

# Hyster Forklifts Overcome Challenges at Automotive Logistics Operation

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**Stuttgart-based logistics company Agility has replaced its fleet of electric trucks with new Hyster® H1.8FT LPG forklifts, enabling the company to increase handling capacity and extend service intervals in the growing automotive logistics area of the business.**

Agility organises the collection of auto parts from suppliers across Europe before consolidating deliveries at its modern logistics facility in Stuttgart. From here, goods are shipped overseas on-demand, including delivery by air freight or on-board courier depending on the level of urgency.

## Every square metre counts

Despite the volatility of the market, Agility has successfully grown in the past year, expanding its capacities at the Stuttgart facility. As a result, the existing fleet of electric forklifts on-site were suddenly required to work more hours than previously.

Agility is based in the area of Korntal - Münchingen near Stuttgart, where car makers Mercedes Benz and Porsche have their headquarters. Suppliers Bosch and Würth can also be found nearby. Although space is at a premium in this busy, commercial area, a solution which enabled a reliable and uninterrupted operation was still needed.

"We are grateful for every centimetre of space we have available," says Jürgen Götz, Technical Manager at Agility.

## 100% reliability required

At first, Agility considered tackling its challenges either by equipping its existing fleet of electric trucks with extra batteries or by holding more trucks in reserve. However, even possible solutions such as an intermediate store were ruled out due to time constraints.

"Even using and recharging lithium-ion batteries, for example at lunchtime, would not have been enough to help us," says Götz. "Friday's are especially busy and we have no free time at all - the trucks must run. We rely on them 100 per cent in order to ensure the car parts are ready to be shipped from Stuttgart to Brazil, Mexico,

the United States and  
China. The ships can't wait for us."

## **LPG Forklifts - the first choice**

"Agility's challenge is quite rare, so we worked together to consider a variety of possible solutions," says Ralf Glawa, Account Manager at Hyster dealer Hald & Grunewald in Herrenberg near Stuttgart.

"However, despite the increase in performance of batteries in recent years, there was simply not enough power to provide around two additional operating hours per day - even the electrolyte circulation process could not provide the required performance. Therefore, the most sensible solution was to change the fleet of electric forklift trucks to natural gas vehicles," Glawa continues.

Since the introduction of the new trucks, the reliability of the Hyster® H1.8FT Fortens forklifts has assisted smooth operations at Agility. Except for changing the gas bottle and conducting scheduled maintenance, trucks can run without interruption. No additional reserve trucks had to be purchased, so today 8 robust Hyster LPG trucks have almost completely replaced the previous electric forklift fleet.

Glawa explains "The total operating costs have been significantly reduced through the use of LPG forklifts. At first look, electric forklifts appeared to be cheaper, as LPG trucks come with higher maintenance costs and a 15 to 20 percent higher initial cost."

"However, as Agility would have needed extra batteries or additional electric trucks, when considering the cost against the required operating time and distance travelled, the LPG option actually provides a lower total cost of ownership."

## **Reassured by design and quality**

"We are more than satisfied with this solution," says Götz. "Both the design and the comfort of the truck have also convinced the drivers."

One of the key deciding factors for Agility in choosing to exclusively use LPG forklifts is also the fast and reliable service.

"The solution has paid off quickly because our customers need reliable partners that help them to avoid production downtime," explains Götz. "Agility can respond immediately when an incorrect item or an insufficient quantity has been delivered, and the customer can request information directly from the

warehouse management system at any time.”

## **Manage processes transparently and reduce transport costs**

In Agility’s Automotive Control Tower, employees control and monitor all processes along the supply chain, from inbound to outbound. Ordinarily it takes three days between the receipt of goods and transporting them overseas.

“We use this time to package the products properly,” explains the plant manager. “We overbuild bulky packages in the container, with wood for example, so that containers can be optimally loaded with a two or even three ply system, which greatly reduces transportation costs for our customers.”

Source: Hyster ®