

ePac – New eCommerce Packaging Initiative



We have launched our own brand of corrugated packaging for the online retail market – ePac, offering an independent alternative in a market dominated by giant multi-national corporations.

ePac will draw on the strengths of the whole Weedon Group with in-house manufacture of the specialist eCommerce board grades on our own corrugator, expertise in packaging reduction, including 'right-sizing' to reduce the use of unnecessary packaging, innovative design capabilities in both creative graphic and structural design and top quality print capability, including printing on both sides of the box.

ePac is a major new initiative for us. The recently completed restructuring of our factory in Hednesford has provided one large space to accommodate new production equipment and to streamline logistics to deal with increased turnover. We have invested heavily in new specialist equipment (see right) and we have set up a new eCommerce sales and marketing team, which includes design experts, to deal with enquiries.

ePac supports our environmental policy. For example, the use of corrugated board

provides a flexible, environmentally-friendly alternative to plastic packaging. In addition, the application of our specialist know-how in right-sizing can help to reduce unnecessary packaging, many of the board grades we manufacture are produced from recycled paper and the resulting packaging can be easily recycled after use. We also use predominantly natural inks and coatings.

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

"Online retail moves the point of impact from the store to the doorstep. As the UK's leading independent manufacturer of Retail Ready Packaging and Point of Sale display units, we understand the importance of the Wow! factor and are able to apply this expertise to eCommerce packaging.

"With significant investment in our infrastructure, we are gearing up for considerable growth in the production of packaging for online retail, offering our customers real choice and enhanced service in a market dominated by giant multi-nationals."

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New Taping Machine

Weedon PSC has become the first company in the UK to invest in a high-speed, state-of-the-art taping machine which will revolutionise the manufacture of eCommerce packaging.

The machine, which is now up and running, can apply different types of sealing tape offline, including 'peel & seal', enabling us to manufacture bespoke packaging for the growing online retail market.

The new machine applies ripper-tape, double-sided tape and/or 'peel & seal' to corrugated packaging on either the flat sheet or the finished box. This means that customers can have tape or tapes applied anywhere on their finished boxes. This is particularly significant in the case of 'peel & seal' where the position of the tape (and its loose end) critically affects the speed at which the boxes can be made up. The equipment can also apply any combination of the three types of tapes side by side to accommodate three processes: for easy make-up of the box, opening by the customer and resealing for return, if necessary.

In addition, the speed at which this new machine runs means that the manufacture of eCommerce packaging will be more efficient and cost-effective, as well as offering customers more options.

An Audience with...

Sarah Howson,
Group Marketing Executive



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

A) I have been with the Group for 10 years, and I'm the Group Marketing Executive. I first started working for i2i europe as a project manager and developed into the Group marketing role about a year later, providing marketing support across the business and reaching out to new and potential customers.

Q) What do you enjoy most about your role and what is most challenging?

A) Every day is different and there are always new campaigns to work on and challenges to face. One day I could be organising an exhibition in London, photographing products and meeting customers on site and the next I might be putting presentations together, creating campaigns, updating social media and sending out press releases. It's a fantastic mix and it always keeps me interested. It's great to see when we're in the industry press with a news piece or to hear that we've been contacted as a result of a social media post.

It can be frustrating when we've released a great story and it hasn't been seen by as many people as I would like but I would say my biggest challenge is co-ordinating projects with very short lead times and working to tight deadlines. Occasionally we will have the opportunity to meet with someone at very short notice and a tailored

presentation pack may be needed for the meeting or we get an impromptu invitation to exhibit and need to get brochures and marketing material to a venue by 7am the next day! I enjoy working under pressure though and I'm very fortunate to have colleagues who will always do their best to pull together to get the job done!

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

A) Our independence gives us the ability to listen and develop great relationships with our customers so that we can always ensure they feel like a big fish in a small pond rather than a dot in the ocean! Independence gives us a unique 'can do' culture throughout the business, from our office and external teams to the guys and girls on the shop floor. We all pull together to deliver for our customers!

In conjunction with this, our offering is so comprehensive across the Group that we can provide services from artwork, design, manufacture and co-packing through to supply chain rationalisation and facilitating multi-brand Point of Sale (POS) promotions. There aren't many companies out there who can do all of that!

