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Story on page 19



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IT'S TIME WE GET SMART ABOUT THINGS

In this age of smart devices, universal interconnectivity and incessant data mining, asking whether intelligent packaging has a role to play in the modern CPG (consumer packaged goods) marketplace is akin to questioning the importance of air and water in sustaining human life.

Just like today's consumers expect to have sustainable packaging alternatives at their disposal, should they decide to choose them, the day when they will expect their consumer packaging to be a source of vast and detailed information about the product packed inside is close at hand, if not already here.

And yet, there has been only scant evidence that Canadian packaging suppliers are embracing the promise of the emerging flexible and hybrid electronics to embed their packaging with the sort of intelligence that immediately lets consumers know if the packaged food is safe to eat or was sourced from ethical and humane farm operations, or whether their latest big-ticket online purchase was the real deal or an unscrupulous knockoff, or whether their meds have made it through the pharmaceutical cold chain intact.

The beauty of printable electronics and the associated RFID (radio frequency identification) and NFC (near field communications) technologies is that they can often be fairly easily integrated into existing packaging structures, without forcing companies to reinvent the wheel or break the bank.

For all that, a widespread collective effort to make everyday consumer packaging smarter remains a fairly elusive undertaking, according to Peter Kallai, president and chief executive officer of the Ottawa-based **intelliFLEX Innovation Alliance** (formerly the **Canadian Printed Electronics Association**).

According to his recent think-piece published in the group's newsletter, "Canada's electronics development

and manufacturing industry needs to up its game."

Says Kallai: "The emerging flexible and hybrid electronics sector offers Canada billions of dollars in new opportunity for electronics manufacturers to drive industry momentum and create more high-value jobs.

"It represents the new set of additive manufacturing methods that can be far more eco-friendly and cost-efficient than conventional subtractive processes," Kallai points out.

"These include 2D large-area printable electronics, flexible integrated circuits, 3D printable electronics for multilayer PCBs, in-mold electronics and adding functionality to the surfaces of 3D objects."

For all that opportunity, the Canadian CPG community and its packaging supplier base have been very lackadaisical in seizing it.

Citing statistics from **CME (Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters)**, Kallai notes that electronics and related manufacturing accounted for just four percent of total Canadian manufacturing output in 2015, or \$24.8 billion out of \$620 billion, whereas in the U.S. that share is 13.2 per cent, or \$364 billion of \$2.77 trillion.

"With all the headlines these days focusing on the risk of a trade war with the U.S. and an uncertain future for NAFTA," Kallai states, "it's time for Canada to look at how it can boost its economy in new ways and into new markets."

For companies looking to get started, there is no better time to get rolling than at the upcoming **CPES 2018** printable, flexible and wearable electronics symposium hosted by **intelliFLEX** later this month, May 23-24, at **Centennial College's** Event Centre in Toronto.

(To register, go to: www.intelliflex.org)

As Kallai states: "The advanced manufacturing sector, now more than ever, is critical to the success of the Canadian economy." We could not agree more.

George Guidoni, Editor

★ COVER STORY

19 THE KITS ARE ALRIGHT! *By George Guidoni*

Relentless product innovation and savvy packaging execution behind East Coast salmon processor's game-changing new product launch.

Cover photography by Darrel Munro

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HUMMUS MARKET LEADER GOES BRIGHT AND BOLD WITH A MASTERFUL PACKAGE DESIGN REFRESH

Staying at the top is often said to be harder than getting there, so you can forgive the runaway hummus market leader **Sabra Canada** for leaving no stone unturned in its latest packaging design refresh aimed at cementing the company's uncanny dominance of the fast-growing market for natural alternatives to traditional dips and spreads.

Produced at the parent **Sabra Dipping Company's** state-of-the-art facility in Chesterfield County, Va., the company's fast-growing range of hummus and other dips, salsas and guacamoles retailing in Canada now feature a

restyled label design and original on-pack photography highlighting the fresh, plant-based ingredients—primarily chickpeas and tahini (sesame paste)—used in **Sabra** brand hummus.

