

SmartSites™

RELIABLE LIFT TRUCKS KEEP BEN & JERRY'S ICE CREAM CHURNING

Ice Cream and Raymond, Perfect Fit!



Dependable lift trucks increase productivity.



CASE STUDY

Americans love ice cream. Over the last 10 years, total production of ice cream and related frozen deserts has exceeded 1.5 billion gallons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This high demand led ice cream manufacturer Ben & Jerry's to re-evaluate its operations.

In order to stay competitive in the industry, Ben & Jerry's recognized a need to improve uptime and reduce maintenance costs in its manufacturing and distribution site in St. Albans, Vt. Ben & Jerry's called on Pengate Handling Systems, Inc. (Syracuse, N.Y.), an authorized service center for The Raymond Corporation, to provide materials handling solutions tailored to the facility's unique needs, such as freezer storage and a harsh materials handling environment in the ice cream manufacturing area. The result was a nearly 60 percent reduction in downtime and a more than 35 percent reduction in repair costs. Equally significant has been the

calculated improvements in productivity, as more pallets of ice cream can now be stocked, stored and shipped each day.

Pengate outfitted the facility's new distribution center with three customized *Raymond Deep-Reach®* electric lift trucks. The trucks are outfitted with cold storage conditioning packages to protect the truck control systems and *ThermaKit™* systems that warm the control handle and floor pad for improved operator comfort. Over time, 22 other *Raymond* lift truck models, including two stand-up counterbalanced trucks and two Model 8400 pallet trucks, have also been added to the fleet. In addition, Pengate worked with Ben & Jerry's to implement a Comprehensive Fixed Price Maintenance (CFPM) agreement in which the company pays a flat fee per month for all maintenance. This program ensures increased uptime in the challenging conditions where the trucks operate, in both

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the distribution and manufacturing areas.

"We used to run a two-shift operation, but in 2003, when we started working with Pengate, we began to run 24 hours a day," said Mark Favreau, logistics manager for the Ben & Jerry's facility in St. Albans. "Then, in 2005, for nearly nine months of the year, we ran our operations six and seven days a week, and Raymond and Pengate have been instrumental in allowing us to do that."

The St. Albans facility produces more than 200 flavors of ice cream 24 hours a day, five days a week. Across four manufacturing lines, the company produces nearly 1,700 pallets of product per week, all of which are stored and handled several times before eventually being distributed from the facility. Raw ingredient and packaging moves add another 4,000 pallet touches per week. Such an aggressive schedule demands efficient, reliable materials handling.

"Everything we do involves a pallet truck or a *Reach-Fork*® lift truck of some sort," Favreau said. "Because of the volume of inventory that comes in and goes out on a daily basis, it is literally impossible to be successful without dependable trucks."

For Ben & Jerry's, the result of using reliable materials handling equipment, complete with a CFPM from a customer-focused Raymond dealer, has been significant. Thanks to Pengate Handling and Raymond, Ben & Jerry's has experienced considerable increases in productivity due to the substantial reduction in repair costs and downtime.

"We have yet to go wrong with a *Raymond* truck," Favreau said. "Raymond and Pengate have, without a doubt, helped to increase our bottom line."



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