

# ASSOCIATED *advantage*

PROVIDING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS WHICH OPTIMIZE STORAGE AND ORDER  
FULFILLMENT WITHIN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

## Assessing Your Workforce Strategy

The demand for additional distribution labor is increasing as companies react to increased activity levels resulting from the recovering economy, which is likely to increase exponentially in the next five years. The short supply of semi-skilled labor and a steady growth in U.S. labor rates has caused significant concern for senior executives in the logistics industry. The recent recession forced companies to scale back and now that the economy is improving, the decision to add labor back into the distribution center is a tricky one.

In an effort to control labor costs and react to fluctuating market conditions, many firms are employing staffing agencies or temporary labor as a means to increase their workforce. Other companies have followed the advice of management consultant Peter Drucker, "Do what you do best, outsource the rest."

So what alternative is best for your company? Should you do your own recruiting, use a staffing firm, or outsource all or part of your distribution business to a third-party logistics firm? Should you invest in workforce optimization programs as a way to improve productivity and utilization?

On one end of the spectrum, the use of staffing firms is a popular approach in which certain components of distribution operations are staffed. Companies can save time and money by utilizing a staffing firm that will incur the costs of recruiting, administration and benefits for new employees. On the other extreme, some companies choose to use third party logistics companies to handle their entire distribution operations for them.

With regard to these possible workforce strategies, there is a significant difference in the range of services available, from simple staffing solutions to full blown outsourcing agreements.

Within this wide spectrum of possible solutions, many companies are seeking a performance solution that is more flexible than the expensive, full outsourcing of a 3PL, but carries significantly more sophistication than a staffing firm model. This is where Contract Labor Service offerings, often called "in-sourcing", bring a different approach. Contract Labor Service providers can offer a high-performance workforce solution and implementation methodology built on top of their experience in engineered standards and process improvement, performance management consulting, productivity software as well as training and organizational development programs. These offerings are designed to provide most of the value of a sophisticated 3PL at the cost and risk profile of a staffing firm.

The Contract Labor Service approach provides the workforce in much the same manner as a staffing firm, but the workforce is "pre-enabled" with the best practices core process and technology experience of the managed services solution provider.

The managed service approach for Contracted Labor is also scalable from a single work cell to an entire facility. The implementation methodology can call for taking over an existing workforce and/or management team. This eliminates the large, risky and expensive hurdle of successful knowledge transfer in larger implementations. The result is that a Contract Labor Service will out-perform a staffing firm by 30% or more. Essentially, market demands have created a way to deliver the value of hiring a 3PL to run your operation at the expense of a staffing-only solution.

When faced with increased labor demands in a changing, competitive business environment, being able to intelligently deploy your workforce to maximize productivity is imperative to success. Essentially, market demands have created a way to deliver the value of hiring a 3PL to run your operation at the expense of a staffing-only solution.

Managed service Contract Labor offerings can provide a compelling financial and operational alternative to short-term staffing and to full 3PL outsourcing choices. Although you must assess your company's position on the performance matrix and determine the specific capabilities required by your operations, for many companies Contract Labor Services can bring significant intellectual capital and experience in developing a high performance workforce.

*This article was provided by TZA ([www.tza.com](http://www.tza.com))*



## Fire Prevention Month

### 7 Ways to Prevent a Workplace Fire

October is Fire Prevention Month. The history of National Fire Prevention Week has its roots in the Great Chicago Fire, which occurred on October 9, 1871.

Each year people die or are seriously injured as a result of fires at work. Besides loss of life, fire costs US business millions of dollars, from damage to property, loss of business, fines, compensation claims and insurance premiums.

Many fires can be avoided by taking fire precautions. If a fire does break out, the effects can be minimized by having effective controls and procedures in place.

Preventing fires is everyone's job. We all need to be alert to anything that could cause a fire, and take responsibility to report any problem areas so they can be corrected. Here are some reminders about fire prevention:

1. Practice good housekeeping. Clutter contributes to fires by providing fuel and by preventing access to exits and emergency equipment.
2. Place oily rags in a covered metal container. This waste must be properly disposed of on a regular basis.
3. Maintain machinery to prevent overheating and friction sparks.
4. Report electrical hazards. Many fires start in faulty wiring and malfunctioning electrical equipment. Never attempt electrical repairs unless you are qualified and authorized.
5. Maintain free access to all electrical control panels. Material or equipment stored in front of the panels would slow down the shutting down of power in an emergency situation.
6. Use and store chemicals safely. Read the label and the Material Safety Data Sheet to determine flammability and other fire hazards. Provide adequate ventilation when using and storing these substances.
7. Use all precautions to prevent ignition in potentially explosive atmospheres such as those containing flammable liquid vapors or fine particles. Use non-sparking tools, and control static electricity as required.

A workplace fire is an experience you don't want to have. In addition to injury and loss of life, the outbreak of a fire can lead to job losses. Rebuilding a workplace after a fire is very expensive and many companies can't afford to do it. Don't let a fire threaten you, your coworkers and your job. Work safely to prevent fires, and know what to do if one occurs.



## Workplace Stretching

### Tips to Ensure Your Workforce is as Productive and Safe as Possible

Implementing a stretching program at work may be a new concept to some employers, but many companies around the world have started these programs and have adopted them as part of their safety culture. Studies have shown that the risk of injury is less for employees that make stretching part of their daily routine.

