

## PUT IT ON A SLIPSHEET!

*"There is an opportunity to save money in palletless handling." Unitizing and slipsheeting are two ideas.*

*By David K. Spencer*

To understand the present and future trends in unit load handling, a brief review of it is in order. The greatest growth in unit load handling occurred following World War II. It was determined then that a load could be handled more economically by unitizing it rather than hand stacking and hand unstacking.

Several methods of handling unitized loads were originally considered. Some of these included unitizing on a pallet or palletless with clamp or slipsheet. The unitized load on a wooden pallet was adopted as the most popular system initially because the wood pallet was low in cost, availability of wood was adequate, and it was easy to teach an operator to handle the product on the wooden pallet. The necessary equipment to handle the product on the wooden pallet was also lower in cost. A pallet exchange system was established under the direction of the GMA (Grocery Manufacturers Association) to govern the exchange

of pallets between shipper and receiver. It was called the Grocery Pallet Council (GPC).

In theory, the exchange system will work. In practice, it failed and in January 1979, the GPC was disbanded. The reason – pallets returned were inferior to those shipped. Pallets had increased in cost from \$3.00 to \$8.00. Pallets were not returned in some cases, the pallet now consumes 50 percent of hardwood produced in the USA and 15 percent of total wood production. Pallet maintenance was costly, loss of cube and weight of the pallet and sanitation became a problem due to rodent leavings in the pallets which were stored outside. Because of these reasons, palletless handling systems are being reevaluated.

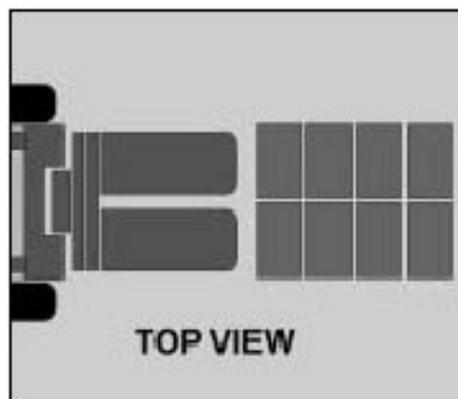
### THE CLAMP

The clamp is one alternative that has been adopted by manufacturers and distributors for handling loads which lend themselves to clamp operations. Clamps work well with uniform loads that have no voids, have a carton height greater than 8 inches and a shipping container

*This article is adapted from a presentation made at a meeting of the Packaging Institute.*

with sufficient strength to protect the commodities. The clamp was primarily used in the warehouse for storage although it can be used to floor load product in railcars and truck trailers. Most clamp loads are transferred to pallets or slipsheets for shipment. It has steadily grown in popularity. Today, 80-90 percent of all paper rolls are handled by clamps, a high percentage of cartoned paper products, appliance, and some food products are also clamp handled.

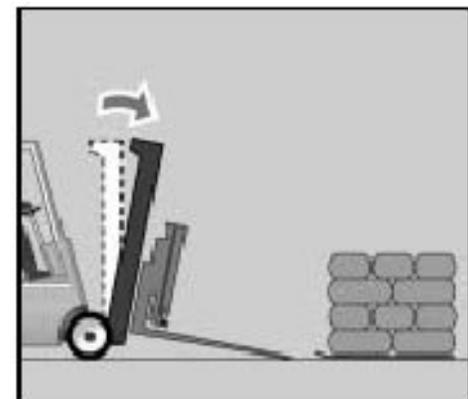
The slipsheet palletless unitized load system was also evaluated by many companies and was adopted initially by companies primarily to ship and receive their product at their own manufacturing and distribution centers. The slipsheet eliminated the cost of the pallet exchange systems, weighed less, and utilized space more efficiently. Companies like Hunt Wesson adopted carton clamps to warehouse their products at the processing plants on the West Coast and transfer their loads by clamp to slipsheets for shipment to Midwest and East Coast markets. They were received at the company owned-and-operated distribution centers and transferred back to pallets initially. About six years ago, they eliminated transferring the loads back to pallets for storage and began warehousing directly on slipsheets. Other



1. Line up the platens squarely with the load.

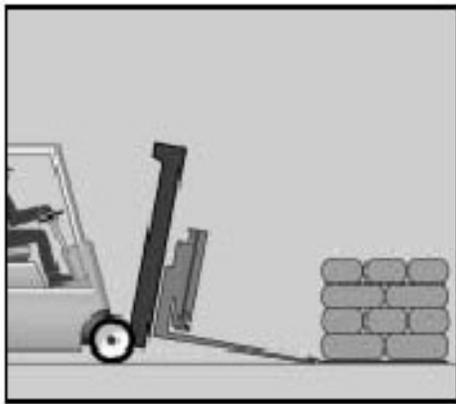


2. Raise the platens about three inches above the floor



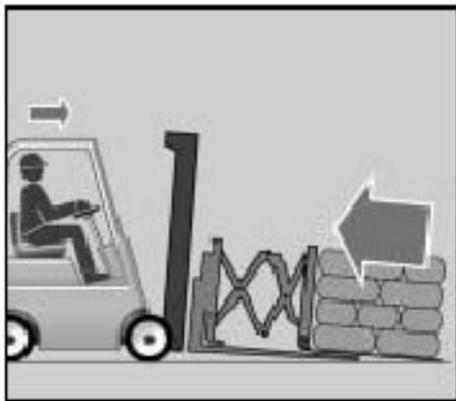
3. Tilt the mast forward until the tips of the platens touch the floor.

