

# Our Largest Ever Investment in Equipment



We have recently acquired a new six-colour HQPP (High Quality Post Print) Weipong flexo-printer. The machine, which is our largest ever equipment purchase, has been installed at the Weedon PSC factory in Hednesford and is now operational.

This move has been prompted by the need to increase print capacity to meet demand for packaging to support growth in eCommerce as well as developments towards more sustainable packaging.

The Weipong will print sheets bigger than our two existing TCY printers, enabling the production of a wider range of packaging and displays. For example, for the first time, we will be able to offer flexo-printing on POS displays as a more cost effective option for high volume runs.

The machine will also print both sides in one pass (four colours on one side, two on the reverse), making it ideal for eCommerce packaging and Retail Ready Packaging with printing inside the box. It can also apply a coating on the inside of a box, for example for fresh produce or automotive components, offering a more environmentally-friendly, cost-effective alternative to plastic packaging.

The Weipong printer also includes an infra-red dryer to dry each colour ink between applications, so it can run high quality work at speed.

We had to remove walls at the factory and reposition existing equipment to install the Weipong. The machine breaks records for us both in terms of its size and its cost – it is the largest investment in a single piece of equipment in our history.

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John Weedon, Managing Director of Weedon PSC, commented:

“The acquisition of a Weipong flexo-printer follows significant expansion over the last year or so and represents the largest single investment in our company's history.

“The demand for corrugated packaging is rising, partly as a result of the growth in online shopping accelerated by the COVID pandemic. But we are also seeing an increase in customers switching to coated corrugated board as a greener alternative to plastic packaging, especially in markets such as fresh produce and automotive components.

“The packaging industry is having to make some major changes to accommodate new trends. In our case things are pretty extreme – we had to demolish part of our factory to accommodate new equipment to keep up with demand!”

# 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.



## From Online Sales to Supermarket Shelf

### A Case Study for the Wobbly Brewery

#### Customer Profile

The Wobbly Brewery was originally established by a former welder who helped manufacture brewery equipment. Now operating from a state of the art brewery in Hereford, the company brews award-winning ales and fruit ciders, catering to sophisticated tastes and the craft ale enthusiast. Initially, the Brewery only sold online but they have recently launched their products in stores.

#### The Problem

As their products were previously only available through the post as individual cans or in casks, the Brewery needed to develop new Retail Ready Packaging (RRP) to hold 10 cans of Wobbly Wabbit Pale Ale.

The design needed to co-ordinate with the look of the Wabbit can but, to reinforce brand identity, it also had to be flexible enough to adapt for other products in the range. At the same time the packaging had to be bold to ensure it stands out on shelf.

#### The Solution

- We created a one-piece box with a vintage, distressed look using the Wabbit green colour and the rabbit image as the main product identifiers to tie in with the can's design.
- The alternating coloured side panels with over-sized imagery contrast boldly with the more subtle white front and back panels. As a result, the Wobbly Brewery and Wabbit branding will really stand out in a busy store environment.
- The strong design includes significant key elements which will translate well to the Brewery's other products.

#### The Benefits

- i2i's extensive knowledge of retailer requirements so we understand the intricacies of designing successful RRP.
- Our award-winning design team with a wealth of experience and creative flair.

The Brewery was delighted with the finished 10-pack and we have since developed designs for their Amber and Gold ranges.



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

## Oiling the Wheels

Lubrication is essential for the maintenance of our machines and can delay or prevent major mechanical breakdowns.

If we need to do a full change of bearings on the impression roller, for example, it can put our in-house corrugator out of action for three days. So we recently installed two automatic lubrication systems on the corrugator, which grease all the bearings in each station and cart automatically. This will prolong the life of the bearings ten-fold and will give us a much more reliable machine.

Following the huge success of this upgrade, we have begun to introduce similar techniques across the whole factory. We are implementing a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan using the Interflon Lubrication and Control system, a web-based maintenance system through which all our machines will be fully audited, photographed

and documented and the data uploaded into our own maintenance system. Over 400 machine parts, bearings, chains shafts, gearboxes etc are assessed every 14 days, and our engineers now have a tablet which they can take to each machine to access its readings and work through a list of specific maintenance tasks.

The system has only been in operation for a few weeks but we are already confident that we will see fewer preventable breakdowns.

Now we are looking into oil sampling and the potential energy savings to be had from changing the oil in motors. Our motors could be consuming 50% more energy than is actually needed due to contaminated oil, which could be fixed with a simple oil change. Not only will this prolong the life of the motor or gearbox but it will also reduce unnecessary breakdowns.

## Saving Power

To save electricity, we have recently installed a new power factor control system at our Weedon Corrugated Products factory in Audenshaw, Manchester. We first began looking into the acquisition of the system as part of our policy of manufacturing as sustainably as possible but, given the rising cost of electricity, it will also help us to operate as economically as possible and to keep prices down for our customers.

As electrical current flows, it loses power during supply and distribution, even before it has powered anything. Power factor is the difference between the power supplied to equipment and the amount of electricity actually consumed by it. By improving the power factor, it is possible to make quite significant savings. In our case, we expect to save about 4% of our annual electricity usage.

# What's New

## Operating a Bonded Warehouse – a First for the POS Industry



Weedon PSC has been accepted as a bonded warehouse for the packaging of alcohol and alcoholic products and, in a significant development for the industry, has become the first Point of Sale (POS) display manufacturer in the UK to be able to offer this service.

