-size-fits-all solution.

- **Support flexibility and modularity for future adaptation.** Technologies and businesses need the capability to evolve. Look for solutions that are scalable and adaptable, ensuring the system can grow and change as the business does.

Customers are best served when recommendations are based on an objective evaluation of all available

options, rather than being influenced by limited offerings, brand loyalties or legacy relationships. This unbiased approach leads to more effective and future-proof automation solutions, driving long-term success.

### Balance Cost, Scalability and Efficiency

While it can be tempting to pursue automation based solely on cost

savings or the allure of cutting-edge technology, successful integration requires balancing three essential factors:

- **Cost:** Consider not only the initial investment but also long-term factors like return on investment, ongoing maintenance and lifecycle costs. It is important to account for the total cost of ownership, which includes implementation, training, support

and future upgrades. A system that is cheap upfront might result in higher operating costs later if it is not built for longevity or requires frequent maintenance.

- **Scalability:** The system must be able to grow with the business. As customer demand increases, processes should be able to scale without major overhauls. Choosing flexible systems that can easily integrate with future technologies or expand as needed ensures that businesses are not locked into solutions that become obsolete as their needs evolve.

- **Efficiency:** Automation should streamline workflows, reduce cycle times and improve consistency. The right solution should eliminate manual tasks, reduce errors and increase throughput. It is about maximizing productivity without overburdening the system. Efficiency also extends to how well the system integrates with other technologies to create a seamless operation.

For many companies, the right approach may be to start small with a phased integration, focusing on high-impact areas where automation can offer immediate benefits and gradually scaling over time. For others, it might be more strategic to invest in a comprehensive solution upfront that can handle increased throughput, anticipating future growth needs.












1000 Stevenson Ct #106, Roselle, IL 60172



2760 Faith Industrial Dr, Buford, GA 30518



2100 #C, E Valencia Dr, Fullerton, CA 92831

## WHY XILIN

XILIN, based in Chicago with warehouses in Los Angeles and Atlanta, offers 500+ electric forklift models, including stackers, reach trucks, and order pickers. Dependable inventory. Unmatched service. Powered to move you forward!

- INVENTORY IN IL / CA / GA
- EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE
- COMPREHENSIVE SET OF SPARE PARTS

[info@xilin.com](mailto:info@xilin.com)
 [www.xilinamerica.com](http://www.xilinamerica.com)
 626-901-0990







## Article Takeaways

- 1. Evaluate Operational Needs.** Start automation efforts by assessing facility requirements, identifying inefficiencies and addressing space or labor constraints to ensure solutions meet specific operational goals effectively.
- 2. Adopt a Technology-agnostic Mindset.** Evaluate a diverse range of automation technologies objectively to avoid bias, tailor solutions to unique business needs and ensure flexibility for future adaptations.
- 3. Balance Cost, Scalability and Efficiency.** Consider total cost of ownership, scalability for future growth and efficiency gains to maximize productivity without overburdening the system.

## About the Author

*John Saltzman is an automation expert at S&H Systems with deep experience delivering scalable material handling and robotics solutions. His projects include fulfillment operations processing over 1 million units daily with inventories exceeding 20 million SKUs, including 3 million unique SKUs, all within a single facility. John specializes in integrating traditional MHE with large-scale AMR deployments across multi-level environments, including air cargo hubs and high-speed cross-dock operations moving 100,000 packages.*

## Material handling companies and their customers face a common challenge: selecting and integrating solutions that align with operational needs.

Balancing these factors helps prevent common pitfalls: over-automation, where businesses invest beyond their immediate capacity or under-automation, where systems are chosen that cannot scale or adapt to future needs. By carefully evaluating cost, scalability and efficiency together, companies can ensure that their automation systems are future-proof, sustainable and aligned with both short-term needs and long-term goals.

### Do Not Forget the Human Element

Automation does not eliminate the need for people; it changes the roles they play. Part of successful integration includes planning for workforce training, safety and operational handoff. The best systems empower teams by reducing repetitive tasks and enabling higher-value work, but this requires a thoughtful change management process.

#### • Training:

Investing in training ensures employees understand how to operate and adapt to new systems, reducing downtime and improving efficiency.

#### • Change Management:

Clear communication is key. Employees need to see how automation supports their work, not replaces it. Early engagement helps ease the transition.

#### • Safety Considerations:

Automation introduces new safety challenges, so updating safety protocols and providing training is essential.

#### • Empowering Employees:

Automation frees workers from repetitive tasks, enabling them to take on more strategic roles and fostering growth and innovation.

### Final Thought: Integration Is the Differentiator

In the automation landscape, the tools may change, but the core need remains the same: a well-integrated system that aligns with each customer's unique goals. MHEDA members can play a pivotal role by helping clients move beyond product selection and toward solution strategy, turning automation into an asset, not just an investment. ●



# trust,

## DECODED

### Former Undercover Police Officer Brings Hard-earned Insights to the Material Handling Industry

*By Christine Preusler*

**PAMELA BARNUM SPENT** years working in a world where trust wasn't just nice to have – it was a survival skill. As an undercover police officer embedded in drug enforcement, she learned to build credibility with people whose respect had to be earned under pressure and whose suspicion could turn deadly in an instant.

"No one saw me as law enforcement – that was the whole point," she said. "I couldn't rely on positional power. I had to build trust with people who were incredibly suspicious and often violent, and I had to do it fast, using small cues and subtle shifts."

After several years undercover, Barnum became a federal prosecutor. In the courtroom, just like on the street, trust was a currency. Whether convincing a jury or cross-examining a witness, she leaned on the same instincts she'd honed in the field.

Now, Barnum uses her experience as a trust strategist and expert in nonverbal communication to educate corporate audiences on how to build and maintain trust. This summer, she brought those lessons to MHEDA's Emerging Leaders Conference in Chicago, where she hosted two sessions: "The Power of TRUST: A Blueprint for Excellence" and "Strategic Negotiations: Innovative Approaches to Enhance Trust."

In both presentations, Barnum explored how trust, once the cornerstone of healthy relationships, has eroded in today's professional and personal environments and how leaders can rebuild it in their organizations.

The timing couldn't be more relevant. A May 2025 article from the Pew Research Center revealed that Americans' trust in one another has plummeted over the past several decades. In the late 1970s, almost half (46%) of respondents to the General Social Survey – a survey of U.S. adults conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago – agreed with the statement "Most people can be trusted."

That percentage has gradually diminished, reaching just 34% in a 2023-2024 Pew Research Center poll exploring the same topic.

"We're seeing a decline in trust," Barnum said. "Some of that is driven by technology; fraud is easier than ever. But it's also about polarization, misinformation and a general breakdown of confidence in institutions."

Unlike trust in the government and within interpersonal relationships, Barnum noted that trust in business remains stronger, although it is still





vulnerable to erosion when companies communicate poorly.

"If a company takes a social or political stance, public trust can drop fast," she said. "It's incredibly fragile."

For MHEDA members in high-stakes B2B environments where long-term relationships and reliability are everything, the ability to build and maintain trust internally and externally is mission critical.

### **What Trusted Leadership Looks Like**

What separates Barnum's approach from typical speakers is her immersion in the psychology of behavior. She draws not only from lived experience

but also from contemporary research in neuroscience and communication theory.

At the heart of her keynote are several key traits that define a trusted leader – among them transparency, self-awareness and what she calls "intentional cues," or deliberate verbal and nonverbal behaviors that signal respect, attention and trustworthiness.

Transparency, she explained, doesn't mean spilling every operational detail. It means communicating clearly

and owning the message, especially when things go wrong.

"Transparency inspires stability," Barnum said. "If something was put out in error, or if a decision changes, leaders need to take ownership and correct it. People can forgive mistakes. What they can't forgive is being misled."

Feedback, too, plays a crucial role. Barnum said the act of receiving and incorporating feedback is a trust exercise in itself.

"Everybody says they love feedback until they get it," she said, laughing. "But feedback, even if it stings, shows

us how we're perceived. I use video recordings of myself speaking and post-event surveys to continuously improve. I tell leaders to do the same. You can't get better if you aren't willing to look at what needs fixing."

That willingness to improve creates a positive feedback loop.

"When employees see their leaders embracing growth and accountability, they're more likely to do the same," she said.

Self-awareness and self-confidence, she added, are often the hardest pieces to master.

"We all know someone who lacks self-awareness to the point where we wonder, 'How did they get here?'" she said. "But the truth is, we've all been that person at some point."

