

Investing to Increase Output Capacity



We have recently invested in a brand new, state-of-the-art Fosber dry end for our in-house corrugator in the Weedon Corrugated Products factory. This will allow us to produce significantly more sheet board per hour than previously and enable us to meet growing customer demand, particularly from eCommerce and export markets.

Weedon Corrugated Products is one of only a handful of independent corrugated manufacturers in the UK to have its own in-house corrugator. This gives us greater control over costs, quality and production schedules, so we can offer enhanced customer service.

Our Audenshaw factory produces B, C and BC double wall corrugated sheet and packaging, Less-flute (our own economical, environmentally friendly boards), E flute, EL (E flute combined with Less-flute) and

EB double wall. As well as manufacturing sheet board for our own use within the Weedon Group, we also supply sheet board and layer pads to other industries such as stationery and plastic packaging manufacturers.

John Weedon, Managing Director of Weedon Corrugated Products, commented: "The acquisition of this new equipment follows significant recent investment in plant by the Weedon Group to meet increasing demand, especially from customers who are keen to experience the sort of personalised service offered by an independent corrugated manufacturer.

"At the same time, we are seeing business growth in areas of Retail Ready Packaging, particularly for eCommerce and export packaging. This new dry end will boost our output in line with developing trends."

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On-line Retail

Its implications for corrugated packaging

The on-line share of retail trade is growing. Time-poor, cash-rich consumers are turning to eCommerce for speed of delivery and convenience. Even relatively conservative forecasters predict two-figure percentage growth of on-line sales in the UK. Retail Research, for instance, has shown the proportion of on-line sales in the UK rising by 14%, 15% and 17% year on year between 2014 and 2016. The UK seems to be leading with way in Europe, with growth noticeably higher than in France, Germany or Europe as a whole. UK predictions for 2017 show eCommerce rising by another 14% – which is equivalent to some £13bn.

At the same time, the change in sales of 'bricks and mortar' retailers has fallen faster here than on the continent. While it is undoubtedly over-simplistic to see eCommerce ushering in the demise of the high street store, it is nevertheless probably

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true that on-line retailing has issued a wake-up call to our over-stored retail landscape which has failed so far to catch up with changing shopping habits.

As buying patterns change, so too must the packaging that protects and promotes the product. Packaging for eCommerce has to achieve a different functionality in a new supply chain. Individual despatch and delivery requires packaging that is easy to open and resealable in case the product has to be returned.

In addition, although brown paper has long been the traditional material for postal packaging, today's customers expect to experience the wow factor when their new purchase drops on the front door mat. As a result, we have seen the introduction of gift boxes, with attractive and colourful printing on the reverse of the outer postal packaging and the opportunity for additional brand promotion.

This innovative use of the outer protective wrapping to make an impact takes corrugated packaging into new territory. In effect this new eCommerce packaging is Retail Ready Packaging (RRP) relocated from the shelf to the front door.

In addition, the on-line marketplace is a global one so its packaging must be sufficiently robust not just for posting to Newcastle, but also to New Delhi!

The economic crisis of recent years must also be factored in. This has resulted in an increase in self-employed entrepreneurs and start-up businesses, and much of the growth in on-line retail will come not from the giant e-tailers, but from smaller companies using the Internet to boost sales around the country and around the world, without the need for expensive premises.

These small or medium-sized companies need packaging suppliers with the flexibility and the willingness to accommodate their individual needs and help them get off the ground. Inevitably they will have to look to the independent corrugated manufacturers for this level of service and commitment.

eCommerce is expected to be one of the fastest growing sectors in the corrugated packaging market over the next few years. While traditional RRP and Point of Sale displays will not disappear from our shelves or our customers' buy lists, on-line retail will represent an increasing proportion of retail sales. The Weedon Group is therefore gearing up for a new type of packaging with innovative designs and new production capabilities.

