

# Independent Manufacturers – a different way of doing business



Keen observers of the corrugated industry will have spotted shifting patterns of business in recent months.

The multi-national paper-making groups have been buying up a growing number of independent corrugated manufacturers. For example, TRM, until recently the largest independent corrugated packaging company in the country, was sold to DS Smith in March. As the big five swallow up the independents, buyers' options are being eroded.

The UK corrugated market is now dominated by five giants of the industry – DS Smith, Rigid VPK, Cepac, Saica and Smurfit Kappa. Together they supply about 75% of the corrugated market. Sales by the independent sector – those companies that are not part of the 'big five' – are now thought to amount to only about £350 million a year. That figure has decreased by some £150 million over the last two years alone.

Some will argue that this could be a good thing. After all, the bigger the corporation, the greater the potential for economies of scale, and multi-national paper-making groups may be able to provide more economical services to their customers – assuming they pass on their cost savings, of course!

But what is widely recognised is that monopolies have a tendency to create complacency – and then service can easily become a casualty. This may be a key consideration, in particular, for small and medium-sized businesses, if the big corporations do not take the trouble to deal with individual needs. At the same time, many of these companies are being pressured by retailers to lower their costs, so they are being squeezed from both sides.

The Weedon Group is now one of only five significant independent corrugated manufacturers left in the UK equipped with their own corrugator and the ability to both

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Sales Office Manager,  
Weedon Corrugated Products

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manufacture their own corrugated board and convert it into packaging.

We and the other independent corrugated manufacturers offer something that the big five cannot – a different sort of approach.

For example, we take the time to understand our customers' concerns and the pressures under which they operate. Our independence also makes us more flexible. So, if a customer has an emergency, we can adjust our procedures to meet a tight deadline, or change a design at short notice. Because every customer matters to us, we put a great deal of effort into cultivating – and maintaining – relationships. In short, we listen to our customers.

Many buyers appreciate this individual level of service.

To find out how we can help meet your corrugated packaging needs, please email [John Weedon](mailto:John.Weedon@weedon.co.uk) or call him on 07970 085551.



# 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.

## Pre-filled MUs A Case Study for Tesco

### Customer Profile

Tesco is a giant multinational grocery and general merchandise retailer, the third largest retailer in the world measured by profits and second largest measured by revenues. With stores in 12 countries across Asia and Europe, it is the grocery market leader in the UK with a market share of around 28%.

### The Problem

As a special promotion for the Queen's 90th birthday, Tesco launched a pink velvet and chocolate sponge celebration cake with Prosecco-flavoured icing as part of its 'Finest' range.

- The product had a relatively short shelf-life, so it was important that it arrived in store and reached the consumer as quickly possible.
- It could be easily damaged, so adequate protection of the product in transit was also imperative.
- The cake was part of a short term promotion and had to be displayed in an eye-catching way to accelerate sales.
- The in-store display had to co-ordinate with the product packaging, adhere to the Tesco Finest brand and reflect the premium nature of the product.

### The Solution

- Pre-filled merchandising units to protect the cakes during transit.
- Attractive graphics with a quality look to drive sales and align with the brand message.
- Coated EB board grade, manufactured on our in-house corrugator, to give an excellent printing surface for top quality print.
- High quality screen print to reinforce the quality message.

### The Benefits

- The MUs performed well in transit, arriving undamaged at the stores.
- 100% implementation in-store, on time, without the need for in-store merchandisers.

Weedon PSC is the UK's leading independent producer of pre-filled MU shippers.

- Our designers have specialist knowledge of the different types of corrugated board, its characteristics and performance throughout the supply chain.
- We work closely with our customers and understand what they want to achieve.
- We have an in-house testing facility to check our packaging and Point of Sale designs do indeed perform as intended.
- Our corrugator produces corrugated board in-house, giving us the flexibility to provide fast turn-round of orders.

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



## Highest Hygiene Accreditation

Weedon PSC has achieved the highest British Retail Consortium (BRC) accreditation for the packaging of food and drink, 'AA', following its latest audit.

