



ELECTRIC FORCE

Ken Poole, Logistics Manager at Bing Lee, one of Australia's largest electrical goods companies, shares how its Sydney DC managed a 150 per cent increase in operations through its efficient forklift fleet.

Bing Lee – a great Aussie icon, whose story begins in the Western Suburbs of Sydney, has stood the test of time. It's the largest privately held electrical retail business in New South Wales with over 35 stores.

Many of us are familiar with the Bing Lee TV and radio commercials of the last four decades. The catchy jingle "I like Bing Lee" is a part of the local pop culture and captures the essence of the family's objective – to be a wide-reaching, low-cost electrical goods retailer bringing affordable technology to the hard-working Aussie family.

Bing Lee offers a range of TV, audio, computing, home appliances, cameras, communication and navigational devices to its customers. Ken Poole, Bing Lee Logistics Manager, says since the pandemic hit the company has experienced unprecedented volume. He works at the main Distribution Centre (DC) in Old Guildford, NSW, managing direct home deliveries, stock replenishment into the store network and online order fulfilment.

"We've had to convert to a three-shift operation to cope with consumer demand," Ken says. This has meant that

the Sydney DC is relying on its forklift fleet more than ever to get the job done – at a record rate.

RECHARGED AND REFRESHED

For years, Bing Lee's main DC in Sydney was running an afternoon and evening shift. Ken says five years ago the operation was having a lot of issues with battery control of their previous forklift fleet. "We had major issues with our forklifts holding charge," Ken says.

He is thankful the company made the switch and upgraded to Jungheinrich's lithium-ion-powered EFG. "It's now been five years since we implemented the EFG units and we haven't had any battery issues to this day," Ken says.

"Now we are operating across 24-hours, we need to rely on quality units," he says. Bing Lee has upgraded its initial fleet from 2015 with an additional four units, bringing the EFG fleet to a total number of 16 at the main DC in Sydney. The company also has a DC in Melbourne to fulfil online orders that has 2 Jungheinrich EFG forklift trucks on-site.

"The quality of the batteries is remarkable with Jungheinrich's EFG

forklift trucks. They are able to provide batteries, chargers and forklifts that are perfectly synchronised.

We recently replenished our initial fleet from five years ago, and even though you could say they were coming towards their end of life, the trucks had absolutely no battery issues," he says.

The versatile EFG counterbalance forklift trucks are designed for maximum performance at minimum energy consumption. Due to its Pure Energy concept, productivity-enhancing ergonomics and optimum safety, the units provide the highest efficiency for even the most demanding operations.

"Our operation has greatly benefited from fast charging times and zero maintenance due to the Jungheinrich lithium-ion batteries, which are the most economic energy source in the long run," Ken says. Now the Sydney DC has shifted to a 24-hour operation, he says employees can be guaranteed not to worry that their forklifts will run out of battery – even if they're rostered on the 3rd shift for the day.

"We have a quick and easy routine for swapping batteries and instead of being after every shift, we

can focus on fulfilling more orders and trust the forklift's efficiency."

RELIABLE FORKLIFTS

Bing Lee has experienced 100 to 150 per cent increase in its operation across their Sydney and Melbourne DC's since the start of COVID-19. During this time of unprecedented demand, Ken says it's vital to have efficient machinery and processes in place. He credits the operation's integrated fleet management. "The trucks ensure continuous operation. They're always ready for use, without any signs of fatigue," Ken says.

Consumers have never been more demanding. Ken says the DC plays a role to ensure customers are receiving their goods at the fastest rate possible. "With our agile EKS electric forklift trucks, we can maximise our throughput performance in narrow-aisle warehouses," he says.

"Our warehouse has narrow aisles, offering little room to manoeuvre. Thanks to their small and compact design, these trucks can easily navigate through, with the added advantage of our platform pickers."

Ken says it's important that the operation remains flexible to meet various consumer needs. "Minimal down-time is extremely important when your operation runs for



24 hours. Every minute of movement counts," he says. "Although order levels are slowly dropping as we head out of this COVID-era, the levels aren't anywhere near normal. So, having reliable and ergonomic units that we don't have to worry about, gives us reassurance our team have the right solutions and peace of mind for peak periods."

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FUTURE POWER

"There was always an old saying in the warehouse that if your forklift ran out of gas... you were a million miles away from the gas bottles," Ken says. He has been chuffed to hear the ease of Jungheinrich's EFG forklift trucks when casual workers have come on-site and commented on the cleanliness and comfortability.

"We hire plenty of casuals who drive a wide range of different forklift trucks and the positive feedback we receive after they work on our site just shows the ease of operation," Ken says. Jungheinrich's EFG forklift trucks offer perfect seating comfort, best all-round visibility, and flexible operating options as people work around the clock to fulfil hundreds of customer and store requirements daily.

"No longer were our workers covered in sooty residue after a hard day's work, Li-ion batteries are revolutionising electric industrial trucks and have proven to be beneficial for our warehouse efficiency and handling capacity," Ken says.

"I can't fault Jungheinrich. The company shows value in the products they deliver onsite and in their after-sales service. Bing Lee's assured we have invested in the right infrastructure for our busy operation that will continue to meet our demands." ■

