

People Prime Consideration in Dock Equipment Selection

Stryker depends upon the people they hire and it doesn't matter if the position is the director of engineering or someone in production. That is the human resource orientation for this global leader in medical technology.

When Stryker planned for a new manufacturing facility adjacent to their current building in Flower Mound, TX the management team thought carefully how to outfit their loading dock. Its workers were top of mind and the reason why Stryker chose to go with a combination of the LoadHog® modular dock bridge and SERCO® dock equipment.

For the success of their business, Stryker looks for people who exercise initiative at all levels so that problems are prevented before the products work their way through their system and have to be rejected in quality assurance. They want to retain those people on their team. Part of ensuring employee retention is providing a comfortable and safe working environment.

The Flower Mound facility designs and manufactures operating room equipment that makes it possible for patients to receive the best in health care by helping medical staff maintain a safe and efficient environment. Stryker also offers telemedicine systems that provide vital medical data, keep surgeons connected to other patients in recovery and provide access to medical information and/or resources around the world throughout the course of surgery.

While the action during surgery is focused around the operating table, surgeons and their team often have to move around and work from a variety of angles. If a status screen is not positioned properly it may be difficult to view. Stryker offers a positioning arm that can hold their equipment and be manipulated to give those who need it an optimal view from virtually any angle.

These arms weigh 500 lbs. each and require a good deal of customization – no two are alike. Much of the complexity lies in the various electrical and gas hookups leading up to the arm. While they traditionally outsourced the production of these arms, Stryker recently decided to manufacture them in-house and thus the need for this new facility.

In considering the new plant, among the questions they asked themselves was how to get the best safety and loading dock equipment to carefully handle these precise yet heavy pieces of equipment. That's why the LoadHog was a strong fit for them.

LoadHog is a modular dock bridge that spans the gap between the warehouse dock and the trailer, offering similar capability of mechanical dock levelers, but without the need for a concrete pit.

Stryker management worked with **Chris Alkier with Southern Dock Products**, their local dock equipment supplier, to outfit the five dock doorways at the new plant.

According to **Alkier**, "for this project, Stryker wanted a clean

dock image to make a good impression for customers and they wanted to avoid the use of dock plates."

"That is why we recommended the LoadHog dock bridge, especially as we knew that within a few years Stryker would be moving to a new location."

They have a requirement for Sea Vans to drop off parts at their dock. Typically once a van docks it takes several hours to unload. Stryker has found other loading dock equipment difficult to use because of the way their loads arrive. The shipping containers are fully loaded with surgical tables. Each unit weighs 600 to 800 lbs and are double-stacked. The dock crew cannot safely use a forklift on a standard dock plate to get the first table off because it is right at the edge of the trailer.

LoadHog allows the user to break the lip at a 90° angle and lower it between the trailer bed and dock wall, referred to as an "end-load". This puts the forklift in a better position to get that first load off. Then without moving the truck out the user can raise the LoadHog platform, flip the lip back up and bring the LoadHog back down into standard loading position very easily.

LoadHog's unique activation system is designed with a more ergonomic approach than dock plates, mechanical levelers and Edge-of-Dock's, which require bending and/or pulling of chains to activate. Once the trailer is in position against the dock bumpers, the dockworker simply steps on the release pedal and gently pushes forward on the deck and it slowly, softly lowers into place.

LoadHog only requires approximately 38 pounds of force to lift and store. The operating handle pivots up to meet the dockworker, requiring no bending and making it easy to raise the deck.

Mechanical pit-style levelers can also be difficult to walk down into position if they are not constantly maintained. LoadHog's unique variable bias design does not require an operator to walk it down into position. LoadHog is also much easier to position for end-load operations. Plus the LoadHog doesn't need the maintenance devoted to a mechanical dock leveler.

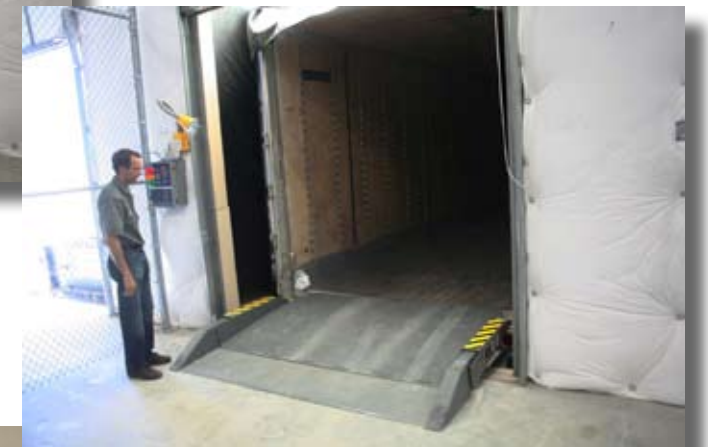
Because Stryker will be moving into a new facility in 2010 the company management also appreciates LoadHog's modular design. When they are ready to move, the four anchor bolts that hold each LoadHog can be removed and the units transported to the new site. Stryker does not have the cost of cutting a pit into the concrete floor as required for a mechanical leveler.

