

COVER STORY

2009 SALES SUCCESS STORIES

WE'RE STILL HERE

It's bleak out there. The daily headlines describe the casualties of the current economic climate: Layoffs. Closings. Lost Sales. No Sales. Downsizings. You know the list.

Some companies have figured out a way to hit the mark. They know there is no time to relax or to rest. That era is over. They understand that a mutual commitment between distributor and manufacturer is the only thing they can be sure of in order to achieve sales success.

In this, *The MHEDA Journal's* annual Sales Success issue, we salute these companies that get it.

Wisconsin Lift Truck Re-Tires Customer

One of Wisconsin Lift Truck's (Brookfield, WI) largest customers is a household goods manufacturer in Racine, Wisconsin. WLT has over 220 trucks in the customer's facilities throughout the country under a full-service fleet program.

Since it was such an important account, Field Service Manager **Pat Ryan** kept a very close eye on the fleet. Each month he provided the customer with spreadsheets explaining every detail of the fleet's performance. After a few months reviewing these reports, Ryan began to notice a trend. These trucks were being run about 500 hours a month and their tires were only lasting for about 1,500 hours. This meant that many of the trucks needed new tires every quarter.

This was an unacceptable situation for Ryan, and he set out to find a solution. His first call was to **Brian Riggs**, WLT's tire specialist. He explained the situation and Riggs got down to business. To help find the perfect tire for the application, Riggs contacted **Philip Lannon**, NAFTA sales manager at Continental Tire. Both Lannon and Riggs studied the application, finally deciding on a Continental MH20 tire. They believed its solid shoulder and lack of tread pattern would be ideal for maximum stability with heavy loads. They were also designed to last much longer than the tires that the customer was currently using.

At first, the customer wasn't receptive to the idea of new tires. He had requested the lower-quality tires because they were cheaper, and he was still hesitant to pay the premium for the MH20 tires. He even briefly considered opening up the bidding to other companies before Ryan talked him out of it. Ryan offered to give the customer a set of the Continental tires free-of-charge to

- > **Distributor:** Wisconsin Lift Truck
- > **Supplier:** Continental Tire
- > **Summary:** Switching to pricier tires saves customer big money.

see how they would perform. The customer agreed to try them out and ended up being thrilled with the tires.

Ryan then put together a presentation for the customer detailing how, over the course of a calendar year, the more expensive tires would actually be cheaper than what they were using. The MH20s were able to run 3,000 hours before needing replacement—double the previous tire's capabilities. The customer recognized the value of the Continental tires and decided to purchase them for the entire fleet. "This sale was a big win for all three parties," says Ryan. "The Continental tires enabled us to solve a very big problem and, more important, keep our customer extremely happy."



This article originally appeared in the Fourth Quarter, Fall 2009 issue of *The MHEDA Journal* ©Data Key Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.