

Keeping Children Safe in School



As schools begin to look to opening their doors again, we have turned our packaging skills to an ingenious new way to help primary schoolchildren keep their distance from each other. We have developed a mini standee, a corrugated cardboard cut-out of a child, which has been snapped up by schools all over the country.

These little 'people' stand 1 metre tall and can be positioned to mark how far apart children need to remain to prevent the spread of

Coronavirus. The design was developed by our in-house design team, following the success of an adult-size standee which we are producing for businesses to mark the safe distance between individuals, for example, on a production line or in a supermarket queue. The standees are strong but lightweight and can therefore be easily repositioned as needed. The feet of the mini standees have been strengthened to add increased stability in the rough and tumble of the playground.

Managing Director John Weedon said he has been inundated with requests from headteachers from as far afield as Cornwall, the Lake District and Essex. He commented:

"After the Government announced that schools should be preparing to readmit pupils, we were approached by a headmaster who had heard about the standees we were producing for factories and shops.

"We were concerned that these adult standees, which are 2 metres tall, might seem threatening to small children, so we set to work on something which is more child-friendly. Hopefully the mini version will help to keep children safe at school."

The Weedon Group has remained working throughout the pandemic as an essential business supporting the food industry and online retail. The standee is just one of the

Keeping Children Safe in School

Home Delivery Trays

Remember the Early Bird

Design Focus
Simple Pre-filled Shippers

What's New
New Gluer System will Extend our Range of Boxes

An Audience with...
Ashley Watson

Flat-Packed Desk for Home-Working

Did the Romans Invent Recycling?

Industry Insight

clever ideas our designers have had to use corrugated board to help in these difficult times. On the following pages, you can read about other developments, including a flat-packed desk for home working and various alternative ways of distributing and displaying food to increase speed to shelf and to protect consumers and delivery drivers.

Home Delivery Trays

With the spread of COVID-19, many consumers have turned to home delivery for their groceries. But there is widespread concern about the possibility of the plastic trays in which groceries are delivered carrying infection from door to door.

To meet this need, we have been manufacturing a standard one-trip corrugated

tray. Used new for every customer, it is safer for everyone involved in the supply chain. It is recyclable and easy to dispose of and will absorb any spills or residue in the box.

We offer a range of sizes to meet different requirements – the tray can sit inside the existing plastic tray or completely replace it.



Remember the Early Bird

A personal message from John Weedon, Group Managing Director



Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, the Weedon Group has continued to produce packaging for food and drink manufacturers and to keep online retail deliveries flowing – often within tighter than usual deadlines and sometimes in innovative ways. Like everyone else, we have been doing our bit to help meet immediate needs.

In the midst of a crisis, it's easy to focus on the here and now. How do you keep everyone safe? Can your business keep operating? Do you need to furlough employees? Where do you source supplies? But, as we begin to take tentative steps out of lock-down, businesses must not lose sight of the future.

We will not always be as restricted as we are now. Business will ramp up. Customers will want – and be able – to buy our products again. As we return to something approaching normality, the big question then will be – are we ready? Will we be in recovery mode, playing catch up? Or will we be in a good position to hit the deck running? Are we using this time solely to fight fires, or are we examining how we can improve our businesses and increase efficiency?

The creative expertise and experience that has enabled us to help our customers during the lock-down can be applied to solve ongoing packaging issues when this current crisis is over.

For example, even before the outbreak, we were aware that many of our customers were frustrated by their inability to get new products to market fast. They were worrying about how they could reduce costs to help drive cash flow. And they were concerned about potential corrugated or paper supply issues.

As an independent corrugated packaging manufacturer, we can help drive your profitability in these three areas.

Speed to market – with in-house teams working within the major retailers and unique expertise in retailer requirements, we know how to circumnavigate the artwork and design roadblocks put up by retailers. We offer all elements of design and production under one roof, so we can control schedules and reduce lead-times. And, because we are independent, we can be very flexible. The combination of all these factors means we can move really swiftly when required!

Reduction of packaging costs – our creative design company, i2i europe, offers full-blown packaging reviews to help you identify where waste can be eradicated and resources saved. We are at the forefront of the drive to cut out over-packaging and we are experts in right-sizing. We have introduced environmentally friendly and economical new materials like Less-flute and EL flute. And we have the facilities to test packaging scientifically and provide performance guarantees that the materials we recommend will be up to the job.

Continuity of supply – with our own in-house corrugator, we can control our supply of sheet board and we can be flexible in response to our customers' needs. This is one of the factors which has enabled us to step in and help during the Coronavirus crisis when other manufacturers have let people down.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, our customers really matter to us – we think you'll notice the difference.

We can help you streamline your packaging and ensure it is cost effective, so that it does not hold up your speed to market or eat into your profits. Now is the time to plan for the opportunities which will inevitably arise as the UK reopens for business. Remember the early bird...



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.

Simple Pre-filled Shippers

The Problem

With changing shopping patterns triggered by the outbreak of Coronavirus, our customers have experienced numerous problems in-store. These have included insufficient stock on shelf of some essential items, such as pasta, tinned vegetables and eggs.



All of this stock arrives in shelf-ready packaging (SRP) which has to be loaded onto shelf individually by staff. This has been hampered by a shortage of staff available to replenish the shelves to keep up with consumer demand.

The Solution

SRP relies on good staffing levels, at a time when many employees are at home self-isolating or looking after children. So instead, for a temporary period, we have been manufacturing large pre-filled SRP – shippers that stand on the floor – for these key products.

Supplied in a standard size, the shippers can be plain (brown or white) or printed in a solid colour (or they could be fancier if necessary). We can fill them in our co-packing centre and deliver them either into distribution centres or direct to store. All our customers need to do is identify the key skus and have the product delivered direct to us, thereby releasing staff time throughout the supply chain.