The BRC operates a programme of internationally recognised hygiene standards for the packaging used for food and drink. Accreditation at level 'AA' means that our customers can be confident that we are producing top quality corrugated packaging suitable for the food and drink markets.

John Weedon, Managing Director of Weedon PSC, said:

"With the food industry under increasing scrutiny, certification is a big issue. The BRC quality certification programme is used by over 22,000 suppliers to the food industry across 123 countries. From presiding over activities which may affect the safety, quality and legality of stored products, to helping establish good manufacturing practices, the standard is fast becoming a minimum requirement for major retailers.

"We are committed to delivering a first class service to our customers in every respect. BRC provides the industry-wide benchmark for food safety and quality, and level 'AA' is the absolute pinnacle for us to aim at. We are delighted that our high standards have been recognised in this way."

## New Gluer

Weedon PSC has recently doubled its capacity for gluing Point of Sale (POS) display units at its Hednesford factory with the installation of new specialist gluing equipment. The new machine enables us to automate more of our larger POS gluing jobs and outer wraps. This latest acquisition supports recent growth in this area and comes after investment last year in Lunex equipment.

The new equipment was installed in time for the production of Tesco's 'Back to School' shipper in August.



# What's New

## Total Cost of Ownership Audit



Do you know exactly where costs are going throughout your supply chain? Sometimes you have to stand back and look at the big picture to see where improvements can be made.

We offer a total cost of ownership audit to help you determine the direct and indirect costs you are incurring – and where waste can be eradicated and resources saved.

Our experts will help you to reduce your costs by streamlining your processes, adopting more efficient practices and improving your logistics.

A total cost of ownership audit can result in a reduction in packaging, manual handling and storage costs. It can also cut down on administration and improve transportation utilisation. Improving your supply chain efficiency will also reduce your carbon footprint, making your business more sustainable.

To find out how we can help you see where your money is going, email [Sarah](#) or call her on 01543 423838.

# An Audience with...

**Amanda Lawson,**  
Sales Office Manager,  
Weedon Corrugated  
Products



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

A) I joined the company in January 2016 as the Sales Office Manager. My role involves supporting the internal and external sales teams and generating new sales opportunities.

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

A) The sales teams represent our customers' primary contact with us, so customer satisfaction is key. I enjoy resolving day to day issues. Things don't always go to plan, which is a challenge, but also a real source of satisfaction when we get things sorted and the customer is happy!

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

A) We are an independent manufacturer, and there are not many of us left! As such we are customer-led and we offer our customers a bespoke service.

As Sales Manager, customer service is one of my top priorities and I see a lot of the way we work to meet the individual needs of different customers, whether it's through a

clever design to solve a problem, or rushing an urgent job through to meet a tight delivery deadline.

**Q) The Weedon Group is an innovative company which strives to keep on top of the latest developments in the packaging industry. What recently introduced innovations do you see making a real difference to our customers?**

A) I could talk about Securepak for secure postal packaging or Smarty pop-up instant display stands, but my personal favourite is the Earthinks® range of environmentally friendly inks. I love the idea of anything natural, and organic has got to be good for the future of our planet.

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

A) Positive results, happy customers and a happy team. It is always satisfying to know we have done a good job.

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

A) My two daughters, Ellie and Jess, fill most of my free time, but when I do get time to myself I enjoy training in the gym. I love summer holidays and also the obvious.... shopping!!

# Weedon PSC is one of JustGiving's top charity fundraisers

Over the summer we received some good news from JustGiving, the online charitable donation site. It's official! Weedon PSC is one of the site's top 5% of charity fundraisers.

The announcement came after we raised nearly £6000 for charity last year through sponsorship of our successful attempt at the Three Peaks Challenge. A team of staff and directors climbed Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon, traveling between the three peaks and sleeping in a minibus, all within a 24-hour period – 13 hours' walking plus 11 hours' driving.

