

New folder/gluer meets growing demand for RRP

Investment in a new Bobst Supafold gluer is set to double our gluing capacity. This move, prompted by the continuing industry trend towards Retail Ready Packaging (RRP), will enable us to keep pace with rising demand.

The Supafold has been installed alongside our existing Bobst Visionfold gluer at our factory in Hednesford, Staffordshire. It is equipped with a revolutionary squaring section which enables cases to be glued to a high quality level whilst maintaining increased output.

We have a proactive approach to packaging design and have been able to help many of our customers make the transition to RRP and exploit its advantages. The use of RRP can help our customers address their green obligations and reduce the handling and labour costs both for them and for their customers, the retailers.

However, to ensure packaging performs correctly on the filling line and looks good on-shelf you need accurate die-cutting and highly controlled folding and gluing. To keep costs down, you also need to do all this at very high speed.

Our existing Bobst Visionfold had already proved it could deliver – the quality of gluing from the new Supafold is exceptional. This machine will double our capacity to meet increasing customer demand.

A Monster in the Factory!

Demolition experts were called in recently at our factory in Hednesford!

The problem was the arrival of our new Enko large-format die-cutter. The machine weighs 30 tonnes – roughly the same as five African elephants. It measures 5.75m x 4.89m and is 2.5m high – covering about the same area as half a squash court.

We had to knock down two walls to get it in!

The new machine cuts printed sheets of 1800mm x 2200mm, enabling us to produce even the largest display pallets out of two pieces instead of four. This offers significant cost benefits, in particular for manufacturers of household products, breakfast cereals, food and beverages and other bulky products, where full-size pallet displays are used for in-store promotions.

The trend with retailers is moving increasingly towards pre-filled displays.

This reduces their costs and ensures 100% implementation in-store. So display pallets now need to be more robust to withstand the rigours of the supply chain. But this can eat into a promotional budget. Our new die-cutter offers significant potential for reducing the cost of such displays.

With customers including Asda, Black and Decker, Kellogg's and Tesco, our display pallet business goes from strength to strength. Our strategic alliance with THIMM Display in Germany now gives our customers the opportunity to buy displays for delivery anywhere in Europe from a centralised purchasing base, thus increasing the scope for economies of scale. And we have opened a new storage and co-packing facility.

Read more about our alliance with [THIMM Display](#).

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Design Focus

In this column, we introduce some of the innovative ideas which our in-house graphic and structural designers have developed to solve specific problems for our customers.

The Complete Packaging Solution A Case Study for Gardman Ltd – Ernest Charles Bird Tables

The Problem

Gardman was launching a new range of high-end bird tables under the Ernest Charles brand and required packaging for four products. The company had a number of special requirements:

- Timescale – five weeks from design brief to delivery.
- The design had to tie in with the Ernest Charles brand and existing products in the range. A natural look was requested, but the packaging had to be full-colour with a premium look and feel.
- Special features: carry handles, ventilation holes, discreet fixings.
- The products were heavy and an awkward shape, so the packaging needed to be robust but still had to look good on display and reflect the products' top quality feel.

The Solution

We have innovative in-house experts in both graphic design and structural packaging design, as well as state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, to handle the whole project from concept to delivery. In particular, we suggested:

- Right-sizing of corrugated packaging
- Eye-catching design on natural background
- Litho laminated corrugated packaging
- Cut out hand-holes doubling up as ventilation outlets
- Locking tabs on the cartons for hidden fixing and to preserve the integrity of the packaging on opening

The Benefits

- Because we provide a complete end-to-end service, we were able to control all stages of the project to meet the demanding timescales.
- By clever structural design, we developed neat packaging that protected the product in store and in transit, using the minimum amount of board and keeping the box as small as possible to provide maximum protection.
- Our litho laminated packaging provided a high quality gloss print finish in keeping with premium range products.



What's New?

Pioneering the Use of 'Natural' Inks



Always at the forefront of innovation, we have now become the UK's first manufacturer of corrugated packaging to use predominantly natural printing inks. While other companies are experimenting with 30-40% natural inks, we are using inks made from up to 80% natural materials.

