



Celebrating 30 Years

2017 marks our thirtieth anniversary so, as we raise a glass to the New Year, we have cause for a double celebration.

It all started in 1987 when brothers John and Peter Weedon acquired Hinton Case, a small sheet plant in Burntwood, Staffordshire, which was turning over £250k pa and employing just 12 people.

The acquisition of a second sheet plant, Regent Packaging, followed soon after, and more space was needed to accommodate business growth. The two companies were merged in 1989 when we moved three miles down the road to our current location in Hednesford, and the combined business was rebranded Hinton Corrpak. At that time, the company manufactured brown boxes, its main customer was Wall's Sausages and the factory occupied three units on the Anglesey Business Park.

Before buying Hinton Case, John Weedon had worked in the corrugated packaging industry for over ten years, latterly as a Product Development Manager with Reed Corrugated Cases. There he had been aware of the emerging Point of Sale (POS) market and, in 1994, Hinton Case diversified. The company began manufacturing POS displays and was rebranded again, becoming Weedon Packaging Solutions Centre, to better reflect both the family nature of the operation and our area of expertise. Our emphasis is on solving our customers' problems, rather than just selling boxes! The business grew rapidly as we began to work for Asda, Homebase and Black & Decker.

In the early years of the new millennium, another trend emerged with the rise of retail own label brands, and we set up i2i europe, a creative and packaging design agency specialising in branded and own label packaging. Retailers can be very specific in their packaging requirements and, with our own staff teams based within a number of major UK retailers, we have unique knowledge of these requirements and how to meet them.

For a period in the late 1990s, the Weedon Group was a Joint Venture with Stone Container Corporation, but in 2005 we bought out their share and became truly independent.

Further expansion followed in 2011 when we acquired Rowpack, manufacturers of corrugated packaging based in Audenshaw, Manchester. The business became part of the Weedon Group and was renamed Weedon Corrugated Products. The acquisition of a company with an in-house corrugator gave us the ability to manufacture our own corrugated sheet board, securing our source of supply to meet the demands of our expanding customer base (by now we were also serving customers such as Kellogg's, Sony and Tesco). Weedon Corrugated Products also added high volume case-making to the Weedon portfolio and gave us a base in the North of England.

So, from small beginnings, the Weedon Group now includes three complementary companies: Weedon PSC, the country's leading independent manufacturer of Retail

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We wish all our customers, suppliers and staff a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

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Ready Packaging (RRP) and POS displays, Weedon Corrugated Products, the largest independent corrugated manufacturer in the North West, and i2i europe. Together we provide a complete packaging solution from concept, design and artwork, through production, to Europe-wide distribution.

We are an independent company, in a market which is increasingly dominated by the large multi-national paper-making groups which now account for over 75% of sales. We are also a family-run business, which we think gives us a different sort of ethos and different values, compared with some of our larger competitors. Our dealings with our customers are based on building relationships. We understand our customers' needs and we have the flexibility to meet their individual requirements. Today we turn over £250k every three days, occupy 15 units (still on the Anglesey Business Park) and we employ 200 people across the Group. We are proud to say they include many of the original Hinton Corrpak staff.

Taking the High Road to Scotland and Ireland

The Weedon Group has appointed a new Regional Sales Manager for Scotland and Ireland. Jim Flett began work earlier this month and is already busy.

Jim's appointment follows a growth in enquiries from Scotland, in particular, from companies in the food and drink sector which are looking for an independent supplier. There are currently no independent corrugated packaging manufacturers with an integrated corrugator in either Scotland or Ireland.

With its factory near Manchester as well as a base in the Midlands and its own distribution fleet, the Weedon Group is well placed for nationwide deliveries.

Jim is based in Glasgow and can be reached on 07767 377027, email: jimf@weedoncp.com.



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.

Packaging for Online Retail A Case Study for Beauty Pie

Customer Profile

Beauty Pie is the latest brand from Marcia Kilgore, the brains behind Fit Flops and Soap & Glory. Launched on 8th December and only available online, Beauty Pie allows its customers to buy direct from the same factories which supply the majority of make-up to well known luxury beauty brands – without paying marked-up prices.



The Problem

- Beauty Pie sells its products for significantly less than its competitors, although the products themselves are comparable. They therefore need to keep packaging costs to a minimum – without giving the impression that the contents are any less valuable than expensively packaged make-up.
- Since all sales are online, the packaging needs to withstand the rigours of the postal system.
- In line with its company ethics, Beauty Pie requires its packaging to be made of 50% recycled materials.

The Solution

- High quality printing on a glossy coated paper inside the postal packaging, to reflect the high value of the products.
- Robust structural design with double roll-over walls.
- Use of 50% recycled fibres for corrugated board manufactured in-house.

Additional Benefits

- The postal packaging reverses to show the printing inside, converting into an attractive gift box.
- The plain exterior does not attract theft in transit.

The Weedon Group is the UK's leading independent producer of Retail Ready Packaging. The three companies in the Group work together to provide a complete packaging solution: in this case, i2i europe created the design, the coated board was produced on our own corrugator at Weedon Corrugated Products and the packaging was manufactured at Weedon PSC.

Our designers have specialist knowledge of the different types of corrugated board, its characteristics and performance throughout the supply chain, and we work closely with our customers and understand what they want to achieve.

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



UP TO 82%
OF PEOPLE

MAKE UP THEIR MINDS
AT THE POINT OF
PURCHASE

Weedon
Group

LEGG
FLUTE

Smiley
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What's New

Build-A-Bear – Bringing the Packaging Back Home

Weedon PSC has secured a new contract with a UK-based customer to produce carry-home boxes for Build-A-Bear.