Well-known for its signature red rim with a partially see-through top lidding to enable consumers to see the hummus and the centered ring of fresh side topping ingredients—and a seasoning topper in the center of the hummus—the Sabra brand packaging was updated to enhance the brand's shelf appeal as well as incorporate color-coded flavor differentiation for improved shopability, according to the company.

"We are delighted to be introducing this fresh, new look to the Canadian marketplace," says Sabra Canada marketing manager Kelly Freeman, adding there are now 15 different Sabra hummus SKUs (stock-keeping units) retailing in Canada at all the leading grocery outlets.

"It was important to us as a brand to continue to evolve and communicate visually with consumers in-store and on-pack as they make their hummus choice," says Freeman.

"Sabra's brand personality really shines through in this redesign, with fresh ingredients front-and-center and a Sabra chickpea evoking the warmth at the heart of the Mediterranean.

"We believe the new designs truly enhance flavor expectations and depict the nourishing food inside the package."

Designed by the New York City-based agency **Bearwood & Co.**, with Toronto-based **Slingshot Inc.** providing a bilingual adaptation for the Canadian market, the updated Sabra packaging strives to preserve the essence of the product's original look, while telling the brand's story more persuasively through a stronger focus on the fresh ingredients, bold flavors, and a food known for its ability to foster connections.

"Our approach was in no small part directed by consumers, because we believe rebranding is in effect an exercise in listening," says Eugenio Perrier, chief marketing officer for Sabra Dipping Company, which operates as a joint-venture company of **PepsiCo** and **Strauss Group**.

"It was important to retain the clear window which Sabra pioneered to communicate trustworthiness and transparency," Perrier remarks, "while giving that mouth-watering



glimpse into what awaits you when you open the pack.

"Upon launching in Canada, Sabra had introduced one of the world's oldest foods to a new market by placing it into what was then very disruptive packaging that invited consumers to see the rich blend of chickpeas, tahini, oils, herbs and spices through a transparent top," Perrier relates.

"The brand helped to drive rapid category growth for the flavorful and versatile plant-based dip with its recognizable red rim."

Adds Perrier: "We are in an era of real food, with consumers caring more about the quality of ingredients and the innate healthfulness of what they eat.

"Increasingly, people are prioritizing plant-based nourishment, so as makers of an original plant-based food, and as global hummus leader, Sabra recognized it was time to let the ingredients shine."

As Perrier explains, some of the more significant updated packaging elements include:

- The new Sabra word mark that was customized to keep the playful 'musicality' of the previous version, while prompting a bolder impression;
- The reimagined Sabra sun graphic, which is now illustrated as a chickpea heart surrounded by five sesame seed rays representing Sabra's five core values of openness, trust, passion, caring and daring;
- The reorientation of Sabra's top packaging label from horizontal to vertical orientation for naturally guiding the consumer's eye to the new logo, flavor, ingredients and, finally, to the transparent view of the product—a breakthrough packaging innovation Sabra first introduced in the early 2000s;
- A cleaner side label with bolder fonts and brighter colors for easy color-coded flavor differentiation;
- A Mediterranean-inspired approach to product photography sunlit ingredients atop a wooden cutting board to emphasize product freshness and superior flavor of the all-natural ingredients.

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PACKAGING UPDATE PAYS DUE HOMAGE TO GOAT MILK'S PURITY

Taking fate by the proverbial horns may not be for everyone, but it has paid off in spades for Montreal-based soap manufacturer **Canus**, which is currently celebrating 20 years of creating premium skin-care products made from 100-percent Canadian goat milk.

Back in 1991, André Beaugard resigned as a sales manager for an import company to start his own seasonal item wholesale venture, naming his company Canus to acknowledge the fact that the specialty aromatherapeutic products his startup company was going to market—including imported scented candles, home fragrances, incense, etc.—were going to be sold in Canada and the U.S.