We have been awarded exclusive rights to print RRP and Point of Sale (POS) display units using Earthinks®, a new range of environmentally friendly, water-based flexographic and screen printing inks launched recently by Solar Inks.

Colour and quality are as good with Earthinks® – and in some cases better – as with synthetic and oil-based inks, and prices are comparable, but these inks significantly reduce the impact on the environment.

Earthinks® have been developed from sustainable and non-polluting resources including soy, starch, sugars, dextrin, tree resin, cellulose and other polysaccharides. Natural waxes are used to replace standard petroleum-based synthetics, and natural oils are used to defoam instead of mineral oils. Earthinks® are glycol and silicone-free, contain no heavy metals and have near-zero Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC).

Earthinks® give excellent performance. They have a low viscosity and low foaming levels to deliver sharp images with lower dot gain than standard inks. They also offer stability over long runs due to their unique pH-independent technology. In-house colour mixing is also an option for special colour production on demand, and an ink recycling programme saves waste.

We will now work with Solar Inks to further develop the inks. We have set up an ink laboratory at our site in Hednesford, where we will look at issues including enhancing colour, coverage and usage for different products such as on packaging to be used in wet, cold and dry environments.

There is increasing concern nowadays about sustainability and the environmental effect of manufacturing processes. We recognise that the way we design and manufacture corrugated packaging and displays can have a significant impact. So everything we make is recyclable and, wherever possible, we try to minimise damage to the environment in our choice of raw materials. The use of Earthinks® is the latest step in our drive to use environmentally friendly boards and inks.

There are many other ways in which we try to help our customers 'go green'. For example, clever design can minimise the use of resources, while at the same time reducing costs at every stage of the supply chain, from design and manufacture through distribution to sales. So we have pioneered the concept of 'right-sizing' – eliminating unnecessary packaging, extra boxes or layers, and using fewer or lighter components where possible, without forfeiting protection.

Read more about [right-sizing](#).

An Audience with...

Weedon

Group

John Weedon,
MD of the Weedon Group

Q) How long have you been in the box-making business?

A) I began working for a major corrugated manufacturer in Derbyshire in the early 1970s, operating a crashlock gluer, and I have worked my way through a variety of roles, learning all aspects of the business from the ground up. I worked in sales, both of corrugated packaging as well as specialist bag-in-box wine packaging. After that I moved into product development with the (then) number one corrugated producer in the country, Reed Corrugated Cases. I suppose this is what led to my interest in design and finding creative solutions to difficult packaging problems, which is something we now specialise in. Together with my brother, Peter, we decided to set up our own business. We acquired Hinton Case in 1987 and changed the name to Weedon PSC as the business evolved. Since then the Group has grown steadily – we have acquired other corrugated packaging businesses and in 2005 we set up i2i europe.

Q) What key changes have you seen in the industry over the years?

A) I think three key trends have contributed significantly to shape the corrugated packaging industry of today – the huge move of manufacturing industry to China, the growth of the supermarkets and their specific corrugated packaging requirements and the development of their own label brands. We have responded, among other things, by creating i2i as a centre of retail expertise to support our box plants.

Q) What aspect of your job do you most enjoy?

A) What gives me real pleasure is seeing the company grow as a result of giving outstanding service to our customers. I get a real kick out of making people happy!

Q) What do you do to relax?

A) I am a keen supporter of Derby County Football Club – but I can't say that has provided much relaxation in recent months! I like to read, listen to music and chill out with family and friends.

Q) The Weedon Group has grown and evolved dramatically over the last 5 years. Where do you see it going in the next 5 years?

A) We expect to broaden our product range – for example in the area of online packaging and pre-filled displays – and to extend further into markets in the SE of England. This is one of the reasons why we have recently established an office in Hemel Hempstead.

Q) What is the single key defining quality that the Weedon Group offers its customers?

A) If I have to restrict myself to one thing, I would say our independence. It's what enables us to be flexible to meet our customers' needs, it allows us the freedom to be highly innovative and it gives us control over quality and service. But we are also supported by an excellent and experienced team, state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment and the breadth of expertise and facilities to provide a complete packaging solution.

Q) What is the biggest challenge you think the corrugated packaging industry is facing today?

