

## **Q&A with Joe Manone, Vice President of Rite-Hite**

**Q.** How does Rite-Vu fit into this philosophy?



*Rite-Hite Corporation, headquartered in Milwaukee, WI, is a world-wide leader in the development, manufacture, and sale of loading dock safety systems and industrial door solutions.*

*Rite-Hite's complete product line includes hydraulic, mechanical and air-powered dock levelers, vehicle restraints, truck levelers, Frommelt dock seals and shelters, high speed doors, cooler/freezer doors, traffic/impact doors, safety barrier systems, industrial ceiling fans and a complete line of aftermarket parts, accessories, and service.*

*Joe Manone is the Vice President of Rite-Hite Corporation.*

**Q.** What is your approach to improving manufacturing at Rite-Hite?

**A.** Our philosophy at Rite-Hite over the past 35 years has been product development and innovation with compelling new products that add value and solve problems for customers. That is how all of our businesses are set up. We're constantly looking for new ways to solve problems at the loading dock, as well as other areas throughout plant and warehouse facilities.

**Q.** How does Rite-Vu fit into this philosophy?

**A.** The technology of putting lights at the dock has always been there, but the problems we're trying to solve are specifically related to clear communication with the forklift driver, and understanding if he's safe or unsafe to unload a trailer. That's where Rite-Vu came into play. Rite-Vu is actually a combination of three different

products that are all separate components of the system:

- **Corner-Vu**— Typically, when companies use Dok-Loks or vehicle restraints, the small red and green lights on the control box are often out of the forklift driver's line-of-sight and not easily seen when they're looking through the mast, especially with a load. So we wanted to make sure that every time the forklift driver entered the trailer, he can very easily see red or green lights.
- **Leveler-Vu**— When a forklift driver is in a trailer, there is no way for him to see the red or green lights located next to the interior door. These lights, which are mounted at the rear of the leveler, are designed so the forklift driver can see the lights as he backs out.
- **Pedestrian-Vu**— When a forklift is backing out of a trailer, the driver has a limited view. So we illuminate the lights when there's a forklift in the trailer, which tells anyone on the dock to proceed with caution.

**Q.** Did you employ any special technology in the Rite-Vu system?

**A.** From an innovation standpoint, we use a concept called virtual filament technology, using a very small LED to illuminate an acrylic rod with a etches in it. If you move off center and look at it from an angle, like 45 degrees, you see just a glow. That's important because if you have several loading docks, you don't want a lot of light pollution. When communication is most important—head on—it's extremely bright.

**Q.** *What kind of feedback have you gotten from your customers on the Rite-Vu product?*

**A.** It's been exciting. We officially introduced it in May, but have had different versions of it in our showrooms in Milwaukee for the past 12 months or so. When people see the Corner-Vu they say, "Oh, that makes sense." But we need to explain Leveler-Vu and why it's important to communicate to forklift drivers when they're in the trailer. The response has been very good, and we're excited to move forward.

**Q.** What do you think was the biggest draw for voters?

**A.** In my opinion, Rite-Hite has had a lot of great products. But Rite-Vu is a very visual product. When people see the picture of Rite-Vu, it's intuitive and easy to see what it does. Plus, Rite-Vu addresses a safety issue that many companies have encountered and feel they need to address. It's the main reason why we developed the system.

**Q.** How do you bring your design, product, and management teams together in order to function in a collaborative fashion? Do you have a sizeable design team in-house?

**A.** We do. The way we drive our business is through product development, so the past 35 years we've invested heavily in it. And our product development is 95 percent internal. We have a number of different engineering teams working on

## **Q&A with Joe Manone, Vice President of Rite-Hite**

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

---

different products for different parts of the loading dock.

Marketing drives engineering. We listen to our customers, get a lot of feedback, and sit down with our engineering teams and say, “Here are the problems we’re trying to solve. What are some ways to look at it?”

**Q.** Why would you encourage potential customers to look at this as an investment, versus simply a purchase?

**A.** All the products we manufacture have some type of payback. We need to look at the application and find out what makes sense for the customer. Sometimes it’s easier because it can lead to increased productivity gains. But when you talk about safety, those are soft numbers, and they’re more difficult to justify at the higher levels in the organization.

But the Rite-Vu products aren’t hundreds of thousands of dollars—they’re hundreds of dollars. The real value comes into play when the customers see it, and they know they’ve had these accidents. Those are pretty quick visuals that pop into people’s minds because they’ve all been in that situation before and they know how a relatively minor investment in safety up front can save a lot of money in the long run

**Q.** Anything you can tell us about what Rite-Hite has coming down the road?

**A.** We do have the funnel filled with a number of different products, not only Rite-Vu related, but also relating to other areas of the loading dock and back in the plant. Every year, each one of our operating companies will be coming out with at least one, and probably multiple products. It’s been that way for the past 35 years—this is the way Rite Hite does business. Our pipeline is filled, and we’re going all the way out to 2015 as far as what products we have slated.

**Source URL (retrieved on 07/23/2014 - 9:21am):**

<http://www.impomag.com/articles/2009/09/q-joe-manone-vice-president-rite-hite>