The 30,000 sq ft facility has two receiving doors and three shipping doors along a single wall and each door is equipped with a LoadHog. This is a lean operation and management is using 5s to make all steps in the process more efficient.

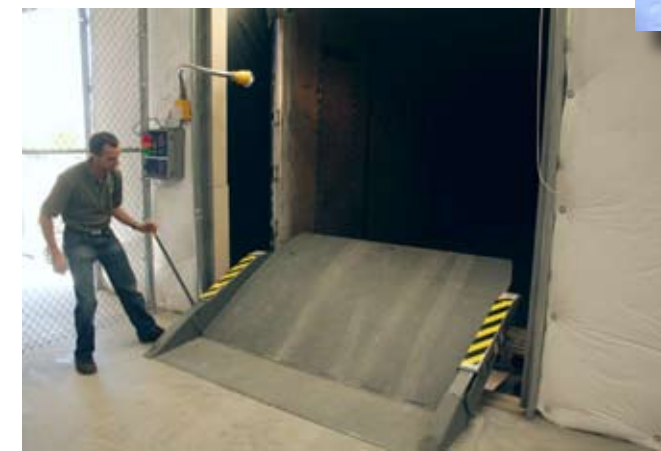
Stryker needs the three outgoing freight doors as they generally ship most of their orders at certain times of the day. These orders will be staged on the dock and each order can contain as many



◀ **Lower** – A release of the lever on the LoadHog dock bridge enables it to softly lower in place to the truck trailer bed, enabling shipment of positioning arms at the Stryker manufacturing plant.



▲ **Load out** – The LoadHog dock bridge affords the Stryker dock the capability to handle any load that arrives or ships out from their dock. When the unit is not engaged, it stores vertically, not taking up the room of a dock plate and protecting the dock door from forklift damage.



◀ **Raise** – Just 38 lbs of force is all it takes to raise the LoadHog dock bridge into place, creating little ergonomic strain on the dock workers at Stryker.

as 160 of these equipment systems, yet only 40 units can fit in one 53 ft trailer. So space gets tight when product is being shipped out. In the planning process Recognizing the problems of using dock plates, Stryker management felt that despite the low purchase cost they knew that the 6' x 6' plates would get in the way as product is being staged on the dock.

The LoadHog was the perfect solution because it stores vertically and has a very low profile, providing ample room for staged product.

On the outside, Stryker management wanted to bolster protection for the forklift drivers by installing PitBull® Vehicle Restraints. They strongly felt rubber wheel chocks did not offer the safety of powered restraints. Air ride suspensions on their trucks are very common now and they could have a bad forklift accident if that truck rolls away.

The problem is the truck drivers are not with Stryker. The drivers typically want to get in and out rapidly and very rarely does a driver break out the chocks and put them under the wheels.

With the PitBull his employees' safety is secured. When the truck backs up to the PitBull an optional photo sensor mounted above the door detects the trailer's presence and activates the restraint automatically which engages the trailer's rear impact guard and firmly holds on during loading/unloading. When the truck is ready to go, the dockworker pushes a button inside on the dock, the PitBull releases cleanly and the truck is on its way.

Stryker management decided to make the extra investment in vehicle restraints knowing that a fatal accident could occur if a forklift takes a plunge off of the dock.

The dock shelters also play a role in creating a positive employee environment. The Ultra Dock Shelter® combines the flexibility of a seal and the full vehicle access of a shelter, creating a tight seal between the building wall and the back of the vehicle. It effectively keeps the outside elements, which in Texas includes heat, rain and sometimes sleet and snow, out of the dock area for energy savings and added employee comfort. In Flower Mound air conditioning must be provided by code for commercial/ industrial buildings, but if the doorway cannot be completely sealed that investment is wasted and the employees don't benefit from a cooler dock.

All of this attention on the dock is part of Stryker's focus on employee morale. Management here believes it is a big factor in productivity and the company's success.

It is only fitting that a company, which makes its living keeping people healthy, would do the same in the way it sets up its docks.

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