# Unitizing & Slipsheeting

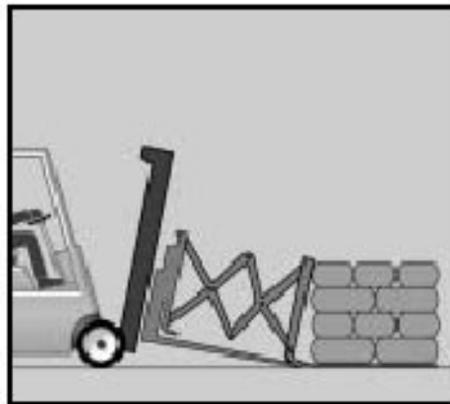


4. Drive the truck forward until the platen tips are under the slipsheet lip.

companies ship and warehouse their products similarly, including such companies as Libby's, Cal-Pak, Carnation, Seagrams to name a few. The latest major company to make the switch is General Foods. Other major processors are now evaluating this system or have made the commitment to make the conversion. Examples of these companies include standard Brands and Lever Brothers. Slipsheets have been received at major grocery chain warehouses on railcar siding for a number of years. Few truck shipments have been made because it is the common practice for the truck driver to unload his own vehicle and the cost for unloading the truck trailer is included in negotiated tariff rate.



7. Move forward slowly as the load is being pulled onto the platens.

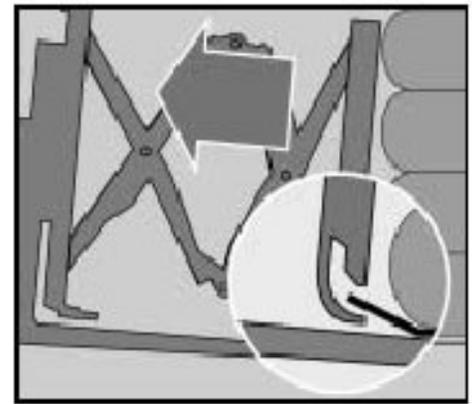


5. Extend the pusher plate so that the slipsheet lip fits into the gripper channel opening

Times are changing. One major receiver, Jewel in Chicago, is requesting suppliers to ship to them on slipsheets because they want to eliminate the problems associated with the exchange pallet on their loading docks. Truck shipments are common between producer and their distribution center where the distribution center is unloading the truck trailer rather than the truck driver. Most major grocery receivers have not actively requested unitized slipsheet loads across their docks and some have discouraged these shipments because they did not feel they will benefit from this system. Some of their reasons include:



8. As the weight of the load is transferred to the platens, they will deflect downward slightly. Raise the carriage about one inch to prevent the platen from digging into the floor. Slowly tilt the mast to a vertical position as you scoop up the load.



6. Retract the pusher plate. The gripper bar will automatically clamp the slipsheet lip.

- added cost of equipment to handle slipsheet
- driver training required
- additional time to transfer loads back to pallets
- poor condition of the slipsheet loads sometimes requires more than one person to unload the load

These problems can be overcome at the shipper, receiver and equipment suppliers work together. Examples of the benefits from this cooperation include:

## Lower cost of equipment

- Crown outrigger truck with sideshift push/pull having a capacity of 3,000 pounds lifts up to 60 inches. Cost \$15,000.



9. Tilt the mast back, and raise the load three-to-four inches above the floor. You are now ready to transport the load.

- Yale ESC modified electric counterbalance truck with sideshift push/pull, lifts 2,500 pounds up to 60 inches and 2,100 pounds to 130 inches and can carry pallets. Cost: \$21,000.
- Clark Walkie with push/pull having a capacity of 3,000 pounds. Cost: \$15,000.
- New Walkie Push/Pull scheduled for release from Cascade September 1979. Cost: \$11,000 approximately with OEM Walkie. Capacity 3,500 pounds.
- Light-weight push/pull scheduled for release from Cascade August 1979 for counterbalanced truck and outriggers, 3,000 pound capacity, 500 pounds lighter than the present unit and 1 1/2 inches less lost load to increase truck capacity.

### *Slipsheet Standards Committee*

- ANSI (American National Standards Institute) form of adhoc committee members of companies and personnel interested in establishing slipsheet standards.
- API (American Paper Institute) composed of slipsheet manufacturers representatives to establish volunteer slipsheet standards and a movie on the proper method of handling slipsheet standards.

Regional seminars are being presented throughout the nation to educate users and to assist them. McDonald's has recently staged coast-to-coast visits with these seminars. In addition the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, New

York Chamber of Commerce as well as a major slipsheet manufacturer have conducted seminars. Cascade has participated in these seminars to train the key representatives of the users of slipsheets, the local lift truck dealer salesmen and slipsheet salesmen in the proper techniques of material handling with slipsheets. Slipsheets, properly used, will benefit your system and save money in materials handling. Improperly used, they create frustration and can reduce economical justification.

Cascade has assembled a manual that reviews the benefits of slipsheet handling, proper driver techniques, how to assemble a load, speeches and periodicals on the subject, slipsheet suppliers, types of slipsheets, outline for justifying economically, the slipsheet handling system and on-the-job reports. One of these can be furnished to you.

In summary, the slipsheet system can be used by itself or in conjunction with the wooden pallet. You must make the decision. There is an opportunity to save money in palletless handling of your products by using slipsheets. The decision is yours.

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