*Continued overleaf...*



*Five of the team at the top of Pen-y-ghent. The two fastest climbers, Emily and Dave, had already gone on. They raced ahead to complete the challenge in 8hrs 20mins. The other successful climbers came down in just over 11 hours.*



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In August this year, a Weedon Group team tackled the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge, which involved climbing the peaks of Pen-y-ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough in the Yorkshire Dales National Park in under 12 hours. The route is 24 miles long and includes 5,200ft (1,585m) of ascent.

Weather conditions on the day were appalling with driving rain and poor visibility. Indeed many teams abandoned their attempts. But the intrepid adventurers from the Weedon Group soldiered on and raised a total of £6745, beating last year's total by over £700. The money was split between Cancer Research, the Motor Neurone Disease Association and the Stroke Association.

Peter Weedon, Operations Director of Weedon PSC and one of the team, comments:

"The Yorkshire Peaks Challenge really tested our fitness and our endurance, but we were delighted to have been so well supported in sponsorship and that we could give to these charities which do such great work."

# Industry Insight

## The Continuing Rise of Corrugated Packaging for e-Commerce

Demand for compostable packaging will emerge as a key trend in the global e-Commerce packaging market until at least 2020, according to research by Technavio.

Technavio's recent report, entitled 'Global E-commerce Packaging Market 2016-2020', forecasts that the global e-Commerce packaging market will reach over US\$ 105 billion by 2020, and the most widely preferred packaging is corrugated. Corrugated packaging now provides over half the world's packaging for e-Commerce.

Corrugated boxes	55.81%
Polybags	38.65%
Others	5.54%

*Global e-Commerce packaging market by type of materials 2015 (% revenue)*  
Source: Technavio research

The global e-Commerce corrugated packaging market was valued at US\$ 45.57 billion in 2015, and is expected to continue to rise significantly over the next four years.

Sharan Raj, one of Technavio's lead analysts for packaging research, comments:  
"Many products like electronic goods, glass items and fragile goods require protective packaging for safe delivery. Protective packaging products, such as bubble wrap

and Styrofoam, are lightweight and cheap, but both are made out of polystyrene materials derived from hydrocarbons.

"The production process of creating these products out of these plastic polymers is energy-intensive and is not environmentally- friendly, as these products take a long time to decompose. Hence, to address these concerns, vendors are spending more on R&D for packaging products that are eco-friendly and biodegradable."

Corrugated boxes have become increasingly popular because they are light and biodegradable. New methods and technologies have evolved for paper pulp extraction, which is producing technically advanced corrugated board.

Unlike some other packaging materials, corrugated packaging also offers sufficient space for detailed information about products and to meet the growing requirement for improved graphics on packaging.

## Corrugated Knocks the Spots off Plastic for Packaging Fresh Produce

Corrugated packaging leaves the competition standing when it comes to protecting goods – fresh produce in particular.

As well as keeping fruit and vegetables safe, corrugated board has a great hygiene record. Scientific research has proved that corrugated reduces the risk of microbiological contamination compared with reusable plastic crates – prolonging shelf life by up to three days!

New research led by a team at the University of Bologna's Department of Agricultural and Food Sciences has revealed that micro-organisms die much quicker when placed on corrugated surfaces. The research showed that micro-organisms survive longer on plastic surfaces whereas, with corrugated packaging, they get trapped in the paper fibres and die due to the lack of water and nutrients.

In addition, tiny cuts and scratches on damaged and worn plastic are difficult to clean in an industrial process. They can easily fill with organic matter that microbial cells feed on to survive and grow.

Jan Gramsma, Market and Environment Director of the European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers (FEFCO), said the findings added to the growing weight of scientific research showing how corrugated keeps fruit and vegetables fresher for longer. He said:

"The study shows the unique capability of corrugated to trap microbial cells gives it a clear superiority when it comes to ensuring produce keeps its shape, feel and taste."

More information at: [www.corrugated-of-course.eu](http://www.corrugated-of-course.eu).

# Weedon

Group

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