New Strapping Machine for Weedon Corrugated Products

As part of the Weedon Group's overall investment plan, Weedon Corrugated Products has installed a third fully automated wide arch strapping machine at its Audenshaw factory. The new Gordian strapper joins the two that were installed last October.

These strappers receive packs from the case-making machines, compress and then strap them automatically. Photocells detect the pack size and six driven belts index packs to the correct position under the arch for strapping. Together these three machines will improve the factory's efficiency and increase production output.



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.

In-store Theatre A Case Study for Vimto

The Problem

Soft drinks manufacturer, Vimto, wanted a new Point of Sale (POS) display unit to be sited along the route of the Manchester Pride procession in August.

- The unit had to have small shelves to fit the product.
- It needed to be large and to make a big impact to boost sales.
- The company wanted to use the Rainbow branding for Pride and to display a promotion to win VIP tickets to the weekend.

The Solution

- Attractive graphics, which merged the Vimto with the Rainbow branding, in keeping with the Pride event.

Additional Benefits

- The Weedon Group is the UK's leading independent producer of POS display units.
- Because our structural designers and our graphic designers work closely together as a team, we were able to produce a stand that is both stunning visually and strong enough to do the job.



Download other [case studies](#) to find out how we have used our expertise to solve specific packaging problems for our customers.

What's New Relaunching the Nakd and Trek Brands in the Convenience Channel

Natural Balance Foods (NBF) is a young British company devoted to increasing world happiness with yummy healthy snacks, humour and helpfulness. The company makes delicious, good-for-you munchies, including the Nakd bar, made from just raw fruits and nuts, and TREK protein energy bars and products.

NBF wanted to relaunch the Nakd and TREK brands into convenience stores with a range of merchandising solutions which reflect the personality of the Nakd and TREK brands, and which are easy to set-up and maintain. The aim was to showcase these products effectively in a competitive marketplace to encourage new and existing shoppers. The company also wanted to introduce different unit structures to reflect the two different brands.

We designed two types of stunning floor standing display units, providing one-piece pop down units with separate headers so that they can be put together quickly and easily by merchandisers in-store. Both units have powerful graphics inside and outside, including inside a timely reminder to merchandisers to restock the unit, as well as angled shelves to ensure the product is clearly visible.

The results went down very well with NBF!



An Audience with...

Edd Perry,
Creative Manager, i2i europe



We also have i2i europe, which offers creative expertise in packaging and POS for both graphics and structure all under one roof – not many packaging businesses can boast that!

Q) What innovations do you see making a real difference to our customers?

A) The POS market needs to be more reactive to last minute opportunities so, for instance, we have developed a core set of units for one particular customer to align with retailer guidelines, which will be adaptable to other customers' brands. This enables firstly quicker selection of final units to shorten the development and approval stage and secondly cost savings by combining production runs where shared items are used.

We are also currently revamping our eCommerce offering to help our customers find the right type of packaging for their needs. The packaging journey and customer interaction are key points in our designs. Ongoing Group investment in new kit is also improving our technical offering in this area.

Q) What do you see as the next hot topic in the packaging and POS industry?

A) eCommerce has to stand top of the pile. The marketplace for eCommerce has grown so much over the last 12-18 months, it can't be ignored. There has been a lot of press coverage recently about eCommerce packaging sales growth, showing 25+0% increases in certain market sectors. The end user's experience and reinforcing our customers' brands have to remain high on the agenda as we develop and grow our eCommerce offering.

Q) What makes a 'good day' for you?

A) A good day is when our creativity helps win new business for the Group, as that shows we are doing the right thing in offering something different to our competitors. It's also a good day when our delightful sales folk bring in lovely things for us to eat – hint hint!

Q) What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

A) Spare time?? I vaguely remember what that's like – Lucy and I are run ragged by our daughter, Ruby Sue, and Django, our Springer Spaniel. When I am not chasing after them, I seem to be taking on large DIY projects. I currently have the small challenge of building our own kitchen from scratch. It seemed like a good idea at the time ...