And, best of all, for a temporary period, to help keep the UK fed, we have only asked that sales cover our costs.

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

What's New

New Gluer System will Extend our Range of Boxes



We have invested in a new gluer system for one of our Bobst gluing machines at our Weedon PSC factory in Hednesford, which will enable us to produce a wider range of boxes. The new system will double the number of positions where glue can be applied during box assembly, allowing us to manufacture additional, more complex designs in-house, including different styles of crashlock box and boxes with internal fittings.

As a result, we will be able to meet growing demand for eCommerce packaging with internal corrugated fittings to fill voids, which offers a cheaper, quicker alternative to loose paper or plastic fillings. Other applications include wine carriers and wine boxes with internal divisions and quick-erect designs for stackable produce trays.

Rob Marshall, Production Director, comments: "We are always looking for new ways to add value to our customers. The installation of this gluing system means we can expand the range of boxes that we can supply, offering wider choice and meeting some of the more specialised needs of our customers.

"Despite these difficult times, we are continuing to invest in new equipment and facilities to grow our business, so that, as we begin to see the country released from lock-down, we will be ready and equipped to support our customers."

An Audience with...

Ashley Watson
Commercial Analyst,
Weedon Corrugated Products

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

A) I've been working in the Weedon Group for just over two years. I have a couple of roles within the business. I work as a Buyer at Weedon Corrugated Products, purchasing/forecasting materials and negotiating paper prices, and also as a Commercial Analyst, looking into customer and job profitability.

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

A) On the commercial side I enjoy the variety of the role. I jump from one thing to the next quite often and have to dig around to figure things out which keeps it interesting.

With buying, building relationships outside the workplace is the best part and seeing these pay off when you need them.

The most challenging part is buying the right materials. Usage for certain materials can spike and fall off naturally due to bespoke jobs and spec changes, so having the right things at the right time can sometimes be difficult.

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

A) A few things – being an integrated independent company, speed of communication and the stock and serve element.

Many suppliers don't offer the range of grades that we do and, when they do, it's usually at a much higher cost than we can produce it. Weedon Corrugated Products enables us to make these bespoke grades which must give us market advantages, particularly for Point of Sale (POS) and one-off jobs.

In larger companies there is a lot of red tape and decisions take time. Being an independent with a flatter hierarchy means the customer doesn't have layer upon layer of people to go through to get an answer. This means almost instant information and decisions being made, which benefits customers who need answers quickly.

Our 'stock and serve' system is also very attractive to customers. This can be a huge plus for those who need a constant supply of



boxes but don't have warehouses or have only limited space on site.

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

A) Anything around the reduction in plastics will be welcomed by our customers, particularly in the food industry. There is a lot of focus on this and companies are actively taking steps to reduce plastic, even if this means higher costs, because of the ever growing focus on the green movement. In the Weedon Group we are looking at new ways to use corrugated board instead of plastic, for example, replacing plastic yoghurt trays with recyclable corrugated.

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

A) Augmented Reality packaging will no doubt be something that we will start seeing more of in the supermarkets. AR allows consumers to connect with food packaging via smartphones or smart devices. It gives customers demonstrations on their phone of the product in front of them, and provides an interactive fun experience, encouraging sales. It's more of a gimmick right now but, as the technology grows, I believe this will come into play. Watch this space!

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

A) When everyone is on the same page and does their bit. Business works when we are all aiming towards the same goal, and a day working together as a team is a good day.

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

A) I have an 8-year-old who takes up most of my spare time, which means I can be a kid again! That's my secret to staying young!

Flat-Packed Desk for Home-Working



When lock-down began, we looked at new ways that we could help during the Coronavirus pandemic. One of our innovations is a small desk made from corrugated board to help the many employees and schoolchildren working from home.

The desk is supplied flat-packed, arriving as four pieces of super-strong corrugated board to be assembled easily with minimal gluing. It stands 1200mm wide x 800mm deep x 695mm high and fits conveniently into an alcove, against a wall or even in a large cupboard.

As part of our contribution to the current situation, we have made these desks available at cost price.

Eddie Perry, Group Design Manager, comments:

"Many people have been working from home, sometimes while trying to home school their children at the same time. Everyone in the family needs somewhere to put their books, their laptop and their papers.

"This sturdy little desk was designed by one of our structural designers to ease some of the logistical problems of home-working. Manufactured in our factory and delivered to the door, it is easy to assemble and has met an urgent need."

One delighted customer commented: "We have had great feedback on the desks, which are really helping our work from home team, some of whom were working from their sofa or on camping tables!

"So, a really fantastic initiative and thanks so much for the speedy delivery, which has helped no end."

Did the Romans Invent Recycling?



Researchers at Pompeii, the city buried under a thick carpet of volcanic ash when Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD, have come up with new ideas about how the Romans disposed of their rubbish. Huge mounds of refuse apparently dumped outside the city walls were in fact materials being collected and sorted to be resold inside the walls for construction. Some of the mounds were several metres high and included bits of ceramic and plaster. Scientific analysis has now traced refuse from city sites to suburban deposits equivalent to modern landfills, and back to the city, where the material was incorporated into buildings, such as earth floors. Were the Romans then the first civilisation to recycle?

Industry Insight

EUROPEN says packaging is essential during crisis

An article in [Packaging News](#) at the beginning of the UK Coronavirus crisis emphasises the importance of packaging to

maintain the necessary supply of food and hygiene products as well as medicines to citizens throughout Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

EUROPEN, the European Organisation for Packaging and the Environment, called on the

European Commission to guarantee the continued uninterrupted flow of packaged goods by recognising packaging and its raw materials as essential and to open the designated priority lanes for their intra-EU transport.

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