A) Probably the continuing squeeze on our customers' margins by the supermarkets. Manufacturing businesses, particularly in the food industry, need to be constantly looking for new ways to trim their costs. We are responding to this by working in partnership with our customers to find new ways of improving their corrugated packaging at all stages of the supply chain.

Supporting Teenage Cancer Trust

On 23 August, Peter Weedon, Group Operations Director, will be attempting the Three Peaks Challenge, climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in 24 hours (13 hours' walking and 11 hours' driving).



Peter Weedon trekking in the Himalayas

Peter says:

"I will be with a group of six walkers including one of the bravest lads I have known – and, as a rugby coach for 14 years, I have coached a whole host of brave lads! When he was 13 years old he was diagnosed with cancer. This meant that he had to undergo all the treatments that come with this condition. He lost his hair, and lost an incredible amount of weight. He had to stop taking part in the sports which had previously been a big part of his life. But throughout he remained himself, always cheerful, never hiding away.

"Over the last three years he and his family received tremendous support from a number of groups, but in particular they would like to give something back to Teenage Cancer Trust. He has now recovered and I know he is really excited at the prospect of doing this challenge in August.

"If you would like to sponsor our attempt and donate to Teenage Cancer Trust, please give at <https://www.justgiving.com/glennon-weedon>. Thank you for your support."



Extending into the South East

Our brand identity and packaging branding services just got even better!

i2i europe, our retail own label packaging company based in Burton upon Trent in Staffordshire, specialises in finding creative solutions for primary and secondary packaging for retailers' own label and own brands. Now we have teamed up in a strategic alliance with PWD Consultancy in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. The resulting partnership – dubbed i2i Creative – will enable us to enhance our creative brand capability and expand our service to customers in the South East of England with a satellite office just outside London.

Established in 1999, PWD Consultancy has considerable experience of working in the same creative areas as i2i europe. PWD's clients have included Antler, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Disney, Barbour, Figleaves, Mothercare, Flair Leisure Products and Wilkinsons.

The contribution of PWD Consultancy will enable us to add design style guides across entire packaging ranges, as well as photography, to our portfolio of services which already includes:

- Brand Identity and packaging branding
- Style guides
- Photography
- Mock-ups
- Print production and management – including in China and Hong Kong.

Industry Insight

CPI survey says corrugated cardboard is first choice packaging material
79% of mainly food and beverage manufacturing companies rate corrugated cardboard their first choice packaging material. That is the finding of a poll commissioned by the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI).

As well as providing protection for goods in transit, corrugated packaging is leading the way in optimising the appearance and performance of product ranges. In particular, fresh produce suppliers are now being urged to use corrugated packaging to boost brand recognition.



Corrugated packaging helps take waste out of the fresh produce supply chain
An [article in Produce News](#) highlights the benefits of corrugated packaging for the fresh produce industry, including its ability to help farmers and growers control costs and waste in the supply chain due to crops that have been affected by poor weather.

The CPI's Director of Packaging Affairs, Andy Barnetson, cites food safety, recyclability and developing print and digital technology as key factors in the growing success of corrugated in this market.

FEFCO looks to the future

FEFCO, the European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers, has recently published its latest round-up of growing trends in the corrugated packaging industry.

It discusses:

- Continual investment to meet challenges such as the shift towards Internet shopping, environmental concerns and food waste.
- The development of print and digital technology.
- Exploitation of the virtual world, eg 3D simulation in the packaging design process to allow customers to see in advance how their products will look on supermarket shelves.
- Expansion of the industry – corrugated packaging protects more than 75% of Europe's goods in transit. Its role in the protection and preservation of food is continuing to develop.

'Good Spirited' environmental initiative

Bacardi rum brand director, [Kevin Oglesby](#), explains how even the corrugated cardboard cases used in shipping support the company's policy on sustainability.



BACARDI

Four trends driving corrugated packaging growth

Demand for corrugated packaging material is expected to increase by an average of more than 4% annually over the next five years, according to a [report](#) compiled by Smithers Pira.

The four top trends driving the rapid growth of the corrugated packaging industry are:

- the environment
- lightweighting vs. heavyweighting
- Internet shopping
- printing

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