Hyster Forklift

Hyster is acknowledged as a worldwide leader in lift trucks. However, it began as a manufacturer of lifting equipment and winches. Most of its production was focused in the Pacific Northwest and dealt primarily with the wood and logging industry. A couple years after the first forklift trucks were invented Hyster became synonymous with quality production. Over the previous 80 years Hyster has continued to expand and grow its product line. The expansion of its products coupled with its wish to stay service oriented has allowed Hyster to develop into the worldwide player it is nowadays.

Some of the major inflection points in Hyster's past occurred between the 1940's and the 1960's. In 1946, Hyster opened a plant in Illinois that was fully dedicated to bulk manufacturing trucks. This allowed Hyster to drive its costs down and, simultaneously, offer a better quality product at industry competitive rates. In 1952, Hyster began its first foray in to the international production market through opening its first plant in the Netherlands. The Netherlands plant was originally designed to produce two products: Hyster 40" and the Karry Kranes.

The ever varying needs of Hyster clientele and Hyster's ability to continue to innovate led to rapid growth throughout the 1950's and 60's. They began constructing container handlers in the US in 1959 to meet with the ever expanding demand for transportation goods. In 1966, Hyster developed a system for enabling a lift truck to go both ahead and backwards using the same pedal. This pedal was termed the Monotrol pedal, which revolutionized the industry. Later in the decade Hyster opened a R&D centre in Oregon that was concentrated on enhancing the design and functionality of forklifts. The centre is still one of the world's top testing facilities in the materials handling industry.

The sixties was characterized by rapid growth right through the entire materials handling industry. Due to this, Hyster considered it necessary to refocus its strategy towards these growing mass markets. Hence, in 1970, the XL design philosophy was born. The XL design philosophy allowed Hyster to afford better quality at a more inexpensive price. A further expansion in manufacturing capabilities was necessitated by the demand in Europe for Internal Combustion Engine Vehicles. To plug this gap, a plant in Craigavon, Ireland was opened in 1980. Through the 80's Hyster continued to concentrate on developing industry leading forklifts. The Hyster brand name was known throughout the world for its dedication towards superiority. This attention to excellence brought numerous suitors for the company. In 1989, a large multinational company based in Ohio called NACCO Industries purchased Hyster and started an aggressive expansion strategy. NACCO swiftly replaced the XL philosophy with a more driver oriented lift truck that concentrated on operator comfort, which is well-known as the XM generation of forklifts.

The shift in supply change management to a much more just-in-time focused approach has meant that Hyster has had to constantly invest in new-found technology. Acquisitions and investments were made in the US, Italy, Netherlands, and lots of other places all over the world. All of these investments have made Hyster a worldwide leader in the lift truck market. In 2009, Hyster celebrated its 80th anniversary as an industry leader of materials handling equipment, which consists of over three hundred various versions of lift trucks.