



Finnish Electric Warehouse and Counterbalanced Forklift Truck Manufacturer: Driving the Market with Targeted Solutions

Rocla Supports MHI Group's European Materials Handling Equipment Business

The long-running and globally disruptive European debt crisis is finally showing signs of bottoming out. In the advanced nations of Europe, electric warehouse trucks are predicted to lead the materials handling equipment market, a market sensitive to business trends. The impact of the current recession on Scandinavian corporations has so far been less severe compared to some other European countries, and the hopes for these companies are particularly high. One such company, Rocla Oy of Finland, under MCFE ownership, is supporting European logistics through its active, proposal-based solutions.

European Materials Handling Equipment Market Shifts to Electric Warehouse Trucks

Founded in 1942 in Jarvenpaa, Finland, Rocla, an electric warehouse truck manufacturer, ranks among the top European industry leaders. The company has worked with MHI since 1987, accepting OEM contracts for electric warehouse trucks, and the relationship has been a consistently good one.

In recent years, logistics systems in the advanced nations of Europe have become increasingly sophisticated, and there is a marked shift from engine-powered forklift trucks geared for large containers to highly maneuverable electric warehouse trucks.

While MHI specializes in engine-powered counterbalanced forklift trucks, Rocla's expertise is with electric warehouse trucks, and there is strong synergy in the partnership between the two companies, augmented by the fact that they do business in very different regions. In 2008, MHI initiated a takeover bid of Rocla through MCFE (Mitsubishi Caterpillar Forklift Europe B.V.) to further strengthen the relationship.

Prioritizing Customer Satisfaction in Product Development and Sophisticated Design

Rocla co-creates its products in cooperation with its customers. The company focuses on

thoroughly understanding the way the product is used and reflecting this knowledge in the development of new products. While the company naturally includes customer views at the operational level, it also reviews the actual logistics applications from a professional perspective. This plays an important role in Rocla's peerless innovation.

One reason that Rocla's electric warehouse trucks are renowned within the European market is the company's sophisticated design sense: The company stands alone in the materials handling industry as the recipient of three "red dot design awards," a globally recognized honor. Requirements for electric warehouse trucks in Europe are specific. For example, the ceilings of warehouses in Europe are generally 10m or higher, and there is strong demand for ergonomic designs that reduce worker fatigue as much as possible. Rocla's design philosophy, honed in Europe, doesn't stop at the pursuit of aesthetics; usability is also paramount, and as a result, its products are rated highly by customers. In addition, Rocla practices concurrent engineering from the very beginning of new product design working in close cooperation with its production, purchas-

ing, sales and marketing divisions, and has managed to greatly reduce the time spent on development.

At present, commoditization in the European materials handling equipment market is advancing, particularly in Germany and France. Many logistics companies are focusing on the automation of their operational bases in an effort to cut costs, and there is a growing tendency to depend on leased equipment. As an electric warehouse and counterbalanced forklift truck manufacturer and in order to respond to these market changes, Rocla's alternatives include boosting price competitiveness, accelerated product development and greater flexibility, and expansion into lines of business that add value for customers, such as the component, service and rental businesses. Under these circumstances, Rocla is focusing on business expansion through its unique targeted solutions.

Providing a Full Lineup of Comprehensive Solutions

Rocla's proposal-based solutions stem from an accurate understanding of the business and

marketing conditions of its customer companies. With its full lineup of electric warehouse and counterbalanced forklift trucks, Rocla is able to comprehensively provide combinations of products tailored to each customer's needs. These include consulting, fleet management and remote monitoring, as well as maintenance and other support and backup functions. Rocla's goal is to provide packages of these services tailored to each customer's financial situation, and in fact the demand for these comprehensive solutions is growing. One good example is the tie-up recently finalized with the Itella Group on its fleet of more than 2,000 warehouse and counterbalanced forklift trucks. Itella will switch from an ownership-based forklift truck procurement model to leasing, with Rocla supplying and centrally maintaining Itella's entire fleet in Finland as well as all other countries where Itella operates.

As Rocla works to become even more active in the European materials handling equipment market, its system of cooperation with partner companies will remain indispensable. Rocla and other MHI group companies are actively engaged in mutual exchange of technologies and are working to develop new products based on a fusion of technologies and products. In 2012, Rocla took over from MCFE the production of electric counterbalanced forklift trucks, which now also includes the development, and new electric counterbalanced forklifts and reach trucks are about to be launched.

Rocla also works with Kone, Metso and other leading Finnish companies and, with support from Tekes (Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation), it is building an effective network for the production of various solutions both at home and abroad.

Expectations just keep rising for the targeted solutions that the integrated company MCFE-Rocla promotes to drive the materials handling equipment market.



Rapid low level order picker (PS20), one of the red dot winners, is equipped with an ergonomically designed steering wheel that resembles a game controller, making it easier to operate



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Leading Finland's Industrial and Service Sectors in Anticipating of Outstanding Technological Developments

Tekes is the main public organization that provides funding, networking and expertise for technological innovation and R&D conducted by Finland's domestic companies, universities, research organizations, and government agencies. With an annual budget allocated by Finland's Ministry of Employment and the Economy totaling around 550 million euros, we actively support research and development, especially cutting-edge projects, and also fund projects undertaken by foreign-owned companies registered in Finland based on similar criteria and conditions.

Tekes funds R&D projects of about 1,200 companies on average each year, and provided funding to some 1,620 projects in 2012. These include research and development projects carried out by Rocla. Tekes has been continuously funding Rocla's projects for almost 30 years and has maintained good business relations with the company.

Rocla's projects funded by Tekes have involved automation of electric warehouse trucks, guidance systems, ergonomic designs, mechanics, energy efficiency and product development methods, as well as comprehensive systems. These are all very important components of material handling equipment and related services. We ensure a high return on investment by continuously monitoring the results of funded projects. Among these are many of Rocla's innovative projects that have proven to be successful and that have led to the development of new technologies and novel products along with the growth of promising business activities.

In the future, we expect Rocla to remain an active and influential company in Finland's innovative environment. We also look forward to seeing Rocla's key business partner, MCFE, demonstrate its confidence in the company's capabilities and prospects by according it more responsibilities with respect to product development and business activities. Looking ahead, we will continue providing support to Rocla's highly promising R&D projects with the desire to strengthen the competitiveness of Finland's industry as a whole.