One day, a customer asked if Canus had any goat's milk skin-care products in stock, leading Beaugard to explore this very niche segment.

After finding out that such products were quite rare, very expensive, and had very limited shelf-life of just six months, Beaugard saw a unique business opportunity for his own budding business.

Hooking up with a recently-retired **Procter & Gamble** scientist, Bureaugard eventually developed new formulas that delivered a way to maintain the hydrating properties of goat's milk and increased the shelf-life of skin-care products made from it for up to five years—making the item commercially viable and confirming Beaugard's instincts.

In just a few years, Canus' **Original Formula** became the second best-selling bar soap in Quebec drugstores.

Some 20 years later, the company sells over 70 different products made from goat's milk, including body lotion, body wash, bar soap, bubble bath, liquid hand soap, and so on.

In addition to its famous *Original Formula*, these products are nowadays also offered in different fragrances such as **Shea Butter**, **Lavender Oil**, **Orchid Flower Extract** and **Eucalyptus Mint**, the latter introduced last year after months of trial-and-error experiments.

To mark the company's 20-year anniversary of being in the goat's milk business, Canus recently worked with Montreal-based design and marketing agency **Adjuvant** to develop a new modernized packaging look for its flagship **Caprina** brand, featuring a cleaner streamlined look and updated version of the goat logo with a more impish expression.

"Goats are mischievous animals, and we see a connection between this character trait and the joyful playfulness today's families often exude," says Canus marketing director Anna-Isabelle Morency-Botello.

"The packaging's more vibrant colors infuse the line with cheerfulness," she notes, "which increases its impact on the store-shelves."

Nowadays ranking as the fifth-largest soap manufacturer in Canada, Canus produces more than one million bars of soap per month, with its other core brands including **Nature by Canus**—made from goat's milk and sustainable, carbon-negative palm oil extracted from hand-picked palm fruits grown on a strictly organic, 4,000-hectare plantation—and the **Lil Goat's** product range for babies and young children.

"In fact, the boiler used to extract the palm oil is fueled by palm tree husks and fibers," says Beaugard, citing the company's other key sustainability credentials that include the use of biodegradable plastic for packaging, the use of hybrid technology for the company's delivery trucks, and installation of energy-efficient smart lighting for its warehouse.

Says Beaugard: "We always strive to stand out from our competitors by making smarter decisions—packaging included."



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A DECADENT NEW CHOCOLATE INDULGENCE WITH NO GUILT STRINGS ATTACHED

Guilt-free indulgence may sound like an oxymoron, but giving in to temptation without regret is a proverbial piece of cake with one of three new delicious chocolate bark snack-packs launched a few weeks ago by **PRANA BioVegan Inc.**, one of Canada's leading organic snack producers with a natural knack for creating premium taste sensations served up in classy and elegant modern packaging.

Produced at PRANA's state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Montreal, the 100-gram stand-up pouches of **PRANA**



Maca Power, **Chia Balance** and **Matcha Magic** chocolate thins infused with 100-percent organic and vegan superfoods sustainably sourced from around the world offer Canada's legions of chocolate-lovers a decadent nutrient-packed snacking option ticking off all the right boxes for social and environmental awareness.

Boasting 62-percent dark cocoa mixed in with generous servings of tasty nuts, seeds, dried fruit and other healthy natural ingredients, the crunchy treats were created for the new health-conscious

breed of snackers eager to satisfy their taste buds without any second-guessing about their choice.

According to PRANA, "You can be socially, nutritionally and environmentally conscious while still getting your chocolate fix."

"Each of the three new flavors offers a unique flavor and crunchy texture for a satisfying snack perfect for a mid-afternoon pick-me-up, after yoga class, or while binge-watching your favourite TV show," says PRANA, also describing the products as natural energy-boosters formulated to trigger varying degrees of buoyancy to suit the occasion.

Offering one-year shelf-life, the new chocolate bark treats are packaged in resealable, recyclable, matte-finished stand-up pouches decorated with vivid graphics and product images designed by the Montreal office of leading package design services provider **Pigeon Brands**.