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

A) We have just invested in a brand new state-of-the-art taping machine to elevate our eCommerce packaging to the next level. We are now able to apply adhesive and ripper-tape on the corrugator and off-line, making the process faster and more efficient. One of the benefits of the new machine is the application of hotmelt tape which allows for greater accuracy and improved speed and performance for packing. Our new machine also gives us greater scope for the range of designs we can manufacture

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

A) The move away from single use plastic has to be one of the most significant trends out there at the moment, with growing emphasis on finding alternative sustainable replacements. Manufacturers and retailers are becoming increasingly active in driving solutions and we are getting more work that would have previously been provided by a plastic alternative. We are also noticing a demand for more thoughtful eCommerce corrugated packaging solutions to eliminate plastic void fill and to provide the option for

multi-use return trips before recycling, which is something we have developed with our new ePac range.

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

A) It's great to see people interacting with our marketing. Whether it's someone new responding to an article and picking up the phone to talk to us or existing customers emailing to say they didn't realise we do Retail Ready Packaging or co-packing, for example. I get very excited when I see an increase in 'views' on our website or 'likes' and 'shares' on our social media (I know, I'm a bit of a geek!), but it means that more people are aware and interested in what we do and how we can help. Another bonus is when you find out that Weedon PSC has been shortlisted for a POPAI award (see page 4), but we can't have days like that every day!

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

A) When I'm not looking after my horse, I enjoy open water swimming, cycling (road and mountain), running, snowboarding, bouldering, photography, hiking and playing the piano. I'm an awful baker and I'm not much better at gardening but I do have valiant attempts at those once in a while too. I'm restoring a 1940s ladies push bike at the moment and I'm currently in training for the Staffs 70.3 Ironman triathlon on 10 June too. What's 'spare time'?!

A Complete Corrugated Packaging Solution for the Plastics Industry

The Weedon Group has become a partner in Plastikcity, providing easy online access for the plastics industry to our expertise in the design and manufacture of corrugated industrial packaging.

Packaging requirements are becoming ever more complex but, by combining the expertise in our three companies, along with state-of-the-art equipment and many years' experience, we can offer solutions that our customers may not have considered.

What's New

New Range of Pallet Boxes Launched



We have introduced a new range of pallet boxes, which offer a heavy-duty corrugated packaging solution for the transportation of bulk products or for long-term storage. Compared with wooden alternatives, these boxes offer significant benefits in terms of cost, ease of use and environmental protection.

Our new range includes:

- Octabins – stackable and ideal for the transportation and storage of bulk cargo such as granular, powder and other loose-fill products. Octabins are available in standard sizes or bespoke, with the option of discharge points or an inner sleeve to protect extreme loads.
- XXL export boxes – for large or awkwardly shaped products or pallet displays, or simply for creating larger packs to provide transit and storage efficiencies.
- Integrated pallet packs – with the pack and pallet designed as one unit to provide additional strength and convenience. The range includes standard European pallet sizes or packs tailor-made to the customer's exact requirements.

These boxes are ideal for markets such as electronics, furniture, chemicals, the automotive sector and other industrial goods.

Because the efficient use of the right materials can also reduce costs, we are offering a range of different pallet box styles and board grades to suit specific needs, with expert guidance from our in-house structural design team. The pallet boxes can also be printed if required, to add branding or identification marks.



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.

Using Corrugated Instead of Plastic A Case Study for British Airways



Customer Profile

British Airways is the flag carrier and, based on fleet size, the largest airline in the United Kingdom. The company celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2019.

The Problem

With the arrival of its new fleet of Airbus A320 aircraft and the imminent introduction of densification on all other planes, which will see more seats and reduced cabin and galley space, BA needed to find a replacement for the existing rigid plastic trolley top tray used to deliver drinks, meals and other in-flight refreshment services to passengers.

The airline wanted a single, generic, corrugated solution for use on all its aircraft, across two different types and sizes of trolleys, each consisting of a double and single length version. The trays had to accommodate the varied fixtures and fittings on the top of the trolley and, most importantly, to do so safely.

Other aims were that the solution would:

- be simple and minimise Global Supply Chain complexity.
- be sufficiently compact to avoid the need for extra stowage space.
- be lighter and cheaper than the existing plastic trays.
- be easy to use and easily identifiable by cabin crew.
- be able to accommodate teapots safely, with safe access to teapot handles.
- locate into the trolley and remain in position, even when the cabin was at an incline.
- not obstruct access to the trolley handle.

