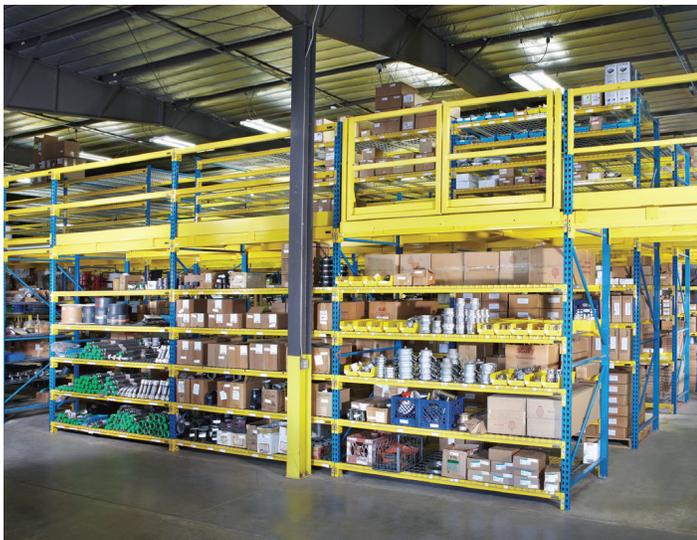


Wisconsin Lift Gases It Up

The Wausau, Wisconsin, warehouse of Northwest Petroleum was a mess. As the petroleum equipment manufacturer accrued inventory and out-of-model equipment, its storage room became cramped and unorganized, which made finding inventory and parts difficult and inefficient. The company was looking for a way to consolidate



storage and also keep high-value products like point-of-sale consoles and electronics more secure than the current storage system allowed. To combat the issue, Northwest Petroleum looked into constructing a building-supported mezzanine to store the equipment. They were discouraged when they learned that the warehouse would have to be structurally engineered to meet building codes, that their operations would be disrupted during the construction, and that property taxes would be due on the structure, which would be assessed as a permanent fixture. This approach did not fulfill another objective that any solution offer flexibility if the company moved or remodeled. Northwest Petroleum turned to Tim Zunker, account manager at the Wausau branch of Wisconsin Lift Truck Corp. (Brookfield, WI).

Zunker inspected Northwest Petroleum's warehouse and found that the company was using its vertical space very inefficiently. Zunker suggested building a rack-supported mezzanine. "The advantage of using a rack-supported structure is that it isn't permanent," says Zunker. "You don't pay taxes on it and you can add to it, make it smaller, or move it if you change locations or buildings. It offers flexibility." Zunker and WLT Engineer Erika Lau worked with Steel King Engineer Kelly Pixler. Their solution decreased the storage area from 40 ft. x 80 ft. to 40 ft. x 60 ft. and increased the storage height from 8 ft. to 16 ft. while quadrupling the storage space using Steel King SK2000 pallet rack. Use of a mezzanine increased vertical storage. The long runs and narrow aisles bolstered horizontal space while maintaining the flexibility that Northwest Petroleum desired. A lockable gate on the top level of the mezzanine added a level of security for storage of Northwest's expensive electronic components.

The planning process for the \$49,000 project took more than two months.

"Instead of jumping around to four different areas, everything they need is right there in one place and in neat rows," says Zunker. In fact, Northwest Petroleum is so happy with the solution they have showed it to two other customers who are looking for similar solutions.

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Tim Zunker, Wisconsin Lift Truck Corp



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