

VELOCITY VIDEO CASE HISTORY

A DC VELOCITY SPEED CHALLENGE

Island time

Miami-based Viking Freight Consolidators finds Toyota forklifts to be the ideal workhorse for handling Caribbean imports and exports.

WHEN YOU LIVE ON A CARIBBEAN ISLAND, you learn to count on others to bring you the things you need every day. Food, clothing, electronics – it all has to be imported. That is where third-party logistics companies like Viking Freight Consolidators make life easier. Miami-based Viking consolidates shipments bound for the islands and other tropical ports of call. The company has been around for 35 years, and for most of that time, it has used Toyota forklifts exclusively.

"We use them to receive freight here for offloading 53-foot trucks, flat racks, and parcel shipments," explains Bryan Valdes, Viking's president and owner. "We also use the forklifts to store the freight throughout the warehouse in racks, and then we use the forklifts again to load containers."

A wide range of products regularly pass through the Miami facility. In one day, for instance, island-bound items might include television sets, barrels of cleaners, dog food, refrigerators, swimming pool sand, tires, rugs, and toilet paper. One forklift has a clamp attachment to handle drums. Another is equipped with fork extenders to move freight that is larger than the standard-sized pallet.

The Toyota forklifts handle 99 percent of all freight in the building. The products are staged in pallet racks or floor locations according to their destinations: Aruba, Curacao, Trinidad, Bonaire, and the Dominican Republic, as well as points in Central America and South America. Exports from those nations are also received, processed, and shipped at the facility.

ALL CLEAR AHEAD

With their three-stage see-through masts, the 5,000-pound capacity Core IC Cushion Toyota counterbalanced forklifts are the ideal trucks for moving freight in the 20,800-square-foot Miami facility. "The visibility is great to see, to pull up the pallets, and to take them down. We don't have any issues," says J.C. Martinez, office

and warehouse manager. He adds that the forklifts are also very comfortable for drivers putting in a full shift on their units. "They're definitely comfortable. And I'm a big guy, so you know part of my thing is comfort, and I really enjoy driving the Toyota forklifts." He adds that the controls are also within easy reach: "Everything is right there and it's very easy to maneuver."

Valdes grew up in the family business and has been operating forklifts himself since he was a teenager. Occasionally during crunch times, he has been known to leave the office to pitch in as a forklift operator.

"I find that driving them is really simple for the guy who doesn't use them every day," he says. "They are easy to move around in a safe manner. And that's important because sometimes we will have temporary workers and they need to have a machine that's relatively easy to operate."

SECOND LIFE

Valdes says that Viking runs its LP-powered Core IC Cushion Toyota forklifts hard for about five years in Miami, then sends the vehicles to

one of the company's warehouses on the destination islands. "We know that while we enjoyed the first five years of a brand-new truck, they will continue to use them for anywhere from seven to 10 more years down there. We find that we get a good 15 years out of them," he says. Valdes adds that while the trucks are worked hard in Miami, the conditions they endure on the islands with heat and dust are much rougher.

It is because of that dependability that Viking chose Toyota forklifts in the first place. "We exclusively use Toyotas primarily for the reliability," explains Valdes. "We are a small business, and they are our most important asset of the day. Our business out here in the warehouse would not function without a reliable forklift. So we work with Toyota because we know that when we need the trucks, they are going to turn on, they are going to work. It is as simple as that."



To see a video of Toyota forklifts in action at Viking, go to dcvtv.com and click on Channel Two to see the Velocity Video.

www.toyotaforklift.com