The Solution

The Trolley Top Tray – a variation on a

die-cut, 4-point glued quick-erect tray which could be easily assembled and broken down but which would be sufficiently strong for use during in-flight service. The design was adapted in size for use on both types of double trolleys, with a shorter version for singles.

Other features include:

- Locking tabs to secure the corrugated tray to the trolley itself as well as a recess in one end for easy access to the trolley handle.
- A layer pad to provide additional strength, as well as printed instructions on how to assemble the tray.
- Numerous transit trials and vigorous testing with multiple samples on long-haul flights to test the design.
- High quality print on White Kraft E-flute to stringent BA branding requirements.
- Use of Flexo Earthinks inks and FSC approved corrugated board to support BA's Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

Implementation

The corrugated trolley top tray has been successfully launched on BA's short-haul aircraft out of Heathrow and is working well. The airline is currently reviewing the operational requirements for its long-haul flights as its new fleet is introduced and existing aircraft are modified.

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

Build-A-Big-Bear

We were asked recently to produce a giant version of the box we currently supply to Build-A-Bear for packaging the cuddly friends that children love to create. The oversized box, which stood over two metres tall, was to provide the centrepiece for the Build-A-Bear stand at the Comic Con exhibition in Birmingham. The concept was that visitors to the stand could walk into the box and let their imagination run riot!

Build-A-Bear were delighted with the result. A spokesperson for Build-A-Bear UK, said: "So many people went inside to have their picture taken... it was the star of the show!! So many thanks for making it happen!"



Standing at the Top



Weedon PSC has beaten some strong competition to reach the finals of the POPAI Awards 2018.

A wine of the month display unit, which we designed for Tesco, has been nominated in the 'Grocery Temporary Display' category. The stand is a co-packed, three-shelf pallet display unit for bottles of white wine or Prosecco.

POPAI is the industry association which promotes best practice and is dedicated to enhancing the total shopper experience. The POPAI Awards celebrate the role of retail marketing in all areas of shopper engagement and successful retailing.

Edd Perry, Weedon Group Creative Manager, puts this latest success down to a collaborative effort within Weedon PSC. He said:

"It shows that, working as a team, we can really produce some stand out designs."

The winners of the POPAI Awards 2018 will be announced at the Awards Dinner in October.

Industry Insight

The economic value of the UK's paper-based industries

The Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) has produced its first ever comprehensive [Economic Value Report](#) which sets out the importance of the UK's paper-based industries to the UK economy. Its findings include the industries' relevance to over 140,000 jobs (directly or indirectly), involving nearly 1,500 companies with £11.5 billion turnover and £4 billion gross value added. The CPI has also published initial proposals to Government for an Industry Sector Deal for the UK's paper-based industries, which will focus on paper recycling quality and recyclability, decarbonisation, the bio-economy, industry training and investment potential in UK papermaking and downstream conversion.

IKEA builds its empire on cardboard!

An [article on the Quartz website](#) describes how in 2012 the world's largest furniture company introduced new lightweight platforms for stacks of products throughout its self-serve areas. The platforms, which double as shipping pallets, are now made of corrugated cardboard instead of wood. Switching to single-use cardboard platforms – or 'paper pallets' – has enabled IKEA to move its products faster and more cheaply and with less damage to the environment and fewer injuries for its employees.

Cleanliness of corrugated shipping containers confirmed

An [article in Packaging News](#) reports the results of a new study into the hygiene of corrugated containers used to transport fresh produce. The study confirms the cleanliness of corrugated shipping containers, noting that they are used only once before they are recovered for recycling. 90% of corrugated containers are returned to the paper mill for recycling, where high temperatures effectively kill any bacteria that may have been transferred from the product.

Weedon

Group

Weedon Group Ltd, Anglesey House, Anglesey Business Park, Littleworth Road, Hednesford, Staffordshire WS12 1NR
Telephone: 01543 423838 Email: peaceofmind@weedonpsc.com

Weedon

Packaging Solutions Centre
www.weedonpsc.com

i2ieurope

Creative Solutions
www.i2ieurope.com

Weedon

Corrugated Products
www.weedoncp.com