



The Warehouse Manager's Handbook: How to Identify Your Material Handling and Operational Needs



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Introduction to forklift operations and material handling

Whether you're a newly-appointed warehouse manager or a seasoned professional, it's essential you feel fully informed before making a decision about your business' material handling needs.

During a period of [significant change in the industry](#) (such as EU directives, Stage V emissions regulations, and electrification), our dealer network is dedicated to helping you identify the right solution for your needs — both now, and in the future.

To find out more about our approach to forklift operations, [click here](#).

With so many different types of forklifts and truck models available, it can be difficult knowing which to choose, especially if you're keen to future-proof your operation.

Here's a brief look at the different types of forklifts currently available at TCM along with their typical use cases.

Forklift Type:	Application/Use Cases:
Counterbalance Truck (Electric and Engine)	Heavy-duty applications, outdoor usage, loading and moving pallets
Pallet Truck (Electric)	Small spaces, carrying, stacking, and moving pallets, stock replenishment
Stacker Truck (Electric)	Confined spaces, warehouses with racking, smaller businesses
Order Picker (Electric)	Warehouses containing lots of racking, picking individual items
Reach Truck (Electric)	Applications that require a more versatile machine: stacking, loading, unloading, and moving pallets

For a more detailed overview of the different types of material handling equipment available, and which might be the best option for your business, [click here](#).

In addition to advising you on which forklift type you should choose, TCM takes a [holistic approach to material handling](#). Meaning we can help you assess your storage, transport, and stock requirements, and outline the associated costs.

To start a conversation about your business' material handling and operational needs today, [click here](#) to speak with your local dealer.



1. Warehouse managers overview.

a. Overall business requirements

No one business is the same. When it comes to your forklift operations, there are numerous considerations you may need to take into account. This includes taking stock of your current material handling equipment, storage, and throughout.

You'll also need to take into account your future material handling needs and business objectives. To kick-start a conversation with your local dealer, try asking the questions from the list below.

Key questions to ask your local dealer:

- Where can I reduce costs in my operation to maximise business profits?
- Which type of forklift finance best suits my business' needs and budget?
- How can I future-proof my operation in a way that's cost-effective for my business?

To discover more factors you need to consider before buying your next forklift, check out our [cheatsheet for warehouse managers](#).

b. Identifying your objectives

As a warehouse manager, identifying your business' objectives at the outset helps you ensure you have the right equipment in place to achieve your operational goals.

Your objectives might include increasing productivity, making the transition to electric forklifts, expanding your fleet size, and more. Remember: every business is unique. Whatever your objectives may be, these should be specific to your operation and team's needs.

Our dealer network is specifically trained to help you determine the best forklift solution for your business — both now and in the future.

The image shows the TCM logo in red, bold, sans-serif font, centered on a bright yellow background. The background appears to be a close-up of a yellow fabric or curtain, with some vertical lines and shadows. On the far left and right edges, there are small, dark rectangular sections that look like parts of a window or door frame.

Use the questions below as a springboard to help you identify your objectives alongside your local TCM dealer.

Key questions to ask your local dealer:

- My operation runs 24/7 — what forklift solution do you recommend?
- My operation has clear shift patterns — which forklift solution do you recommend?
- My application is heavy-duty. Which truck is best for me?

c. Achieving internal buy-in

Once you've assessed your business' objectives and gained a better idea of what forklift solutions you might need, it's time to work on achieving buy-in internally.

Being able to highlight the benefits of your proposed investment (think improved truck availability, greater throughput, cost savings, and increased profits) will make it easier to make your material handling requirements a reality.

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To help you get key decision-makers on board, why not ask your local dealer one (or all!) of the following questions:

Questions to consider:

- What is the [cost breakdown](#) of my current truck vs. the model you recommend?
- How will X truck help me cut costs, increase efficiencies, and maximise profits?
- How will increasing my forklift fleet size affect my business' profitability?