Made exclusively with fair-trade chocolate and also boasting internationally recognized *Gluten-free* and *nonGMO* certifications, the new product range comprises:

- **Chia Balance:** caramelized coconut and **ProactivChia** seeds covered with 62-percent cacao fair-trade chocolate blended to produce a sweet and unctuous chocolaty snack with a subtle coconut flavor and aftertaste. According to PRANA, the chia seeds used in this product "are chock-full of essential nutrients, an excellent source of Omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants, fiber, iron and calcium ... with added probiotics to help maintain your intestinal flora's health."
- **Maca Power:** A blend of 62-percent fair-trade cacao dark chocolate with ancient grain corn flakes, almonds and endurance-boosting maca root powder formulated for a rich, intense flavor and crunchy texture to "give the energy you need to get through the day."
- **Matcha Magic:** Containing roasted sesame seeds, crispy rice, and matcha tea-leaves covered with 62-percent cacao fair-trade chocolate for a delicately sweet serving of natural antioxidants and a long-lasting burst of energy, according to PRANA.



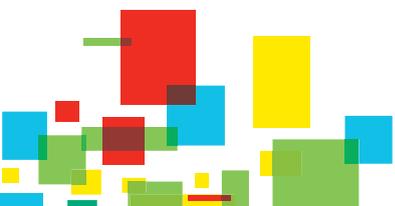
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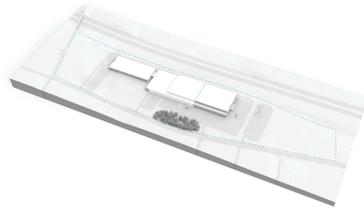
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Festo plans to add another 350,000 square feet of production space to its recently-opened 225,000-square-foot manufacturing and distribution facility just outside of Cincinnati (see picture) as part of a major US\$90-million capital investment in the company's North American manufacturing, logistics and training capabilities.

■ Leading global industrial automation devices and control manufacturer **Festo AG & Co. KG** has announced a major US\$90-million expansion of the company's North American Distribution Center operations in Mason, Ohio, by an additional 350,000 square feet. To be conducted in two stages and completed by 2024, the expansion will nearly triple the facility's capacity in logistics, production and industrial training programs offered through its Festo Didactic Learning Center, while also planning to add 350 jobs in the fields of engineering, mechatronics, purchasing and material management, production and logistics operations over the next five years. "As we continue to grow in North America, this strategic investment in production, logistics and supply chain excellence will enable us to better supply our customers long-term," said Carlos Miranda, chief executive officer of Festo for North America. "Digitalization trends around Industry 4.0 (IIoT) are driving fast-paced changes in the automation industry," adds Rich Huss, president and chief executive officer of **Festo U.S.** "To keep up with and meet our customers' high expectations, this investment will allow us to increase local production and strengthen our regional supply chain long-term."

■ Leading global specialty chemicals and materials producer **DowDuPont** says it will spend about US\$100 million in the next two years to expand manufacturing capacity and to modernize facilities at the Sabine River Works (SRW) plant in Orange County, Tex. According to the company, the multiphase investments will incrementally expand production capacity to support global growth of specialty materials manufactured at the site—specifically the **Surlyn**, **Nucrel**, **Fusabond** and **Vamac** polymers widely used in food packaging, transportation and consumer goods applications—with additional capacity expected to come online in several stages throughout 2020. "This is another great example of the power of our historic merger and our ability to quickly respond to customers' growing needs," says Diego Donoso, business president for **Dow Packaging & Specialty Plastics (P&SP)** business unit of DowDuPont's Materials Science Division. "We see tremendous potential to deliver more supply of these iconic specialty products to our customers in the food packaging and consumer goods markets."