Barnum encourages leaders to observe how they occupy space in meetings. Are they taking all the airtime? Sitting at the head of the table without inviting conversation?

Always the first to speak and the last to listen?

"That sends a signal – intentional or not," she said.

It's those kinds of cues that can quietly undercut collaboration and morale. On the flip side, Barnum said, small gestures can make a big difference.

"Everyone brings their phone to a meeting. But how many people make a show of putting it away – not just face-down, but out of sight?" she asked. "That one move signals: You're important. I'm present. You have my full attention."

It's more than symbolism. A study published in the Journal of the Association for Consumer Research found that simply having a powered-off phone visible on the table can reduce a person's ability to process information and recall details. That kind of cognitive drag can damage everything from focus to rapport.

"We only have one brain," Barnum said. "And if part of it is on alert waiting for a notification, then we're missing the subtleties of the interaction in front of us."

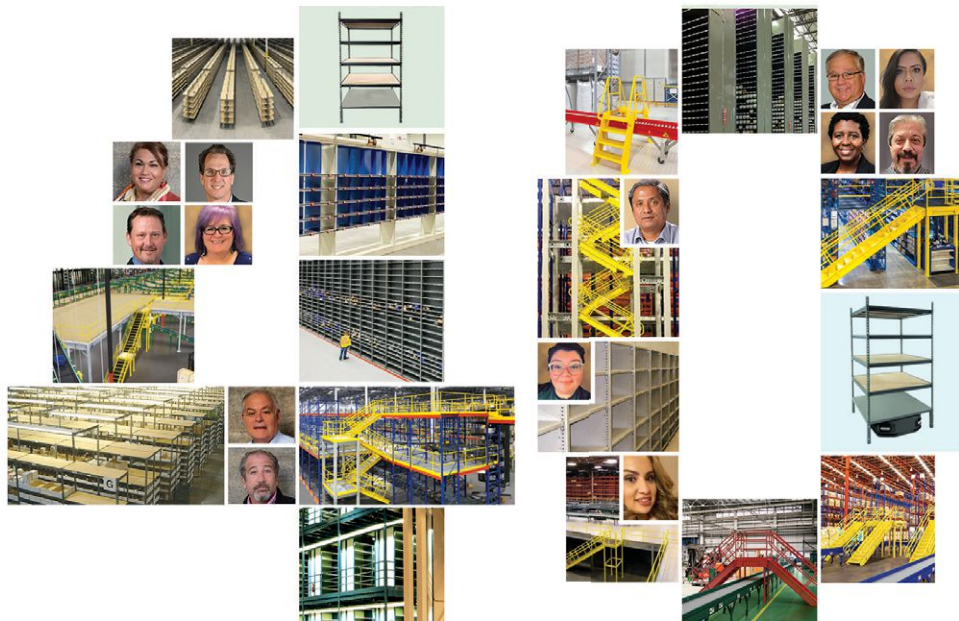
### Trust at the Negotiating Table

Barnum's second session, "Strategic Negotiations," dug deeper into those subtleties. Drawing on her experience as an undercover agent and in the courtroom, she showed attendees how to decode body language, listen for inconsistencies and navigate conversations with a blend of emotional intelligence and tactical awareness.

"People lie in negotiations all the time," she said. "But deception has tells. When you learn to spot them, you can adjust your strategy on the fly."

She also addressed how to reshape negotiations from zero-sum games into more creative solutions. "We

## 40 years strong and ready for the future!



WWW.WPSS.COM • 800-732-9777

Building on 40 years of excellence, Western Pacific announces a pivotal milestone for 2025: New centralized manufacturing in Paris, KY. More storage innovations for a rapidly evolving industry.



all love a 'win-win,' but that only happens when you can expand the pie," she said. "That takes awareness, adaptability and confidence."

She challenged attendees to reframe their view of negotiation – not as a battle, but as a process of discovery.

"A great negotiator listens more than they speak," she said. "They're reading between the lines, sensing the dynamics of the room and uncovering the real needs driving the conversation."

For MHEDA attendees leading teams in logistics, supply chains and service environments, Barnum offered practical advice grounded in psychology and real-world experience. Something as seemingly small as the order in which people are CC'd on an email, she noted, can have outsized effects on morale and trust.

"It sounds petty, but people pay attention," she said. "I worked with

a financial firm where the team read meaning into where their names appeared on the CC line. If you're always last, you wonder: Am I the least important?" she said. "I now advise doing it alphabetically. It removes the interpretation."

Barnum recently put her background to work as a co-host of the television series "Building Bad," which investigates the role engineers and scientists have played in constructing systems for criminal organizations that pose significant risks. She's also hosting an upcoming show, "Ancient Justice," focused on early legal systems across various civilizations.

Barnum's experiences in law enforcement, prosecution and public speaking have led her to one central belief: that trust is an intentional act.

"You can't just hope it happens," she said. "You have to create the conditions for it." ●



## Article Takeaways

### 1. Trust as a Leadership Tool.

Barnum teaches that trust is a vital leadership skill built through transparency, self-awareness and intentional communication.

### 2. Challenges in Modern Trust.

She warns that trust is declining in society and business. Making clear, consistent communication more important than ever.

### 3. Negotiation and Trust.

In negotiations, Barnum encourages leaders to prioritize emotional intelligence and active listening to build trust and uncover real needs.

## Sources

Silver, Laura, et al. "Americans' Trust in One Another." Pew Research Center, May 8, 2025. [pewresearch.org/2025/05/08/americans-trust-in-one-another/](https://pewresearch.org/2025/05/08/americans-trust-in-one-another/)

Ward, Adrian F., et al. "Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity." *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research* 2, No. 2 (April 2017): 140–154.

[doi.org/10.1086/691462](https://doi.org/10.1086/691462)

## /Reliable Tire Weighing: Precise Tread Measurement

Our new **HC-MWS** is a highly specialized, precision weighing system tailored for tire manufacturing, designed to accurately measure the tire tread's weight per meter with exceptional reliability, even in challenging environments.

1

High precision meter weight for treads and side walls

2

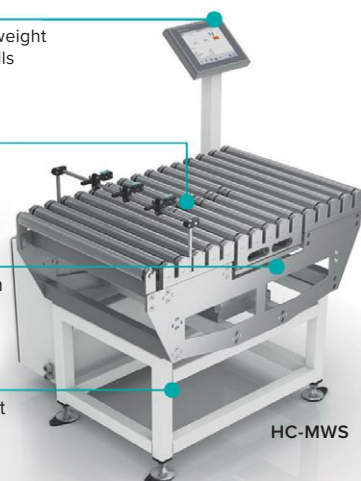
Single lane or dual lane option

3

Safe process through patented calibration

4

Easy to install without foundation work



HC-MWS

[wipotec.com/us](https://wipotec.com/us)

**WIPOTEC**

# Punch Deck® PLUS

A unique solution for rack storage of furniture in a sprinklered warehouse environment

Punch Deck® Plus from DACS is open area flat cap over open area Punch Deck®.

- Ideal for storage of items with legs or point loads (furniture, equipment with wheels, etc.)
- Easy to install in either pallet rack or cantilever rack
- Galvanized finish is bright and maintenance free
- Offered in a wide range of shelf sizes and load capacities



**DACS** inc.

Proven Solutions - One Source

**800-909-4937** / [dswanson@dacsinc.com](mailto:dswanson@dacsinc.com)

**punchdeck.com**

Scan for the DACS Material Handling Products catalog



## WARNING

**PRODUCT FALLS ARE DANGEROUS AND EXPENSIVE!**

### CARRON RACK & CONVEYOR GUARD NET SYSTEMS

PROTECT employees  
REDUCE costly product damage



MADE IN USA

Custom Designed 100% Nylon Nets  
Quality American Craftsmanship  
World-Class Customer Service



**CARRON NET COMPANY, INC.**  
*Quality Nets Since 1934*

800-558-7768 [www.carronnet.com](http://www.carronnet.com)



## PROLINE

THE LEADING EDGE IN MODULAR ERGONOMICS

*For all your workbench needs.*



**Most Popular**



**Hand Crank Adjust**



**Electric Adjust**



**Packaging Benches**

**1proline.com PH: 800 739 9067**



# A Past of Service and a Future of Growth at Cisco-Eagle



By Nicole Needles

**"EAGLE MATERIAL HANDLING** was founded in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1970 by Warren Gandall with three employees in one office," said Bryan Gauger, president of Cisco-Eagle.