To start a conversation about your overall business objectives and how TCM's tailored solutions can help, [click here](#) to speak with your local dealer.

2. Rent, contract hire, or purchase? ■



a. Why rent a forklift?

If you're planning to expand your fleet in the near future, it's important you consider your financing options now to determine which route you take.

If your operation is seasonal, renting a forklift for a specific period is a great option. This will provide flexibility, and allow you to avoid year-round servicing and maintenance costs. Renting is also likely to be suitable if your business needs a forklift truck at short notice.

With that said, bear in mind that rental rates are usually at least 25% higher as you're paying for the convenience. You'll also be limited to whatever specification is available at the time, which might not necessarily be optimal for your operational requirements.

b. Why choose forklift contract hire?

Unlike renting a forklift, contract hire allows you to introduce equipment that's been specifically designed for your business.

80% of trucks are full maintenance contract hire.

This is the most common way to hire equipment in the UK, because you can achieve that level of specificity without the burden of ownership (maintenance is typically planned and scheduled).

Some of the benefits of contract hire include reduced costs and fixed prices over a term, making it easier for you to forecast accurately. Contract hire also enables you to modify the terms of your agreement to suit your business' changing needs.

c. Why purchase a forklift?

Despite the higher acquisition cost, purchasing a forklift outright boasts numerous benefits in terms of longevity, providing your business with a greater return on investment if you later decide to sell it on.

Owning your forklift outright also means you can customise it as you wish to suit your ideal specification, allowing you to optimise your business' operation.

What's more, your liability is also reduced when you purchase a forklift over renting or contract hire. A bit of cosmetic damage won't hurt because there's no pressure to return it in reasonable condition — allowing operators to get on with the job at hand.

Of course, you'll need to factor in servicing and maintenance costs when purchasing a forklift outright, however, this is arguably well worth the [investment](#).

To discover a finance solution that best suits your business' needs, [click here](#) to get in touch.



3. Health & safety and your operators

a. Accident prevention

As a warehouse manager, we know that accident prevention is one of your key priorities, and taking steps to reduce the risk of accidents in your operation is essential.

Ensuring your warehouse or operating environment is free from obstructions, harmful chemicals, and there are clearly defined operating areas will also help you to [reduce cost](#) in the event of an incident.

Remember that accident prevention should start from the bottom up. Instilling a [culture of health and safety](#) in the workplace is one of the most effective ways to prevent incidents.

Discover [how to prevent common forklift accidents](#) in your workplace.

b. Driver and licensing requirements

Keeping on top of your licensing and driver requirements will help keep your operation safe, [efficient](#), and compliant with regulations.

For example, if it's been a while since your business ran additional driver training – or you can't remember the last time your operators renewed their certifications – it may be time to change that.

Ideally, you'll want to conduct regular audits to ensure each operator receives the right level of training for the truck model or models they're operating.

If you're in doubt about what driver requirements apply to your own operation, your local dealer will be able to help. Here are a few questions to help start a conversation:

Key questions to ask your local dealer:

- What type of driver training do my business' operators need?
- What type of driving license is required to operate a forklift?
- How often do my business' operators need to retrain?

c. Maximising operator comfort

One of the top priorities of every good warehouse manager is to improve operator comfort where possible. A key aspect of this is making sure your business has the right equipment in place for the job at hand, as well as their operating environment.

TCM's Floating Arm Rest and Mini Steering Wheel has been nominated as a finalist in the [FLTA Awards for Excellence 2020](#) in the Ergonomics category — and it's easy to see why. Incorporated into our reach truck range, this feature helps to improve operator comfort and minimise fatigue.

Also achieving finalist status is the TCM [FB/FTB 3-4 Wheel Counterbalance](#) with Floating Armrest and Multi-Functional Joystick in the Innovation category. Similarly, this truck helps operators maintain a neutral body posture, minimising strain for a healthier workforce.

To explore TCM's entire product range and discover how to boost safety in your operation, [click here](#).



