



## Adding Value with Air Casters

Materials Handling | Supply Chain by John Massenberg, president and CEO at AeroGo, 07/11/2019

All companies look to differentiate their product in the marketplace. In the manufacturing sector, one simple way to do this is to add value to existing equipment with the addition of an embedded air bearing system.

While the phrase, 'why recreate the wheel,' is catchy, air casters are proof positive that sometimes the wheel *should* be reinvented. While wheels can certainly help move and manoeuvre heavy equipment, air casters simply do it better, easier, safer and cheaper. In fact, it's one of the greatest innovations in manufacturing that most people don't know about.

### Why Add Air Casters?

An embedded air caster system will give your customer the ability to move heavy equipment with ease, allowing them to adapt to ever changing manufacturing configurations. The system uses compressed air to lift and float heavy machines and tooling, even allowing them to be turned 360 degrees within their own footprint. The technology can be likened to a puck floating on an air hockey table. Air caster systems can be embedded in equipment used in a variety of industries including aerospace, manufacturing, vehicle assembly, oil and gas and more.



Embedded air bearing systems are seamless to integrate into existing equipment and work with wheeled casters, footers, solid bases, stations and more. Using downloadable models means minimal design effort and maximum revenue and usability. Integrating air casters is still relatively new, meaning you could be first to market in your industry with the technology, giving your company a huge differentiating factor compared with other OEM manufactures. Air casters are great additions to machine tools, work stands, tooling and processing equipment and lines. Using air casters, only one pound of force is needed to move 1,000 pounds, making it ten times better than using wheels or rollers.

Some manufacturers believe that air casters are loud, need tremendous air pressure, will create dust or need extensive training to use. All of these things are completely false.

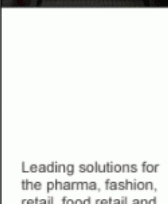
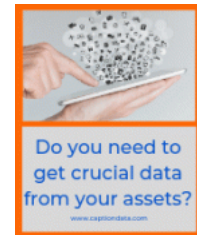
### How Air Casters are Integrated

An air caster system is simple to seamlessly integrate into the design of your equipment with downloadable models. It is permanently mounted into the machine, tool or structure and is sized to fit standard tooling and equipment feet or replaces wheeled casters. The system features air bearing modules and an integrated control console to adjust air levels for offset loads.

### Customer Benefits

As an OEM manufacturer with an air caster system embedded in its equipment, you enjoy a competitive advantage because the system gives your customer a plethora of benefits.

The most obvious benefit is cost savings, which come in multiple ways. The system eliminates the need for rigging and set up and equipment. With workstations able to be repositioned in a matter of minutes, labour time is greatly reduced. Manufacturers can flex and optimise operations as needed. Air bearings can also eliminate the need for fork trucks and overhead cranes, creating the potential for massive cost savings as a crane that can handle up to 100 tons can cost \$400,000 for purchase and installation, and a 200-ton capacity overhead crane will





run about \$1 million.

Using air casters reduces wear and tear on equipment, thereby reducing maintenance costs. Because equipment is easier to manoeuvre with air casters there is reduced floor damage when anything is moved.

Training to use the system is relatively simple and quick. More importantly than lower training costs, are the reduced accident rate in plants that use air casters instead of cranes and forklifts. Not only does this reduce workers comp complaints and potential lawsuits, it maintains productivity levels.

With so many benefits for your customers, integrating an embedded air caster solution into your equipment is a unique value-add that allows OEM manufacturers a distinct way to differentiate from the competition and increase market share and revenue.

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