In those early years, the company grew steadily as new leaders came on board. "In 1973, Bill Cupps joined the company. Bill was the key to adding operational and financial aspects that allowed us to grow, resulting in an expansion to Oklahoma City, then Little Rock, Arkansas."

A pivotal moment came in 1981 when the company installed its first large integrated system for QuikTrip.

"That brought our future into focus with Vic Leonard, who established our Systems Integration department. Vic was known as 'the man who could make a conveyor do anything,'" said Gauger. In 1985, Cupps and Gandall purchased Cisco-Material Handling in Carrollton, Texas, expanding their footprint, and by 1995, the businesses merged into Cisco-Eagle.

Throughout its history, Cisco-Eagle has evolved with its customers. The launch of a website in 1997 and e-commerce in 2000 were pivotal.

"The site is a major factor in our growth and profitability," said Gauger. The founding of their Field Services Group in 1996 and the shift to a 100% employee-owned structure in 2020 further shaped the company's culture.

In 2024, the acquisition of Trinity Controls, rebranded as Cisco-Eagle Systems Technology, expanded its ability to design, integrate and implement sophisticated material handling and automation systems.

Today, the company operates across 12 states with 167 employee-owners serving clients throughout the U.S. and in more than 60 countries. According to Gauger, the foundation of the company's success is its employee-ownership model.

"We bake it into everything we do. Our employees own shares, own our jobs and own the outcomes we create for our customers. It drives us to be more innovative, more focused, and more aligned with each other."

That culture of ownership improves service quality.

"The longer someone works here, the more shares they accumulate, which drives remarkably low turnover. That stability allows customers to build long-term relationships and gives us deep expertise," he said.

Transparency is another cornerstone. Employee-owners review financial results every month, and an annual employee-owner award is decided exclusively by staff.

"Customers can buy from many competitors. We know that employees are the most important reason they choose us."

The company has evolved as the industry has changed.

"When Warren and Bill started the company, the industry was local and territorial. Now, we're competing with firms across the nation and around the globe," said Gauger. The rise of automation has reshaped customer needs. "Customers have always been looking for ways to compete more efficiently. What used to be better storage strategies or simple conveyors has evolved into highly automated systems across the spectrum. Today, smaller companies are adopting advanced automation because the ROI is compelling as labor becomes harder to find."

Customers also expect seamless digital interactions.

"People want to do business online and have the same experience for their material handling projects as they get from Amazon in their personal lives. We've developed systems to meet those expectations, and we're working to fully realize the kind of personalized experience customers expect," he added.

Looking forward, Cisco-Eagle aims to build on its strong foundation. "We intend to be more dominant in our chosen markets, and to selectively expand when it makes sense. We're working through a strategic framework now to define that direction and stay ready to adapt as things evolve."

With safety top-of-mind and employee-ownership at its core, Cisco-Eagle is positioned to help customers optimize their operations — and to remain a trusted partner long into the future.

"People who commit to learning and adapting will have tremendous opportunities in this industry. At Cisco-Eagle, we're making sure we're always ready for the next challenge and opportunity," said Gauger. ●

## Supplier Profile

# Rack Builders Inc.

## Built on Experience, Driven by Relationships

By Nicole Needles

**FOUNDED IN 2009** by three industry veterans, Rack Builders Inc. (RBI) was born out of a shared vision: to deliver high-quality structural racking systems through a distributor-first approach. Each founder brought over two decades of experience in manufacturing and engineering, and together they set out to fill a gap in the structural racking market. Their goal was simple but powerful – to offer superior products backed by outstanding service.

From its earliest days, RBI stood apart thanks to a deep commitment to the distributor network and a firm belief in long-term relationships.

“We’ve built our success on the hard work and dedication of our employees and the strong relationships we’ve formed with our distributors,” Tony Sineni, director of distributor sales and development, shared. That commitment has not only fueled RBI’s growth but also built a foundation for the future.

Today, RBI employs over 200 people and operates two state-of-the-art manufacturing plants in Illinois and Missouri. Their expansion reflects more than just an increase in size – it’s a testament to their focus on creativity, quality and trust.

At the heart of RBI’s success is a company culture that feels more like a family than a corporation. Employees, some of whom have worked with the founders for more than 25 years, are not just workers – they are partners whose efforts directly impact the company’s trajectory.

“We want every employee to feel the impact of their daily contributions on our company’s success,” John Schmidt, CEO, said.

That sense of belonging extends from the shop floor to the front office. From golf outings to team dinners

and community give-back events, RBI places high value on connection and camaraderie. These shared experiences not only boost morale but also reinforce the supportive, collaborative spirit that defines RBI.

As warehousing and logistics evolve, so do the demands placed on material handling professionals. RBI has seen firsthand the shift toward faster lead times, customized engineered systems and increased automation. Safety compliance and more complex SKU management have added additional pressure on warehouses to adapt.

To meet these demands, RBI has doubled down on what they do best – delivering smart, durable storage solutions. The company has invested heavily in engineering talent, manufacturing efficiencies and distributor training programs to ensure its partners stay competitive.

“We offer training and support to help our distributors better serve their customers,” Sineni shared, underscoring their dedication to partnership.

Automation, in particular, has emerged as a major opportunity for the industry. With warehouse labor shortages and space constraints, more customers are turning to RBI for high-density, durable storage systems designed to reduce maintenance costs and maximize space.

Looking to the future, RBI has ambitious plans to remain at the forefront of the industry. Over the next five years, the company aims to become the go-to name in structural rack manufacturing, recognized for



**We’ve built our success on the hard work and dedication of our employees and the strong relationships we’ve formed with our valued customers.**

its durability, custom engineering and service-first mindset. Growth will come through expanding the distributor network, investing in automation and continually improving operational efficiencies.

RBI is also committed to staying ahead of safety standards, including RMI compliance, and helping partners leverage data to grow their own businesses.

“Ultimately, we want to make it easier for our partners to win business by being a reliable, innovative and responsive manufacturing partner,” Schmidt said.

As they look to the future, RBI remains grounded in the values that got them here: quality, inventiveness and genuine human connection. From humble beginnings to industry leadership, Rack Builders Inc. is a story of experience put into action, partnerships built on trust and a team dedicated to making a difference. ●



# Shoppa's Material Handling Partners with Susan G. Komen in Bold Breast Cancer Campaign

By Nicole Needles

**IN A POWERFUL** display of solidarity and commitment to meaningful change, Shoppa's Material Handling, under the guidance of President and Owner, Jimmy Shoppa, has joined forces with Susan G. Komen's Pink Tie Guys initiative. The partnership launches the North Texas Toyota forklift distributor into a nationwide effort to raise funds and awareness in the fight against breast cancer.

## A Personal Pledge with Industry Impact

This year, Shoppa stepped into the spotlight as a Susan G. Komen Pink Tie Guy Ambassador, joining other entrepreneurial community leaders who have made it their mission to use their platforms to help end breast cancer.

Pink Tie Guys mobilize their networks in business to advance Komen's mission: research, patient care, advocacy and education – a mission that deeply resonates with Shoppa on both business and personal levels.

"Shoppa's stands in solidarity with those affected by breast cancer and is committed to contributing to a brighter, healthier future for all," said Shoppa. "This isn't just philanthropy – it's a shared moral imperative that lives in both the boardroom and our branches."

## The Pink Forklift Auction: A Vivid Symbol of Collaboration

At the center of this initiative lies a striking emblem: a one-of-a-kind pink Toyota forklift created by Toyota Women's Impact Network. The distinctive pink truck symbolizes strength, hope and the collective effort to end breast cancer. Shoppa's Material Handling captured headlines by placing the winning \$65,000 bid on the pink machine during a national Toyota dealer meeting, with 100% of proceeds donated to Susan G. Komen.



Pictured, from left to right: Kristin, Janie, June and Kimber Shoppa.



Jimmy Shoppa, president and owner of Shoppa's Material Handling.



"Being the winning bidder was more than a business gesture - it was an opportunity to make a real impact," said Shoppa.

Now proudly stationed at Shoppa's Alliance Texas headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas, the pink beacon will continue its mission. Later this year, Shoppa's will host a DFW-area auction to re-donate the machine, with all new proceeds again benefiting Susan G. Komen. Shoppa's will also spotlight the forklift during Breast Cancer Awareness Month this October through public awareness and fundraising event.