Q) How long have you been with the Weedon Group and what is your role within the company?

A) Having previously taken time out to travel the world, I joined the business on 11 March 2002 as a Junior Designer, and was quickly immersed into the world of packaging! Trevor still fondly recalls the first Point of Sale (POS) display I designed – a spinning battery unit!

In the last twelve and a half years, I have worked my way up to Creative Manager for i2i europe. My role is to support the design and creative teams and help them showcase their talent and ideas to our customers.

Q) What do you enjoy most about your work and what do you find most challenging?

A) The greatest challenge is providing our customers with innovation at pace. Lead times are constantly shortening as our customers often have to react quickly to opportunities within the marketplace. This means we have to continually look for ways to improve our efficiency to increase our thinking time when opportunities arise.

I love it that, as a manager, I still get to offer creative input into our projects and solutions. This is really important to me as it offers variety in the day to day and keeps my creative mind ticking.

Q) What do you think makes the Weedon Group unique in the marketplace today?

A) Our independence is what makes us stand out. We can be reactive to opportunities, and we view each one with care and attention to what our customers want and need from their packaging supplier.

New Commercial Manager



In May, we appointed a new Group Commercial Manager. Warren Powell has taken over responsibility for the Weedon Group's commercial team whose activities include dealing with costing and pricing, as well as process developments and improvements in Weedon PSC and Weedon Corrugated Products.

Warren spent the previous 20 years working in the packaging business, latterly as Managing Partner at Kite Packaging in Coventry. He has joined us in the middle of our five-year strategic growth plan, which aims for Group turnover to reach £40 million by 2019.

John Weedon, Managing Director of the Weedon Group, said:

"Warren joins us at a crucial time in our development with an important job to do. In line with our strategic plan, business is growing, and we are looking to him to steer our commercial activities to sustain this growth and to manage the increasing demands on our commercial department.

"With his many years' experience in the buying and selling of packaging, he is already proving a great addition to our team."

The Loo Box

We keep saying that corrugated is amazingly flexible. Now interior designer, Hareesh Mehta, has come up with a lightweight, foldable, portable Loo Box made from corrugated board!



Industry Insight

Growth in Corrugated Production

Nick Langdon, Statistics Manager of the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI), charts the growth in corrugated board production over the last year.

He writes:

"2016 saw corrugated board production rise for the fourth year in a row amongst CPI's major Corrugated sector Members, to 3,873 million square metres at an average weekly production of 77,463 ksm. This accounts for almost 80% of the total UK corrugated board output of 4,854 million square metres.

"Allowing for losses in conversion and the small net trade in corrugated boxes, CPI estimates that some 4,657,700 ksm of corrugated boxes were placed on the UK market last year, an increase of 3% over the previous year.

"For the Sheet-feeding sector, CPI Members, also representing about 80% of the sector, manufactured 1,146,000 ksm of corrugated board, an increase of 2.3% on the previous year, at an average weekly production of just below 23,000 ksm."

Plastic Packaging – the Elephant in the Room

Adam Hall, Head of Sustainability at outdoor clothing company, Surfdome, says that Britain's retailers must address "the elephant in the room" that is the use of polythene plastic for the delivery of products to and from stores.

In an [article in edie newsroom](#), Mr Hall, whose online retail distribution business has replaced polyethene with cardboard for all of its packaging, believes the UK's recent

success in reducing single-use plastic material through the carrier bag charge is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to tackling the mounting problem of plastic waste.

He says:

"Some retailers have the ability to recycle or sell that polyethene on, but often it is dispersed to various outlets and the systems aren't in place to re-collect it, so it inevitably goes to landfill. This is the elephant in the room – there is no standardised information or clear guidelines when it comes to polyethene packaging, and nobody has addressed that."

Surfdome has substituted cardboard for polyethene wrapping and eliminated the equivalent plastic of 1.2 million bottles within the space of two years. The switching project has also led to significant emissions savings, which are yet to be fully calculated.

Weedon

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