

Linde continues to impress at Kimberly-Clark

Client: Kimberly-Clark
Location: Brisbane, Queensland
Application: Warehousing/Distribution
Equipment: H16 1.6t Forklifts



Kleenex, Huggies, Wondersoft and Snugglers are some of the biggest consumer brands in Australia. And they're all part of the growing stable of products that are manufactured by Kimberly-Clark Australia.

Kimberly-Clark is one of the world's leading suppliers of Family Care, Health Care and Personal Care products made from natural and synthetic fibres. Established in 1872 in Wisconsin, USA, it has sales in excess of US\$15 billion, manufacturing operations in 35 countries and its products are sold in more than 150 countries worldwide.



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Mark Rogers – Distribution Superintendent, Kimberly-Clark Queensland



Above: Kimberly-Clark's Queensland Distribution Superintendent, Mark Rogers.

Its Australian origins go back to 1926 when an agent, W.A Cathro began importing Kotex napkins from the USA. In the 1930s the company began importing what was to become one of the world's most famous brands – Kleenex tissues. As the business grew the name was changed to Kimberly-Clark Australia in 1956, while Kimberly-Clark New Zealand commenced operations in 1991.

Today, the Australian and New Zealand operations have annual sales exceeding \$700m, employ total assets of \$600m and have a team of over 1800 people who operate from 21 corporate, sales, distribution and manufacturing sites.

One of the most progressive sites in this structure is the Queensland Distribution Centre in Brisbane. Kimberly-Clark's full product offering, which is over 1800 SKUs, is distributed to all of Queensland and down to Coffs Harbour from this 10,000 square metre warehouse. 25 warehouse staff and 11 forklifts are responsible for a throughput of 1.1 million cases per month.

The entire forklift fleet is about to be upgraded and, for the third leasing period in the past 10 years, it will be an all-Linde fleet again. The fleet will consist of 10 Linde H18, 1.8t forklifts and one Linde H20, 2t gas forklifts.

According to Queensland Distribution Superintendent, Mark Rogers, the Lindes offer far too many benefits for him to risk changing to another brand.



"For starters, we are a company that prides itself on workplace safety and operational excellence and that is against global benchmarks. We cannot risk our workers or our reputation on inferior equipment. We could source cheaper forklifts but Kimberly-Clark is about quality, from its own products through to the equipment that gets our products to the market. Linde is recognized as the world's premium forklift so it is an ideal fit with our culture.

"Prior to Linde, we used to have a mix of the Japanese models. I have operated forklifts in the past and being 6'2" I found these forklifts uncomfortable. The European manufactured products, such as Linde, are obviously made for a population that is more akin to Australians. Our operators struggled for a few days with the Linde hydrostatic controls when we first changed to Lindes nine years ago, but once they got used to it, they'd often comment that they never wanted to operate another brand again," explains Mark.

"In addition to being more spacious and comfortable, they offer the operator excellent visibility which has a great impact on productivity and safety. The other key safety feature on the Lindes is the ability to restrict the speed.

"Though we are sourcing a premium product, I believe we are definitely well ahead in terms of running costs, which really can be the major issue with overall fleet costs. Everything Linde promised nine years ago with regard to tyre savings has proven to be true, even understated.

Right: Kimberly-Clark's forklift operators are impressed with the Linde's spacious operator compartment and excellent visibility.

“My drivers are happy and safe and the Lindes just keep doing their job.”

Mark Rogers – Distribution Superintendent, Kimberly-Clark Queensland



“With our previous models, we were changing the drive tyres every 6 months and the steer tyres every 12 months. On our Linde fleet that we are just about to renew, we have just changed our first set of tyres after nearly five years.

“We put this amazing performance down to the non-skid characteristics of the hydrostatic drive. If the operators can’t skid to a stop or when they change direction, the rubber is going to remain on the tyre and not end up on the warehouse floor,” says Mark.

There's no conventional brake on a Linde Forklift. The truck is braked automatically by the hydrostatic transmission as soon as the operator eases up on the driving pedal. Kinetic energy of the truck's motion is smoothly absorbed by the hydraulic fluid. The operator is able to select the opposite direction of travel from full speed in complete safety and without imposing any stresses on the transmission because a progressive, totally controlled and smooth hydrostatic deceleration automatically occurs.

“The other major benefit for Kimberly-Clark with regards to Linde is their service. We have had the same service technician, Roman Winter, looking after our fleet for nine years. He proactively visits our premises twice a week and just handles every aspect of our fleet. I never have to worry or even think about forklifts at all. My drivers are happy and safe and the Lindes just keep doing their job,” says Mark.

Linde manufactures an extensive range of forklifts with capacities from 1.2 to 52 tonnes. The company has a national factory-owned customer support network and operates one of the largest rental fleets in the country.

For further information contact

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