## Turning Awareness into Action

Shoppa's campaign encourages individuals and businesses alike to participate—no donation is too small. Supporters can contribute through the company's personalized Pink Tie Guy fundraising page: [info-komen.org/goto/jimmyshoppa](http://info-komen.org/goto/jimmyshoppa).

"Please join Shoppa's in our efforts to raise additional money to help create a world without breast cancer," Shoppa urged.

For Shoppa's, this cause is more than a campaign – it's a commitment. From the office to the showroom, the company is building a culture of awareness, compassion, and advocacy.

## Expanding the Fight, Inspiring the Industry

The ripple effects are already being felt: both Toyota's bold pink forklift concept and Shoppa's ongoing engagement with Susan G. Komen are drawing attention to the power of industry-led philanthropy. As more dealers and distributors like Shoppa step forward, the opportunity grows to transform warehouses into platforms for wellness.

## Trucks to Triumph: A Movement

In championing Susan G. Komen, Shoppa's Material Handling continues to reinforce its values through meaningful action. Jimmy Shoppa's Pink Tie Guy role transforms him into both a business leader and an awareness advocate, using a pink forklift – and, more importantly, his public platform – to shine a spotlight on breast cancer research and patient support.

Shoppa's has also just named Susan G. Komen to be the recipient of its company's annual charity golf course event this coming September. As Shoppa's invitation to "pledge a donation of any size" echoes, this partnership showcases how one company can make a significant difference. By blending visibility, fundraising and heartfelt leadership, Shoppa and his team are raising the bar in both material handling and making strides toward a future free of breast cancer. ●

# Rooted in Legacy, Focused on the Future

**Reed Montgomery, vice president at Adams, Inc., shares his career journey in the material handling industry.**

*By Nicole Needles*

**REED MONTGOMERY'S PROFESSIONAL** journey began in a place many young professionals can relate to: with uncertainty, opportunity and a willingness to take a leap. A 2006 graduate of West Fargo High School, Montgomery went on to earn a business administration degree from North Dakota State University. It was during his final year of college that his path took an unexpected turn.

Montgomery admits he knew very little about the material handling industry. The owner of Adams Inc. at the time, Al Hager, and his son, Tim, also happened to be family friends. They reached out to Montgomery with an opportunity to get involved with the company upon graduating. So that's exactly what he did.

Fast forward 12 years, and Montgomery has grown into a key player at Adams Inc., watching both his own role and the company itself expand.

"Professionally, I'm proud of my growth here," he said. "Starting out not knowing anything at all about the industry and growing into where I am now – and also seeing the company really grow in volume over the past ten-plus years – that's been a fulfilling accomplishment."

Montgomery's early exposure to leadership and responsibility came long before his days at Adams. One of his most significant mentors was his father, who worked in industrial construction. His father passed away when Montgomery was young, but the memories of going to job sites with him on weekends remain at the forefront of his mind.

"He showed me how to take care of a job, stay on track and treat customers right. That was instilled in me at a young age," Montgomery said.

Leadership, he believes, is not about knowing it all, but about continuing to learn and grow. He credits MHEDA events with helping him do just that.

"Attending events like the Emerging Leaders Conference is a great way to network, bounce ideas off people in similar roles and just get a pulse on the industry," he said. "Surrounding yourself with a good team and being open to learning from others – that's crucial."

When asked what advice he has for new leaders entering the field, Montgomery emphasizes passion, drive and the ability to adapt quickly. Jumping in feet first is the best way to go when navigating multiple new responsibilities.

"Being a problem solver is key," he said. "No matter how well you plan, something will go wrong. The question is: How well can you minimize the impact?"



**Being a problem solver is key. No matter how well you plan, something will go wrong. The question is: How well can you minimize the impact?**

His philosophy on leadership is rooted in two principles: treat others well and get comfortable being uncomfortable. He emphasizes that showing respect for all goes a long way.

The second piece of advice – embracing discomfort – stems from his early sales days filled with cold calls. It was the most uncomfortable task for him, and he recalls it's not something they teach you in college. With exposure to the discomfort every day, it eventually faded into the background.

As Adams Inc. celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, Montgomery is focused on the future.

"I hope to continue growing the company," he said. "One day, I'd like to take it over myself. Adams has evolved a lot over the past century – different divisions, shifting markets – but material handling has been the constant. I want to help set it up for another 100 years of success."

On both personal and professional fronts, Montgomery finds pride in growth – his own, his family's and his company's.

"Watching my four kids grow up, seeing them develop into their own individuals – that's something I'm really proud of," he said. "And being part of Adams' continued success is something I don't take for granted. It's been a great ride so far."



# Confidence in Action

**Brianna Isenberg, sales and service consultant at Riekes Equipment, shares her journey from childhood curiosity to industry expertise, fueled by excitement for the future.**



*By Nicole Needles*

**WHEN BRIANNA ISENBERG** was making her pretend sales to customers while tagging along with her father to his office on Sundays, she didn't realize that would one day be her reality. From selling hand pallet jacks and imagining forklifts as "race cars" for her make-believe customers, she would go on to make this industry her professional home, driven by a passion for people and problem solving.

After studying mass communications and gaining experience in human resources in the healthcare sector, Isenberg found her calling at Riekes Equipment.

"I quickly realized that although I wanted to continue in a career that allowed me to work with people day to day, healthcare wasn't the industry for me," she explained. "The opportunity at Riekes presented itself, and I've never looked back."

Starting as a parts and service representative, she swiftly transitioned into sales and now serves as a sales and service consultant. Her role involves navigating diverse customer needs, finding warehouse solutions and marveling at the intricacies of industrial production firsthand.

"What I enjoy the most are the different types of customers and facilities I get to visit and tour," she said. "There are so many products out there that you never think about how they are made until you are watching it being done right before your eyes."

Isenberg attributes much of her success to mentors like her father, Pete Womack, who instilled a daily pursuit of knowledge and resilience in her. She also credits a longtime customer, Don

Richwine, whose guidance broadened her industry insights significantly. Despite early challenges of age and gender stereotypes, Isenberg's dedication and expertise gradually earned her customers' trust and respect, transforming initial skepticism into lasting partnerships.

Being a young woman in a traditionally male-dominated industry hasn't always been easy.

"One of the biggest challenges I saw early on wasn't only because I was a woman – it also was a result of my age," Isenberg shared. "When I first started at Riekes, I helped with operator training for our customers, and I can't tell you how many times I heard, 'You're our trainer? I've been driving forklifts longer than you've been alive!'"

She admits it took hard work and persistence to build trust with some customers.

"The confidence I have in myself to do my job has to outweigh the frustration I felt when I'm faced with people whose first impression was a stereotype."

That perseverance paid off. In 2023, Isenberg was honored with the Walter J. Bublitz Founder's Award at Riekes Equipment. This was an accolade recognizing her embodiment of company values and commitment to excellence. Reflecting on this achievement, she feels honored to follow in the footsteps of industry trailblazers and hopes to inspire future generations of women in material handling.

To young women considering a career in this field, Isenberg offers straightforward advice: "Dive in



**Dive in headfirst! Don't let yourself be intimidated by stereotypes – be excited about the future and how this industry continues to evolve.**

headfirst! Don't let yourself be intimidated by stereotypes – be excited about the future and how this industry continues to evolve."

Isenberg's journey exemplifies resilience, passion and a steadfast commitment to making a difference in the material handling industry. Her story serves as an inspiration to all aspiring professionals, proving that with determination and a supportive network, barriers can be overcome and dreams can be realized in any field.

Isenberg will continue turning those childhood imaginary happy customers into real ones and paving her way in the industry. She hopes more women see the value and opportunity in material handling.

"The material handling industry is so much more than meets the eye. There is something for anyone and everyone who wants to find a home with this family – and that's really what this industry is, one big family."

# Do More Than Convince – Connect

## Ryan Avery on the Future of Communication and Leadership

*By Nicole Needles*



**RYAN AVERY'S JOURNEY** to becoming a renowned speaker and author is nothing short of noteworthy. In 2012, he achieved a pivotal milestone by winning the prestigious World Championship of Public Speaking, competing against 30,000 participants from 116 countries. What began as a personal challenge to tackle the "hardest thing" he could imagine turned into a transformative career path.

Initially balancing his newfound passion with a full-time role at Special Olympics, Avery navigated the demanding world of professional speaking with determination and resilience. From selling everything he owned to moving back with family in Texas, he and his wife embarked on a journey fueled by a steadfast belief in his ability to make an impact through speaking.

