



A Printer's Dream: Equipment that makes Pallet Loading and Unloading Easier

Features and Benefits

The unit progressively and automatically rises or lowers as weight is removed or added, using the stored energy of load density calibrated springs

Pallet Level Loaders are maintenance-free, with no motors, no hydraulic, and no pneumatic systems that need attention

Industry Group: Ergonomic Assist Systems and Equipment (EASE)



This is about a book publisher in St. Paul, Minnesota that specializes in college text books and law books. At the company's production and warehouse facility, pallet loads of books used to travel on roller conveyors to workstations. Their employees would remove the volumes of books and pack them for warehousing and eventual shipment.

The Problem:

Thanks to the company's practice of regularly asking employees about on-the-job problems or suggestions for improving work conditions, the warehouse supervisor learned that employees found constant bending and lifting involved in pallet unloading very tiring.

One employee noted that it would be helpful if equipment were installed that automatically kept the top of the pallet loads at constant, waist-high levels for easy unloading. The equipment also could rotate to keep books within easy reach to eliminate back extension.

"We looked at hydraulic lift tables first, but they involved electrical hookups. This was not a problem, but lift tables also lacked the rotation feature our employees were looking for. "By chance, we saw an advertisement for a work positioner. It seemed to have the features we were after and a

representative demonstrated it for our evaluation. We now have seven in place and plan on ordering more.”

The Solution:

In operation the work positioner requires no power. The unit progressively rises or lowers as weight is removed or added, using the stored energy of load-calibrated, heavy-duty springs to keep the top layer of books at the most convenient loading or unloading height. A low-friction, ball bearing-supported turntable revolves to make all parts of a pallet load easily accessible without reaching and stretching to get at far-side items.

These units have reportedly can cut the work required for loading and unloading pallets by as much as 75% and with possible time saving of more than 40%. The units are maintenance-free, with no motors, no hydraulic and no pneumatic systems that need attention. A linkage design is said to maintain a level pallet surface throughout the travel range. “We’ve had our units for about eight months. Our employees are very pleased with them. They’ve met all of our expectations.”

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