



M CON PRODUCTS

PRECAST CONCRETE MANUFACTURER RELIES ON HEAVY DUTY BIG TRUCKS TO SUPPORT RAPID GROWTH

Founded in 1989 to serve the needs of Ottawa and Eastern Ontario, Canada, M CON Products, Inc. is a leading provider of precast concrete infrastructure products. The company produces everything from maintenance holes and catch basins, to pipes, box culverts and other critical concrete products to support residential and commercial development projects. As the City of Ottawa and surrounding areas grew, so did M CON – ramping up production from around 40 - 50 tonnes to 70 - 80 tonnes of concrete products annually over a 5-year period.

THE CHALLENGE

In addition to the company's sheer growth in volume, the product mix evolved, too. Larger and heavier products, such as wide-diameter pipes used in storm retention ponds for subdivisions, grew significantly to account for a greater part of M CON's business.

"About a decade ago, we'd make 10 pieces a year of those large items," says Tim Underhill, Plant Manager, M CON Products. "Now, that figure has grown to over 100."

With the types of products made at the facility changing, M CON needed to re-evaluate the capabilities of its lift trucks, both in terms of capacity and handling capability. The company needed to purchase new equipment with the right attachment to handle the larger products,

but that was not the only factor M CON considered. Historically, the company ran trucks with a 12 tonne lifting capacity. While this capacity was sufficient to meet their needs, the duty cycle taxed the equipment to its limit, leading to significant expenditures to keep the mission-critical equipment moving. Historically, ICE lift trucks have been the tried-and-tested option for demanding outdoor applications. They offer remarkable durability and have a proven record of withstanding the hottest, coldest, and dirtiest environments. These trucks power through without depending on the electrical grid – an especially important consideration if local utilities cannot provide sufficient electricity to keep electric fleets moving.

Challenge: Support overall business growth, including increased production of heavier precast concrete pieces

Solution: Implement higher-capacity Hyster forklifts capable of handling a complete range of concrete products and capacities, with proper-spec attachment to avoid product damage

Impact: Higher-capacity forklift handles all tasks without being taxed to limit, reducing maintenance spend and helping keep fleet efficiently structured



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THE SOLUTION

With those key factors in mind, M CON began the competitive bid process, involving multiple equipment brands and dealers to find the best solution. As part of the process, the company approached their long-time equipment supplier and local Hyster® dealer, Wajax. Representatives from Wajax visited the M CON facility to get a firsthand look at the operating environment and weights, dimensions and characteristics of products to be handled, along with an in-depth explanation from Underhill on their goals for performance, long-term costs and other requirements.

“We actually narrowed our choice pretty early,” said Underhill. “Wajax matched everything up with what we needed and it became apparent we wanted a Hyster truck.”

Rather than a 12 tonne capacity truck like M CON had historically used, Wajax recommended a step up in capacity to 16 tonnes with the Hyster® H16XM12, capable of not only handling the increased volume of larger products, but helping alleviate the operation’s challenge of taxing equipment to its limit.



Truck shown is the Hyster H360HD, known as H16XM12 in EMEA.



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“In the past, we’d buy equipment that was at the top end of its capacity limit based on our expected workload, so when they came back with the 16 tonne truck, it was bigger than we initially thought,” continued Underhill. “But it made sense – it was the smart way to go for equipment longevity and service costs.”

But capacity was only part of the calculation. Handling cylindrical concrete products requires a specialised attachment, and M CON had certain diameter, weight and application criteria the clamp needed to meet.

The Hyster engineering team put together a solution that integrated the proper size hydraulic box and pipe clamp with the right lift truck to provide an effective solution for M CON. Depending on the size of the product, the operator can set the correct PSI and enable the clamp to apply the proper force. Crucially, the clamp spreads that pressure throughout – not just on a single spot – helping reduce the risk of cracking or other product damage in the material handling process.

The final piece of the puzzle was to ensure the solution was designed around the needs of the operator all year long. The H16XM12 specified for M CON and built at the Hyster Big Trucks plant in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, features an insulated, heated cab for the freezing Canadian winters, along with air conditioning to help operators stay comfortable and productive in hotter summer months.



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THE RESULTS

When it came time for equipment delivery, the new H16XM12 got up and running for M CON faster than any lift truck had previously. Wajax maintained a regular presence to monitor progress and even made additions for further optimisation. For example, they added a dustpan to the truck to minimize the impact of airborne debris on performance and enable maximum ongoing productivity.

“My goal is to minimise the time our operators spend out of their lifts,” says Underhill. “This truck is able to handle the full range of material handling tasks at our facility, meaning we avoid time lost because they do not need to hop between different lift trucks for different tasks”.

With the Hyster® H16XM12, the M CON fleet is comprised of 15 total lift trucks and is able to handle the company’s accelerated production. The operation can load 25-30 trucks in an 8.5-hour day at peak production times.

“We definitely recommend Hyster and Wajax, both in terms of the lift trucks themselves and the comprehensive support that comes with them,” says Underhill. “They’re built with quality components and smart features to meet our needs. Ever since we got them on-site, they’ve been running smoothly as essential tools in our operation”.



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HYSTER EUROPE

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