Thirteen years later, Avery continues to inspire audiences globally, sharing insights not only on public speaking but also on the business acumen required to thrive in this competitive field. His story is a testament to the power of persistence, passion and the courage to pursue one's dreams against all odds.

In this Q&A, Avery shares his insights, challenges and the lessons learned along his extraordinary journey in the world of public speaking and beyond.



**TMJ:** When it comes to being a leader worth following, what traits would you say separate a good leader from a “worth-following leader”?

**Avery:** Well, first, it's important to understand my definition of a leader. A leader for me is anyone who influences someone; your title doesn't matter, and your experience doesn't matter. What matters is if you have the ability to influence others to do what you want. A quality I see that is the most important is the difference between speaking at people and communicating with people. One of the biggest traits that I see in leadership is that a lot of people know how to speak, and very few know how to communicate. So, one of those important traits is understanding and defining what leadership is, while also understanding what communication is and why it is the most important aspect of leadership.

**TMJ:** You've worked with leaders across industries and also in different age groups. Have there been specific leadership traits you've noticed that resonate most with the newer generation?

**Avery:** One of the things that I do is study the difference between “a” leader versus “the” leader, “a” company or “the” company. What really makes the difference between “a” versus “the”? One of those differences, especially for the younger generation, is this idea of “a” company competes with each other, but “the” company collaborates with each other. We see teams competing against each other for the top spot, or whoever gets this will win that. That used to work really well in a competitive state, but this generation isn't competitive in that regard. They're very competitive, but not with each other. They actually very much enjoy collaborating to do something on a bigger scale, and I would say they value attaching things to purpose outside of the financial gain. So, what is the benefit? What is the value that the company offers the world and the communi-



**One of the biggest traits that I see in leadership is that a lot of people know how to speak, and very few know how to communicate.**

ty? It's gotta be something more than “We're going to make a lot of money.”

Now, the word generation stems from the word generalization, so you're generalizing around the group. There's always going to be that 22 year old who wants to be a billionaire, there's always going to be that 58 year old who wants to not wear shoes to work. There's a variety of different types of people within each generation. But those would be two things that I would pay attention to: compete versus collaborate, and then paying attention to why a company exists and why their position is important.

**TMJ:** What are the most common mistakes that leaders can make when they're trying to connect with and inspire their teams, but maybe miss the mark?

**Avery:** The biggest one here is leaders trying to use the word “convince.” Nobody wants to be convinced anymore. They want to feel connected, so they want to feel connected to the person who's communicating, which is the leader. One of the big mistakes that I see leaders make is that they'll try to convince people by saying something like, “Next quarter we're going to go from \$100 million to \$200 million in revenue. We can do it!” But nobody cares about that. Nobody cares about the money aspect of daily operations unless it benefits them as individuals. These leaders and managers make this mistake by never communicating what the company gets or what the employee gets as a result. They need to be communicating what's beneficial and

what is valuable to those they are communicating with. It's all about connecting versus convincing.

**TMJ:** You talked about your definition of a leader and what that means. How would you say the definition of effective leadership has evolved over the past decade, and what should the next generation of leaders focus on?

**Avery:** Two important things come to mind. First is this idea of managing versus motivating. Previously, leaders thought they had to manage people, although nobody comes into the office saying, “I can't wait to be managed today.” It's important to note whether your mindset is managing people or motivating them. It's also crucial to really understand what motivation means. It stems from the Latin prefix “motive” or “mode,” which means to move, and “ation” is the suffix in Latin, which means to get people to take action. So, by definition, motivation means getting somebody to take action. It does not mean getting people to pay attention. This goes back to what I was saying about communicating. Managers are really good at speaking at people, but motivators are good at communicating with people. What kind of mindset do you have when it comes to leading people? Are you managing them? Are you motivating them? You can manage a spreadsheet. You can manage your budget. You can manage your business. Not your people.

The second component that I would say is this idea of leaders always being a step ahead of everyone. But let's say we're going hiking on a mountain. If you were following someone on a hike and they were half a mile ahead of you, you would be stressed. You would feel like you are worthless. You would feel like you are not adequate for that hike or to be with that person. We want the leader a little closer to us – maybe as little as one step ahead of us – where we can follow them, but we know that they're with us as well. That way, they're not on top of the mountain, and they're not trying to get ahead of us.

They are with us while still directing us in a way that says, “I’m doing this with you.” Those are two important aspects of leadership.

**TMJ:** What are a few practical communication strategies that leaders can implement to increase trust and engagement with their teams?

**Avery:** Going back to understanding what communication is, I hear a lot of leaders say communication has never changed and it will never change. Remember, the suffix “ation” means action. It means that the transfer of information and methods of communication have, in fact, changed. Instead of having two or three methods like we used to 30 years ago, where it was over the phone or in person, we now have 14 different modes of communication because you can Slack the Instagram post on Facebook that you found in an email that you want to forward over in a WhatsApp message. The chain of methods of communication has diluted how we transfer information. So, one of the quickest ways to do this is to do a better job of figuring out what communication is, looking at the methods in which we communicate and come up with strategies to put into play. I called these “The Three Ts of Communication,” and those are “Text,” “Tone” and “Time.” Text is the words being used, tone is how those words are being used and time is when those words are being used. I’ll be talking about these at the keynote that I’m giving later on this year, and I’ll be giving a little bit more strategy around it.

One practical strategy that’s helped me significantly in my business is that during sales calls, I always end with “How and when do you want me to follow up?” The reason I do that is because I would follow up with somebody on a Monday morning via email and a PDF, but that does not mean that’s the way that people want to be followed up with. Simply asking them the best way for them is more likely to get you a response. I can’t tell you how many CEOs who have told me to text them

on a Wednesday because that’s better for them, and that is when they do their decision making. If you tell them something on a Monday and they’re busy, you’ve already lost them. There’s this old saying that “People do business with people.” The saying now is “People do business with people who listen.” Listening is a really important component of communicating.

**TMJ:** You’ve talked about “a” versus “the.” Can you elaborate on what that means for organizations?

**Avery:** Ultimately, it comes down to this: If you were offered to go on “a” vacation or “the” vacation, which one would you choose? If you were to work for “a” leader or “the” leader in the industry, who would you go work for? What this shows us is when “a” and “the” are offered, people choose “the.” So, we want to figure out what the differences are between “a” and “the” so we can be the best and so there is no competition; there is only collaboration. That’s where imitation versus innovation comes into play. “A” is all about imitation; “the” is all about innovation. When you’re “the” you have standards, whereas when you’re “a” you settle. So there’s a lot of benefit of understanding the differences between “a” versus “the,” and more importantly, personally and professionally, you have the opportunity to expand your capacity and expand even more, and life is a lot more enjoyable.

**TMJ:** What daily habits or practices do you recommend for leaders who want to keep growing and keep becoming better each day?

**Avery:** I call it my LPT strategy. LPT stands for learn, practice, teach. I hear a lot of leaders who will say things like “I read 14 books this year,” And I’m thinking, “Congratulations. What did you do with it?” I also know a lot of leaders who are doing a lot of things, but they haven’t learned anything new. Then there are those really annoying people who teach a bunch of stuff, but they haven’t practiced any of it themselves.

It’s hard to trust people like that because you don’t know if they’ve experienced what they are talking about. So, the true growth scale to follow is, “What are you learning? What are you practicing? What are you teaching?” for you to develop, grow and expand into who you want to be.

**TMJ:** Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Avery:** The biggest thing that I would say that’s helped me over the last few years is not focusing on what I want to do, but instead focusing on who I want to be. We’re taught and asked to focus on what we want to do. But, it’s a different story when you ask what you want to be. I want to be happy. I want to be healthy. I want to be “the” speaker. I want to be “the” dad. Ultimately, this shows me what I should do, and, even better, it shows me what I should stop doing because it takes me away from those things.

I’d also like to share the best three books that have changed my life this year: “A Return to Love” by Marianne Williamson, every leader should read this book; “Be Water My Friend” by Shannon Lee, that one is about Bruce Lee’s life and was wildly helpful and three to five times a week I read a passage out of Dr. Wayne W. Dyer’s book, “Change your Thoughts – Change Your Life.” ●

### Article Takeaways

#### 1. Leadership is About Connection.

Effective leaders focus on building genuine connections rather than simply trying to convince others.