In recent years, these boxes have been supplied to our customer from China, but currency movements have now made production in the UK more viable, especially when factoring in the superior quality of UK-manufactured packaging. This is the first contract which Weedon PSC has brought back to this country from China and Managing Director John Weedon recognises the beginning of a new trend.

He says:

"Few have disputed that the quality of what we produce in the UK is higher than what comes out of China, but for many years we have not been able to compete on price. With our own integrated corrugator, we are able to control the cost of our raw materials and, with the recent drop in the value of the £ against foreign currencies, things have changed.

"So now one of Britain's favourite cuddly toys will be travelling to his new home nestled in packaging manufactured in Staffordshire."



An Audience with...

Kerry Wollaston, Project Manager, Weedon PSC



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

A) I have worked at Weedon PSC since August 1989 – a whopping 27 years and 3 months! I have had many job titles over the years but my role now is Project Manager. I work on the Tesco account in the Customer Services department at Hednesford. I act as a sort of middleman between Weedon PSC and Tesco, co-ordinating all of their quotations, design, artwork and the production of their Point of Sale (POS) displays, as well as liaising with their suppliers over deliveries.

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

A) There are many challenges in my work but I am at my happiest when really busy and under pressure. I have two particularly demanding times in the year, dealing with the Back to School and Christmas promotions, which make for a VERY hectic six month period. But at the end of it, it's great to see a completed unit in store and to know that we made it.

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

A) I think the fact that we are one of the few independent suppliers of POS in the UK – and the only independent that can make its own board. Having our own integrated corrugator gives us the flexibility to deal with our customers' individual needs. And independence is a big plus to those customers who want a more personal service than what may be provided by a large multi-national company. Although we have grown considerably over the years, I think we have retained that 'family' feel and I hope that this comes across to our customers – in addition to the highly professional service we offer, of course!

Q) How has the company changed since you started?

A) As one of the longest serving employees of Weedon PSC, I remember the 'old days' when we answered the telephone as Hinton Case! That was back in the 1980s. I have

seen lots of changes since then. For example, I remember samples being cut out by hand, whereas today we use the latest CAD technology to cut things out automatically. And I was there when we made our first Point of Sale unit. Today, of course, Weedon PSC is the leading independent supplier of POS in the UK. And I recall the team all going out together to celebrate, 25 years ago when we hit a record £80k of sales in a month! We have come on a long way!

But one thing has remained constant throughout – the atmosphere. It's a good place to work. Of course everyone has gripes from time to time – it wouldn't be work if we didn't complain about something! But the same focus on building relationships which guides the way we treat our customers also colours our relationships with our colleagues. I have a great team to work with and that makes all the difference.

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

A) For me, I just enjoy coming to work every day. If I can achieve what I need to do in my role each day and keep everyone happy, then I am happy too. A big order from Tesco is always a bonus, of course!

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

A) I love to shop, I love to eat out, of course, and I love spending quality time with my crazy family.

All you Need for a Good Night's Sleep?

Babies in Finland learn to appreciate corrugated at a very early age. Many of them sleep in it, warm and cosy in a miniature sleeping bag arranged in a cardboard box! This simple arrangement is believed to be one reason why Finland now has one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world – 2.52 for every 1,000 births, which is less than half that of the United States, for example.

Every year the Finnish government gives away about 40,000 of these baby boxes which, as well as the cardboard crib, contain bedding and about 50 other baby items, including clothes, nappies, toys, a thermometer and even a baby balaclava for the icy Nordic winter.

But there's a string attached. To receive the box, the mother has to undergo a medical



examination during the first four months of pregnancy. The programme began in the late 1930s, when nearly one out of 10 infants in Finland died in the first year. The boxes were a low-cost way to encourage women to see a doctor during pregnancy. They also provided a safe place outside of parents' beds for infants to sleep, in homes that might have only rudimentary furniture.

There are efforts to extend the baby-box idea to a wider audience. A hospital in London recently began giving out the boxes on a trial basis. In Minnesota, US, a non-profit group distributed the boxes to low-income families, and a graduate student at Harvard has formed an organisation to distribute similar kits in South Asia.

Industry Insight

The Future of Retail Ready Packaging

Global growth for Retail Ready Packaging (RRP) will grow steadily by around 4% annually from 2016-2021, reaching 38.7 million tonnes of paper and plastic materials, and a value of \$82 billion in 2021, according to new market data from Smithers Pira.

Shorter print runs are seen as a key factor driving the RRP market, as more retailers and brand-owners are looking to promotional marketing to boost sales.

From a geographic perspective, North America and Western Europe are expected to lose market share to Asia-Pacific over the forecast period. The late adoption of RRP in North America means there is still

reasonable growth here, while in the more mature market of Western European demand is maturing and slowing. Asia-Pacific and Africa are the fastest expanding regions, with both forecast to enjoy average annual growth of over 6% between 2016 and 2021.

The actual incremental tonnage of material generated in each region over this period shows a slightly different picture. With nearly half originating in Asia-Pacific and a further third from the emerging markets of Eastern Europe and South and Central America.

The changing demands for RRP have been a contributing factor in the development of high-quality, high-speed, wide-format digital printers for post-print corrugated packaging. These developments lend themselves particularly to the production of corrugated RRP, which often requires shorter print runs and faster change-overs.

There is still stiff competition between materials as well as pack formats in RRP, with considerable discussion about the environmental benefits of different types of packaging. This is particularly pertinent in the fresh produce market, where corrugated producers claim their product is more beneficial to the consumer and discourages bacterial contamination.

The Smithers Pira report, [The Future of Retail-Ready Packaging to 2021](#) presents an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of the global demand for RRP and a critical assessment of the major influences driving demand for it. The market is quantified and segmented according to type of material and pack format, end-use application, and geographic location for 2011-2021.

Weedon

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