An effective stretching program can be implemented at any workplace, regardless of work environment, and there are many benefits to both the employer and its workers. Stretching can help prepare and condition the body for the day's work and reduce the probability of employees suffering strains/sprains and other repetitive motion injuries. Other benefits to the employer include increased employee morale and motivation. It also demonstrates the employer's commitment to the health and safety of its workers and helps to identify workers with existing disabilities.

Employees also stand to benefit from workplace stretching and many employees enjoy the daily ritual of stretching with their coworkers. There are many other benefits to the employee such as reduced muscle fatigue and soreness, increased flexibility and range of motion, reduced stress levels, decreased joint stiffness and pain and increased ability to perform daily work tasks.

If you are thinking about implementing a stretching program at your facility, you should consult with an occupational health practitioner for guidance. By doing this, you can tailor your stretching program to commonly performed job duties and therefore enhance the effectiveness of your program. Stretching classes should always be conducted by someone who has been trained on proper stretching techniques. It is extremely important that employees learn to stretch correctly, as improper stretching can lead to an injury. An effective stretching program, when incorporated into an existing workplace safety program, will also benefit a company's bottom line.



# The Benefits of Lift Truck Attachments

## Create Efficiencies and Streamline Processes by Adding Cost Effective Attachments

Businesses could save a substantial amount of money and time if they have their lift trucks fitted with the correct attachments in their facilities. There are a number of attachments on the market today that offer safe and innovative solutions such as Side Shifters, Fork Positioners and Carton Clamps, that can help to significantly increase productivity levels and safety.

### Side Shifters:

This attachment allows you to shift the forks from side to side allowing for small adjustments to be made by the operator, enabling alignment with pallets without maneuvering the entire lift truck.

Using a Side Shifter can help you to reduce damage to pallets, product and rack and reduce wear and tear on tires, steering and drive units. Since the driver will be more efficient this attachment also helps to reduce pick times and the corresponding labor costs.



### Fork Positioners:

This attachment gives you the ability to position the forks from the driver's seat rather than getting off the truck and doing it manually.

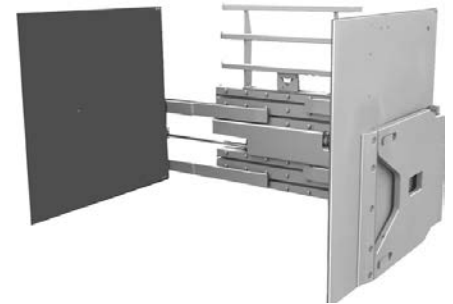
The effective implementation of a fork positioner will reduce damage because the operator can adjust the forks to the correct width for a pallet they are attempting to pick up, quickly and easily. It will also help to improve operator safety by reducing back strains and possible pinching of hands or fingers from manually moving the forks and will increase productivity by eliminating the need for an operator to get on and off of his lift multiple times to adjust his forks.



### Carton Clamps:

This attachment consists of large aluminum flexing plates that compress sideways into a square load. The aluminum plates have grooved, rubber-gripping pads that compress together like giant hands to secure the sides of box-like loads. They can pick up stacked palletless objects like square cans and plastic containers.

This attachment will prove to be particularly useful in loading large unpalletized items from one area to another. It will give you the ability to move these large bulky items quickly and efficiently.



Before adding the above attachments or any other piece of equipment to a lift truck, make sure the lift trucks is suited to handle the equipment. You will also want to make sure your forklift has an auxiliary function with a quick disconnect. This will allow one truck to be capable of performing multiple tasks by allowing you to change out attachments.

When it comes to lift truck attachments, there is a wide variety of equipment that can be added to just about any lift truck. Your local lift truck supplier should be able to recommend the attachment that will work best for your operation.

## In The News

### Associated Announces Their New Strategic Partnership With TZA

Associated, a leader in providing customers with integrated supply chain solutions, announced that it has entered into a strategic partnership with TZA, a technology, consulting, and engineering company specializing in the optimization of labor performance.

This partnership will enable Associated to leverage TZA's expertise and experience in implementing labor management solutions, which encompass people, processes and technology, to enhance the value Associated brings to its customer in increased workforce productivity, efficiency and operational cost reductions.

Michael Romano, President/CEO of Associated said, "As we look toward the future, we are committed to developing new and innovative methods to provide value to our customers. In today's environment, labor costs comprise the largest part of a warehouse's controllable operating expenses. The ongoing challenge many of our customers face is how to manage labor costs without jeopardizing customer service. Our partnership with TZA will allow us to provide our customers with market-leading technology and tools to help them leverage the true potential of their workforce."

# ABOUT ASSOCIATED:

Celebrating over 50 years of providing customers with innovative solutions that optimize storage and order fulfillment operations within their supply chain, Associated understands that handling materials in the supply chain should be more than material handling. By utilizing their unparalleled experience and industry best practices they are able to evaluate current methods and processes for storage, order fulfillment, labor and equipment utilization and recommend practical strategies to enhance its effectiveness and reduce overall cost.



Featuring leading edge engineering, fleet management and labor optimization services to complement industry leading sales, service, rentals and parts, Associated has been the recipient of multiple awards in recognition of being a premier organization in the material handling industry.



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### The conversation continues on Associated's blog!

This resource is updated frequently with informational articles posted by supply chain thought leaders. This blog was created to help professionals to gain access to information covering today's most relevant supply chain management challenges and technologies.

To visit our blog please go to [www.associated-solutions.com](http://www.associated-solutions.com) and click on "blog".