#### 2. Evolve from Management to

**Motivation.** Great leadership means motivating people through action and empathy, not just managing tasks.

#### 3. Focus on Becoming “The” Leader, Not Just “A” Leader.

Strive to be “the” leader by prioritizing innovation, self-awareness and purposeful daily growth.





 CRAFTED IN THE USA



**InCord**  
Custom Safety Netting Solutions

**ASK FOR INCORD**

CELEBRATING  
30 YEARS OF  
EXCELLENCE IN  
SAFETY SOLUTIONS

- Open-Edge Fall Protection •
- Rack Netting Systems •
- Conveyor Netting Systems •
- Handrail & Mezzanine Nets •


incord.com • 860.537.1414 • materialhandling@incord.com

**REMANUFACTURING**  
*A Sustainable Solution*

 **REBUILT**  
with Precision.

 **TESTED**  
for Excellence.

 **GUARANTEED**  
to Perform.



**SCAN ME**  
TO LEARN MORE!

 **FSIP** • shop.fsip.biz  
ELECTRONICS • 800-333-1194  
A division of TVM

# UMH®

## LET'S BUILD YOUR WAREHOUSE!

We do more than manufacture RMI-Certified Storage Solutions - from concept to completion, UMH is here to help optimize your warehouse!

**Pallet Racking**  
**Cantilever Racking**  
**Push Back Racking**  
**Drive-In Racking**



**Pallet Shuttles**  
**Pallet Cranes**  
**AGV's & AMR's**  
**Goods-to-Person**



**Pick Modules**  
**Mezzanines**  
**Pallet Flow**  
**Carton Flow**  
**& More!**



WWW.UNITEDMH.COM  
866-323-7225



## Member Milestones

**Stay up to date** on the latest news about MHEDA members and the industry. Submit your news at [mheda.org/share-your-news-insights](http://mheda.org/share-your-news-insights) to be published on the website, the MHEDA newsletter or The MHEDA Journal.

### Feel-Good News



**AK Material Handling Systems** held its first-ever pickleball fundraiser, Pickle with Purpose, to benefit CROSS Services, a Minnesota-based nonprofit supporting families in need.



**Bobcat Company** is celebrating community heroes through its Work Worth Doing initiative, dedicated to recognizing and supporting individuals who are driving meaningful change and giving back to their communities. Brand ambassadors Chip Gaines, Josh Duhamel, Justin Moore and Ryan Nyquist will each take part throughout the year.

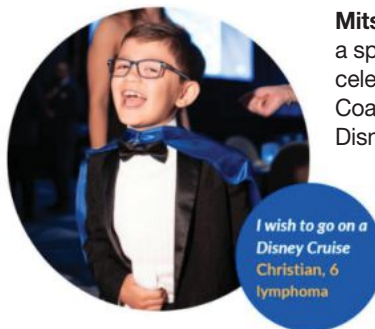


In recognition of National Forklift Safety Day, **Shoppa's Material Handling** is proud to launch its None In A Million campaign, celebrating a remarkable achievement: more than 1,000,000 work hours without a single OSHA-recordable incident.

**Toyota Material Handling** reinforced the importance of operator training and safety culture with the Every Move Matters campaign for National Forklift Safety Day.



### Christian's Wish Celebration



**Mitsubishi Logisnext Americas** hosted a special beach-themed send-off party to celebrate Christian, a Make-A-Wish Texas Gulf Coast and Louisiana child whose dream of a Disney Cruise is about to come true.

### On the Move

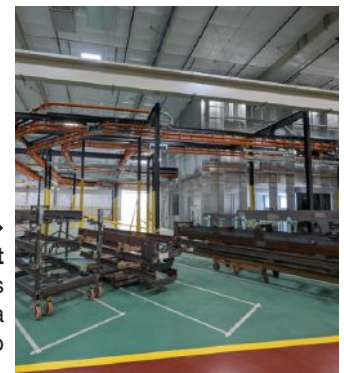


**Green Cubes Technology** unveiled a Li-ion battery for material handling equipment.

**CLARK** announced a new dealer in Western New York: Insley-McEntee Equipment Company.

**Burwell Material Handling**, formerly known as C & B Material Handling, launched a new name and branding.

**Mitsubishi Logisnext Americas** expanded its Houston campus with a new fabrication building to accelerate growth.





## Awards and Recognition



**Combilift** celebrated 10 years of its engineering traineeship.



**Eileen Schoonmaker** joined **PEAC Solutions** as president of the Americas.



**Mitsubishi** is set to open a customer experience center next year.

**UgoWork™** announced the appointment of Jean Lavigueur to chairman of the Board of Directors as the company maintains its aggressive growth trajectory.

**Carolina Handling** was named the winner of the Gold and Silver Stevie® Awards in the 23rd Annual American Business Awards®.

**Adams** is proud to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2025, marking a century of dependable service, industry innovation and unwavering customer commitment.

**Shoppa's Material Handling** received a Commendation from the Office of the United States Senate in recognition of its industry leadership and transformative role in helping customers embrace the future of warehouse operations.

**East Penn Manufacturing Co.** announced the structuring of its executive leadership team. Effective September 29, 2025, Pete Stanislawczyk will be promoted to chief executive officer and Christy Weeber will be promoted to the company's president.

**Forkliftaction** celebrates 25 years since launching its platform providing digital news and business resources for the material handling industry. It also celebrates CEO Ann Hofmans' 25th year with the company.

## In Loving Memory

**David J. Rizzo**, 62, of Westfield, New Jersey, passed away peacefully at his home in Westfield on Sunday, May 18, 2025. David was the proud president and co-owner of AJ Jersey, Inc. in South Plainfield, where he devoted his career to leading the company with passion, integrity and vision. His work was a source of pride and purpose, and his leadership left a lasting mark on all who worked with him. Outside of work, David was an avid sports fan, especially devoted to the New York Mets and the Pittsburgh Steelers. He also had a deep love for collecting—most notably classic cars and sports memorabilia. He enjoyed attending car shows, where he could share his passion with others and connect with fellow enthusiasts.



## Partnerships and Acquisitions

**PEAC Solutions** and **Exodus Global** partnered to offer rental fleet financing.

**Hy-Tek Intralogistics** and **BigBear.ai** combined forces to deliver warehouse automation and AI-powered intelligence.

**PEAC** and **Crane Payment Innovations** partnered to launch rental programs for convenience services customers.

**Conveyer & Caster** acquired assets of **Morrison Company**.

**EnerSys** partnered with **Mitsubishi Logisnext Americas**.

**Hy-Tek** and **Western Computer** united to advance warehouse execution in the Microsoft ecosystem.

# WELCOME

The following companies have applied to MHEDA. We extend a warm welcome and look forward to seeing them at future MHEDA activities.



#### AR Racking

Pablo Montes Duran  
3540 Toringdon Way, Ste 200, 234  
Charlotte, NC 28277  
984-286-7223  
ar-racking.com  
Storage & Handling



#### HP Construction Services

Heather Spear, Marketing Manager  
Calle Jose Echegaray 18  
Las Rozas de Madrid, Madrid 28232 Spain  
615-663-8816  
hp.com/us-en/printers/site-print/  
layout-robot.html  
Systems Integrator



#### Nilkamal Limited

Rajeev Mehta, Sr. VP  
Street 13 MIDC, Andheri East Plot: 77/78  
Mumbai, India 400093  
+91 993-072-8965  
nilkamalmaterialhandling.com  
Storage & Handling



#### Atlanta Warehouse Solutions

Frank Belcher III  
440 Wilbanks Drive  
Ball Ground, GA 30107  
678-756-2550  
AtlantaWarehouseSolutions.com  
Storage & Handling



#### IDEM SAFETY

Making Industry Safer

#### IDEM Safety Switches USA

Amir Mohtasham, VP  
2574 S Beverly St., Ste 100  
Boise, ID 83709  
510-445-0751  
idemafety.com  
Storage & Handling



#### ProEnclosures

Johnny Pace, Director of Sales  
250 Hunter Heights Road  
Milton, KY 40045  
859-353-4805  
Proenclosures.com  
Industrial Truck



#### Attabotics, Inc

Arden Bodner, Marketing Manager  
7944 10 St NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 8W1 Canada  
403-454-0995  
attabotics.com  
Storage & Handling



#### Industrial Truck Technologies US

Daniel Vazquez, Manager  
5701 Business Park  
San Antonio, TX 78218  
726-202-9180  
technologies-us.com  
Industrial Truck