4. Dealers vs. manufacturers

a. How dealers operate

Once you've established your business needs and objectives, it's time to explore your supplier options.

As a decision-maker in your business, you'll want to understand who can offer you a tailored solution at the best cost, as well as provide all the support and advice you may need along the way. But when dealers and manufacturers offer similar products at similar prices, it can be difficult knowing which supplier option is right for you.

As a general rule of thumb, manufacturers sell to you in a race for increased market share. On the other hand, dealers work for you and can provide a more personalised service. Although the big manufacturers technically cover everywhere, in fact, without a dedicated person at your location, you could be easily forgotten. By contrast, dealers are specifically chosen by us to provide a high quality of service in your location.

Find out more about the difference between [dealers vs. manufacturers](#).

b. Finding a tailored solution

Once you purchase a product from a manufacturer, the transaction typically ends there. Dealers, however, offer the full package — consulting your business on its material handling needs now and in the future while maintaining a long-term relationship.

By purchasing material handling equipment through your local dealer, you can rest assured that they're with you every step of the way as your business' needs naturally develop and evolve.

Your local dealer will carry out regular reviews of your equipment, operation, and application to ensure operators are satisfied with the solutions in place.

c. The client-dealer relationship

As a warehouse manager, you should consider your local dealer an [extension of your team](#) and forklift operation.

Our dealer network is specifically trained to help you determine the best forklift solution for your business.

In just a short period of time, your dealer will come to understand your unique business requirements and be able to offer specialist support, when you need it.

At TCM, dealer integrity is core to our business offering. As a result, we stand by the benefits of a hands-on client-dealer relationship. These benefits include 24/7 support, a tailored solution, and one single point of contact for all your material handling needs.

To locate your nearest TCM dealer and start optimising your operation today, [click here](#).

Conclusion: How TCM can help your warehouse operations.



As part of Mitsubishi Logistnext, TCM is a member of the third largest global forklift company. Our backstory confirms our roots in the earliest developments of forklift design and engineering, spanning over 60 years.

We have a solid foundation in the earliest designs of forklifts and continue to innovate and change, adding value and contributing to business improvement and the community.

At TCM, building valuable, long-term partnerships with our customers is at the core of what we do. With the help of our extensive [dealer network](#), we help businesses transform their operations.

Our customers depend on us to supply innovative material handling equipment that will drive their businesses forward, but that's not all. In addition to our extensive range of world-class forklifts, we provide customers with a variety of services to keep their operations running 24/7, including parts, tyres, fleet management, driver training, and more.

At TCM we also recognise that one size doesn't fit all. Instead, based on our findings, we will propose a tailored solution that addresses your business' specific wants, needs, and challenges.

Innovative forklift solutions

As part of Mitsubishi Logistnext, TCM is a member of the third largest global forklift company. Our backstory confirms our roots in the earliest developments of forklift design and engineering, spanning over 60 years.

Over the course of our history, TCM has been created out of the best technology and innovation inherited from its associated family of forklift products. It incorporates the best of engineering and design advances from around the world.

We have a solid foundation in the earliest designs of forklifts and continue to innovate and change, adding value and contributing to business improvement and the community.

Today, products are predominantly developed and built in Europe with locally based support and service. TCM is a brand that offers a strong local and national network with global reach and resources.

A trusted partner

TCM products are sold exclusively through our authorised dealer network. This offers customers an exceptional experience that sets the TCM brand apart from the market.

Dealers provide a service and support resource based around local knowledge and experience of their customers' businesses and needs.

TCM build safe, reliable products that evolve with our customers' needs. We distribute these products through our trusted dealer network so that they can add value to businesses.

Our industry experience stretches back over half a century and covers all areas of manufacturing, retail, wholesale logistics, and distribution. As a forklift provider, TCM remains committed to excellence through simple solutions and smart innovation.

To find out how we can help you, please get in touch to discuss your requirements.

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