A bonded warehouse will be of particular benefit to businesses which wish to take advantage of our co-packing facilities. Customers will be able to deliver alcoholic products into our warehouse for co-packing into displays or for packing into gift boxes or hampers, without the goods becoming liable for duty.

A bonded warehouse is where goods which are subject to duty may be stored, undergo

manufacturing operations or repackaging without payment of that duty. So, while their goods are in a bonded warehouse, businesses which sell alcoholic products in the UK can defer the payment of Excise Duty and VAT on those products until they are actually sold.

This can offer businesses considerable cash flow advantages as well as the flexibility and time to arrange what they plan to do with their stock. It also reduces the risk to which a business is exposed and allows it to import new product lines without having to pay large taxes before it has made any money.

Security is also a key benefit for valuable goods. Bonded warehouses have to meet strict rules set by HM Revenue & Customs

and must be secure at all times, although customers can still access their stock if they need to.

Weedon PSC is already the country's leading independent manufacturer of POS and merchandising display units. We also offer a complete end-to-end solution for co-packing, with fast turnaround times to reduce outbound and inbound vehicle waiting times and a cost-effective and efficient route to market. Our dedicated co-packing facility provides flexible working space and easy access to maximise capacity and the speed of operations.

Peter Weedon, Group Operations Director of Weedon PSC, commented:

"Goods stored in bonded warehouses are not liable for customs duties. That means that, while we are co-packing pre-filled shippers for our customers, they do not have to lay out tax payments on goods in advance of them being sold.

"As the UK's top independent manufacturer of POS and merchandising display units, we already supply a number of producers of alcoholic products. Now we can offer them financial and speed to market advantages in using our co-packing facility too. This is all part of our business philosophy of adding value to our customers' businesses."

## Effective Postal Packaging



As the UK's leading independent manufacturer of corrugated packaging and specialist eCommerce packaging, we are often called upon to provide solutions to tricky problems. One such problem we solved recently involved developing a range of postal packaging for Bluestonex Consulting Ltd.

Based in Shropshire, Bluestonex is a software and services company which brings together a new and specialised consulting design approach with skills and competencies in Systems Applications and Products in Data Processing software technology.

The company focuses on the user experience and digital transformation programmes for large to medium businesses across numerous sectors. Bluestonex builds software for managing data and creates mobile apps, providing solutions that support and enhance its customers' business strategies and objectives. The company uses Lego Serious Play as a tool to help clients enhance innovation and business performance.

When Bluestonex was hit by the effects of COVID-19, they had to make drastic changes to their working methods, particularly in the way they held workshops and meetings with customers. They moved completely to virtual meetings but wanted to continue to use the Lego Serious Play method.

They were looking for innovative packaging to send Lego kits out to their clients so they could continue to engage with the tool while conversing virtually. The packaging needed to be simple for users to open but also easy for them to return the Lego after use.

Our new easy-assemble box for eRetailers, which we nicknamed 'Dave', provided the

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perfect solution. With peel & seal tape, Dave is easy to close and easy for the customer to open without damaging the packaging, so it can be reused for the return journey. It is super-quick to assemble – considerably faster than crashlock boxes.

In addition, there are no gaps in the packaging and a secure seal is provided to ensure security during transit and protection against tampering. With a flat top and bottom, Dave also provides a good surface

for attaching labels and for printing, enabling high quality print to reinforce the customer's brand identity.

Dave folds flat after use, so it can be stored conveniently before it is needed again to return the Lego after use. Its economical design also means it uses less corrugated board than a comparable crashlock box, making it more environmentally-friendly and cheaper to manufacture.



# An Audience with...

Louie Gough Littlewood, Digital Marketing Executive



Having not long graduated from university, getting to grips with the packaging industry was certainly my biggest challenge at first. Although I believe I am starting to get there, it still feels like there isn't a day that goes by without me learning something new!

As the online business is growing substantially, the biggest challenge I am currently facing is balancing my time to cover the different areas of Weedon Direct including the main areas of sales, marketing and customer service. But I am really enjoying my work as the online business begins to scale up.

With the company's directors working so closely with staff, it has enabled me to gain first-hand knowledge and experience which has escalated my development, and this is something I believe you wouldn't get working for any corporation business.

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

A) Being an independent family-run manufacturer provides our customers with a speedy service alongside great value. Particularly in the online market, customers demand a fast service, and this is something we have the flexibility to provide.

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

A) Eco-friendly packaging alternatives have been a huge hit with our customers. With the

way the world must evolve to help save our planet, more and more businesses are realising the need for environmentally-friendly packaging. In terms of the online market, our triangular postal tubes have been among our most popular products – even more popular than some of our standard 0201 boxes!

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

A) It shouldn't really be the next 'big thing' because sustainable packaging is crucial in helping to save our planet, but there still aren't enough businesses out there which have really addressed replacing the use of plastic. Until sustainable packaging becomes a 'must have' rather than a choice, this ought to be the hottest of topics.

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

A) A good day is knowing I have done everything I have set out to do! If we can stay on top of getting orders out to keep our customers happy, whilst continuing to grow the number of daily orders coming in, then that's usually a good day in Weedon Direct world.

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

A) I enjoy keeping active throughout the week through swimming, football and running. At weekends, I look forward to spending time with my family and friends (when I am not going to the Villa games of course!).

## Weedon

Group

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