#### QC Conveyors

Stacey Sowell, Director of Channel Sales  
4057 Clough Woods Drive  
Batavia, OH 45103  
513-753-6000  
qqconveyors.com  
Storage & Handling



#### Dawg Pound Tires

Joseph Pehanick, CEO  
2200 Huntington Drive  
Fairfield, CA 94533  
925-899-0002  
eastbaytire.com  
Industrial Truck



#### Maverick Manufacturing Inc

Julia Cisneros, CEO  
6261 Box Springs Blvd  
Riverside, CA 92507  
951-326-8555  
maverickmfginc.com  
Storage & Handling



#### Servco Forklift & Industrial Equipment

Reece Fuse, General Manager  
2850 Mokumoa St.  
Honolulu, HI 96819  
808-564-2380  
servcoforklift.com  
Industrial Truck



#### Express Elevators & Lifts, Inc.

Puneet Mehta, President  
12545 Coleraine Drive, Unit 1  
Caledon, Ontario L7E 0P6 Canada  
647-505-0023  
expresselevatorslifts.com  
Storage & Handling



#### MWN Consulting

Michael Newman, Owner/President  
525 County Road 461  
Carthage, TX 75633  
214-587-0989  
mwnconsulting.com  
Systems Integrator



#### ShawCo Engineering

Matthew Shaw, President  
P.O. Box 395  
Columbiana, OH 44408  
330-502-8700  
shawcoeng.com  
Special Services



#### FLEXSPACE

Elizabeth Brown, Director of Marketing  
1859 Summerville Ave Ste 400  
Charleston, SC 29405  
630-561-4182  
flexspace360.com  
Storage & Handling



#### NewLane Finance

William Heston, Sr Business  
Development Acct Mgr.  
123 S Broad St., Fl 17  
Philadelphia, PA 19109  
215-260-2336  
newlanefinance.com  
Special Services



#### Sikich LLC

Kim Stegall, Events Consultant  
1415 W Diehl Road, Ste 400  
Naperville, IL 60563  
630-566-8400  
sikich.com  
Systems Integrator



# Q3 2025 MHEDA Resources and Events

Make the most of your MHEDA membership by tapping into the resources at your fingertips! Take advantage of benchmarking data, networking events and professional development opportunities.

## Regional Summit – East Coast

**August 6 at Alliance Material Handling in Jessup, Maryland**

This exciting one-day regional experience hosted at Alliance Material Handling, Jessup, Maryland, will feature engaging roundtable discussions, a dynamic material handling business trend presentation, a tour of Alliance Material Handling's operations, and numerous opportunities for networking and learning. Don't miss out on the chance to connect with peers, gain industry insights and explore new business opportunities.

## Q3 MHEDA Economic Report from ITR Economics

**August 7 FREE Download Available Online**

MHEDA's quarterly economic report, developed in partnership with ITR Economics, is a valuable strategic planning resource designed to help members navigate market challenges and capitalize on future opportunities. Free for MHEDA members, the report offers data trends, moving averages and growth rate forecasts over a three-year horizon. It provides insights into future demand for products and services, outlines market expansion and contraction expectations and delivers actionable advice.

## MHEDA Master Manager

**August 26 Virtual Event Begins**

MHEDA Master Manager is a 10-week virtual training program created to teach the core principles and strategies found in a traditional MBA, but with less time and cost. Alongside the online learning modules, participants can join live Zoom sessions every two weeks with other MHEDA members and gain insights from subject matter experts. This program is built to provide both new and experienced managers with practical management tools and essential financial knowledge to boost both career growth and team performance.

## Organizational Adaptation:

### Leading Through Changes

**September 17 - Women in Industry Virtual Session**

Learn how to embrace change as a powerful catalyst rather than a stumbling block. Gain tools to help you adapt, communicate effectively and maintain morale. This virtual event is designed for women who work in the material handling industry seeking to enhance their leadership skills and develop personal strategies to manage time, energy and resources effectively.

## Save the Date!

### Upcoming Fall Conferences

#### Automation Solutions Conference

**October 21 in Atlanta, Georgia**

You're invited! Join your industry peers for a one-day event to start your automation journey beyond the warehousing and distribution sector. This event will be held at MHEDA member Toyota Material Handling facility. This is your opportunity to engage with like-minded peers looking to expand their business in automation.

#### Rental & Used Equipment Conference

**October 23 in Atlanta, Georgia**

All-new one-day best practices conference designed to enhance your Rental and Used Equipment Management skills and department profitability. This event will be held at MHEDA Member Toyota Material Handling facility. Discover insights to take back to your teams to improve your Rental and Used departments.

#### Women in Industry Conference

**November 4-5 in Rosemont, Illinois**

Join MHEDA, MHI and WERC for the Women in Industry Conference and gain tools to prepare yourself for all the future has in store! This interactive conference is designed to inspire you to lead the way in evolving and preparing for the business landscape of tomorrow.

For the latest updates  
and registration details,  
visit the MHEDA website  
at [mheda.org](https://mheda.org).



# 2025 MHEDA Calendar

## Programs and Resources

**AUG**  
**1**

**Q3 The MHEDA Journal Available Online**  
**Elevate Success Issue**

**AUG**  
**6**

**Regional Summit**  
**East Coast (Jessup, Maryland)**

**AUG**  
**7**

**Q3 ITR Economic Report**  
**Available Online**

**AUG**  
**26**

**Master Manager Series Begins**

**SEPT**  
**17**

**Organizational Adaption:**  
**Leading Through Changes (Webinar)**

**OCT**  
**1**

**2026 MVP/MVS Award**  
**Application Opens**

**OCT**  
**3**

**Geopolitics and the Economy**  
**(Webinar)**

**OCT**  
**15**

**2025 Material Handling Business Trends**  
**Available Online**

**OCT**  
**15**

**Authenticity Unleashed:**  
**Leading with Your True Colors (Webinar)**

**OCT**  
**21**

**Automation Solutions Conference**  
**(Atlanta, Georgia)**

**OCT**  
**23**

**Rental and Used Management Conference**  
**(Atlanta, Georgia)**

**OCT**  
**28**

**2026 Economic Outlook Webinar**  
**ITR Economics**

**NOV**  
**1**

**Q4 The MHEDA Journal Available**  
**Online Trends Issue**

**NOV**  
**4-5**

**Women in Industry Conference**  
**(Rosemont, Illinois)**

**NOV**  
**7**

**Q4 ITR Economic Report**  
**Available Online**

**DEC**  
**1**

**2026 Convention Details**  
**and Registration Available Online**

For more details visit [mheda.org](https://mheda.org). Programs added often. Dates and programs subject to change.

# MHEDA




## Ad Index





Battery Builders, LLC .....	36
Bobcat Material Handling .....	8
Carron Net Company, Inc. ....	54
Conveyor Systems & Engineering.....	23
C&A Property Management.....	69
DACS, Inc. ....	54

East Penn Manufacturing Co., Inc.....	Inside Front Cover
EnerSys .....	34
FSIP Electronics, formerly Flight Systems Industrial Products .....	63
Gamber-Johnson .....	38
Hawker .....	42

Heli America Inc.....	Inside Back Cover
Husky Rack & Wire.....	4
Hytrol Conveyor Co., Inc.....	14
InCord.....	63
Liftow Limited.....	32
Modern Equipment Company, Inc. (MECO-OMAHA) .....	7
Nashville Wire Products.....	Back Cover
Pro-Line.....	54
Rack Builders, Inc.....	39
ResinDek .....	28
Ridg-U-Rak, Inc.....	10
Ryson International Inc. ....	43
Steel King Industries Inc .....	33
Trelleborg.....	45
TVH .....	45
United Material Handling, Inc. ....	63
Western Pacific Storage Solutions .....	52
WIPOTEC-OCS Inc. ....	53
WireCrafters LLC.....	44
Worldwide Material Handling .....	3
Xilin Material Handling LLC.....	48






### INSTALLATION SERVICES

- MDR, Belt, Modular, Chain, Flex Conveyor Installation
- Certified Racking Inspections
- Conveyor Maintenance
- Racking Installation
- Work Platform & Crossover Installation

**C&A Property  
Management**

quote@capropertymgt.com  
616-262-7035  
www.capropertymgt.org

# THANK YOU

**Thank You  
Advertisers for  
Your Support  
of The MHEDA  
Journal!**

AQUIR/STOCK.ADOBE.COM

# LinkedIn Is the New Business Card, But It's Also So Much More

By Brittany Neish



**LET'S GET ONE** thing straight that I love to drone on about...

LinkedIn isn't just an online résumé anymore. It's your digital handshake, your portfolio, your stage, your soapbox and, in a world of AI-generated EVERYTHING, it's one of the remaining places where people are craving the real you.

We're seeing it across every industry. Leaders, partners and hiring managers are turning to LinkedIn to evaluate who someone is, not just what they've done.

Are you someone I want to work with? Can I trust your voice? Are you showing up like a human or a highlight reel?

And that shift isn't just anecdotal. It's backed by some serious data:

- There are over 1.2 billion LinkedIn members worldwide (DataReportal, 2025).
- LinkedIn saw 1.77 billion monthly visits in February 2025 alone (Semrush, 2025).
- Nearly half of LinkedIn users are between 25-34, and Gen Z usage is growing fast (Statista, 2025).
- One-quarter of users engage with brand content daily (Social Media Content Strategy Report, 2024).

So what does that mean for you?

It means LinkedIn isn't optional. It's essential. Whether you're looking to grow your business, land your next role or build meaningful professional relationships, the time to start showing up consistently is now (literally right after you read this).

Here are my favorite tips to help get you started...

## Clean Up Your Digital Front Door

Your LinkedIn profile is doing the talking before you even say a word.

Here's where to focus:

- Your profile photo should look like you today (not in 2015). It doesn't have to be formal, just professional and clear.
- Your headline isn't just your job title. It's prime SEO real estate. Use it to tell people what you do, who you serve or what you're known for.
- Your "About" section is your story. Keep it conversational, and make sure it reflects your values, not just your work history. And please do not put a bulleted list of skills in there (I can promise you no one is reading that).

## Give Before You Get

The best way to build momentum on LinkedIn? Start by giving.

Try my 3x3x3 Engagement Strategy (I do this every single weekday morning):

- Comment on 3 posts from people in your inner circle — celebrate them, champion them, cheer them on.
- Comment on 3 posts from people you'd like to get to know better; start a true, genuine conversation on their posts, not a pitch.
- Comment on 3 posts from industry leaders; add your perspective or share a related story.

That's 9 thoughtful touchpoints that keep you visible, valuable and human.

## Create a Simple Content Plan

Posting doesn't have to be a daily scramble. You just need a rhythm.

Here's an easy content framework to mix and match:

- Original Content: Your take on leadership, trends or lessons you've learned. This is where you share your story (the things AI could never replace you with).
- Industry Content: React to what's

happening in your field and give your take on news, research or articles.

- Celebration Content: Highlight team wins, career milestones or moments of growth (yours and others).

And yes, photos and videos of you matter. People want to connect with people. With AI-generated posts on the rise, your face and voice help people trust that there's a real human behind the insights.

Canva is your best friend if you're not a designer. And don't forget to reshare content from partners and orgs you admire (MHEDA puts out some great stuff, by the way, and resharing some of their content is a great way to get industry content out there).

## LinkedIn Isn't Going Anywhere

Your goals might change. Your role might change. But your presence on LinkedIn is one of the most consistent ways to stay connected to the people, opportunities and ideas that shape your work.

## About the Author

*Brittany Neish is the founder of What You Do Matters, a leadership and career development company built on the belief that your actions shape your impact. With a background in marketing and a Master's degree in Positive Organizational Development and Change, she blends storytelling and strategy to help leaders grow, lead and actually be heard.*



# Lithium-ion forklifts offer several advantages compared to traditional lead-acid battery forklifts.

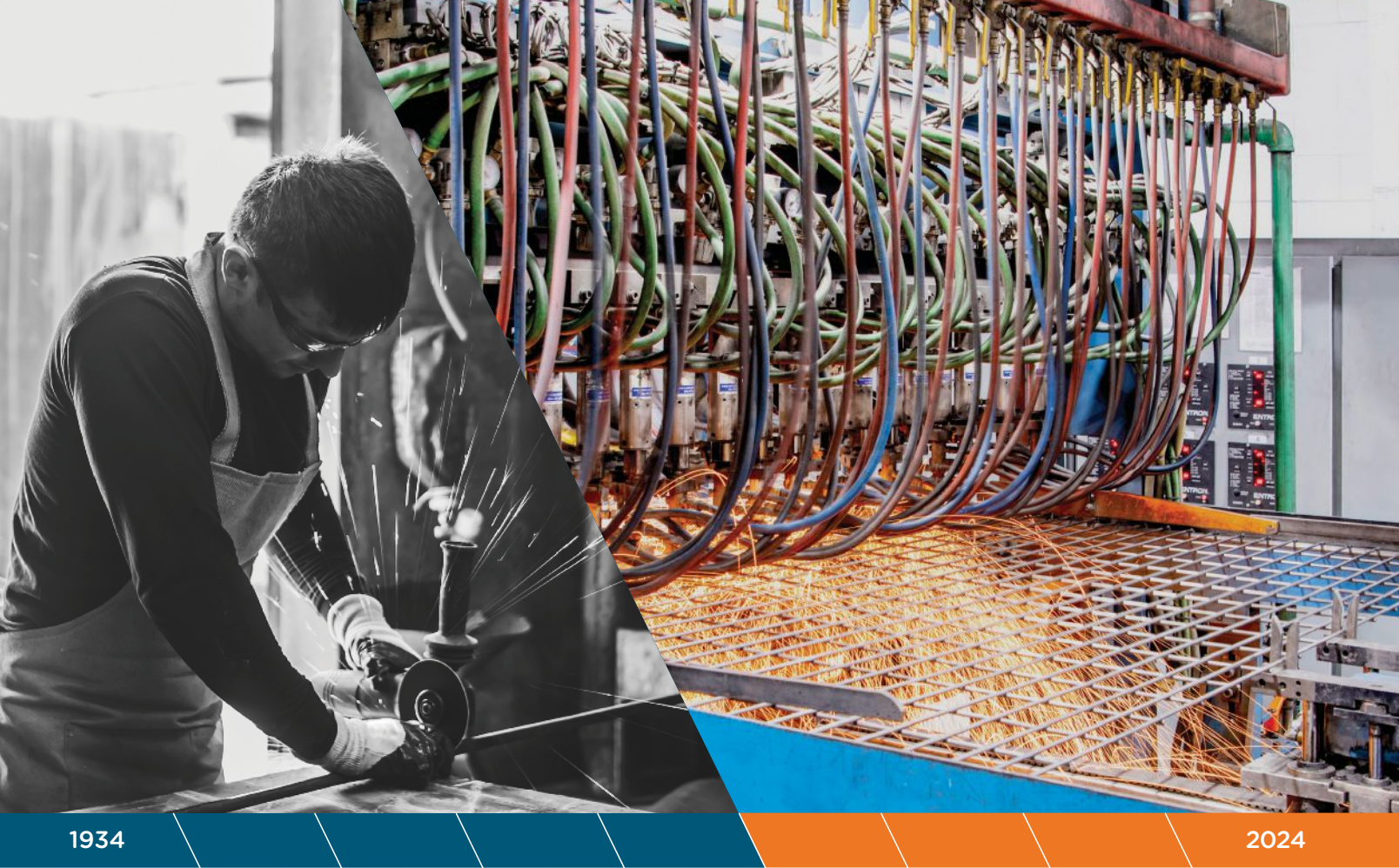
- Faster Charging Times
- Lower Maintenance
- Longer Battery Life
- Environmental Benefits

**#7 in the World  
#1 in China**



4025 Welcome All Road SW Suite 150 | Atlanta, GA 30349  
[heli@heliforkliftamerica.com](mailto:heli@heliforkliftamerica.com) | [www.heliforkliftamerica.com](http://www.heliforkliftamerica.com)





1934

2024

## 90 years of strength, integrity and reliability... **Nashville Wire delivers.**

Nashville Wire is a third-generation, family-run business where the entrepreneurial spirit of our senior leadership team guides our strategic growth.

- Company culture of continuous **improvement**.
- Consistent **reinvestment** in technology, facilities, and people.
- **Innovation** drives speed-to-market, budget optimization and consistent high-quality.
- Unwavering **commitment** to serving the needs of our partner.



 **NASHVILLE WIRE**  
PRODUCTS

**90**  
YEARS

800.841.3274 | [NashvilleWire.com](https://NashvilleWire.com)