■ **Danone Canada**, Boucherville, Que.-headquartered manufacturer of dairy foods and beverages, has been awarded the coveted **B Corporation** international certification widely considered to be the current "gold standard" for CSR (corporate social responsibility) performance in global business following a rigorous **B Impact Assessment** process that evaluated the company according to the highest standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. As such, Danone Canada is now the country's largest consumer products company to have attained the prestigious certification as part of its public pledge to become one of the country's best-performing and most-admired food-and-beverage companies through implementation of its **One Planet: One Health** corporate vision. "Canadians are very conscious of the challenges facing the health of people and the planet, and consumers are rightfully holding businesses accountable for their capacity to use their scale to make the world a better place," says Danone Canada president Pedro Silveira. "Danone shares those values, and I'm thrilled that we are now part of a like-minded community committed to use business as a force for good." With the certification, nearly a third of Danone's global operations are now designated as **B Corp** businesses, including its dairy subsidiaries in France, Spain, U.K., the U.S. and Argentina. "People rightly expect large organizations like Danone to use our scale to change the world for the better while demanding transparency, authenticity and action," says Emmanuel Faber, Danone chairman and chief executive officer. "It's time to make sustainable business the only way of doing business [and] I am incredibly honored by our team in North America, whose



ability to achieve B Corp certification in just one year is not only commendable but will also help serve as a model of what's possible to our other Danone subsidiaries and other large companies."

■ German beverage production and packaging equipment group **Krones AG** has picked up this year's **iF Design Award** for industrial design excellence in the **Communication Design** category for the company's **Connected** series HMI (human-machine interface) terminal used across a broad range of Krones-built equipment. Encased in special rugged housing made of stainless steel and glass and featuring a highly hygienic design, the user-friendly **Connected** terminals feature a large multi-touch display, intuitive modern operator interface, clear user prompting, and an innovative navigational concept for customizing the screen's contents by setting up dashboards to suit a client's specific application needs. Designed to serve as the central point of access to the line's control system, the **Connected** HMI was selected by a jury of 63 international industrial design experts evaluating over 6,400 entries to this year's 65th annual **iF Design Award** competition.



■ **Duravant**, Downers Grove, Ill.-headquartered manufacturer of food processing, packaging and material handling equipment, has completed the acquisition of **QC Industries**, manufacturer and integrator of a broad range of industrial conveyor systems headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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NOTES & QUOTES

■ **Bevcorp LLC**, Willoughby, Ohio-based manufacturer of high-speed fillers, blenders and container handling equipment for the beverage industry, has completed the acquisition of **East Coast Seamers**, Forest Hill, Md.-based supplier of rebuilt **Angelus**, **Continental** and **Canco** can seamers and a full-service provider of seamer systems services.

■ Printing inks and coatings manufacturer **Sun Chemical Corporation** of Parsippany, N.J., has completed the acquisition of the metal deco ink business of the Pittsburgh, Pa.-headquartered **PPG Industries** for an undisclosed amount. “With changes in consumer tastes and lifestyles across the world driving increased demand for canned food and beverages, brands are constantly seeking new ways of decorating the metal packaging of their products to differentiate them from the competition,” says Sun Chemical’s chief marketing officer Felipe Mellado. “This acquisition means that Sun Chemical will now be able to offer customers an enhanced range of metal deco solutions to help them achieve their marketing goals.”

■ Chicago-headquartered rigid packaging products group **Berlin Packaging** has completed the acquisition of **H. Erben Ltd.**, a leading U.K.-based supplier of closures and other packaging for the food-and-beverage industries with operations in Europe, South Africa and California. “H. Erben is an extraordinary company that not only shares our focus on quality, service, and results for customers, but also has a culture that delights in serving and growing powerfully in the marketplace,” says Berlin Packaging’s chief executive officer Andrew Berlin, adding that the acquired company will now operate as the **Bruni Erben** subsidiary of Berlin Packaging. “Adding Erben to the Berlin enterprise shows our commitment to acquire the best businesses in the packaging industry, along with our proven approach to organic growth.”

■ **Maxcess International**, Oklahoma City, Okla.-headquartered manufacturer of precision rolls, guiding systems, inspection systems, tension controls, slitting systems, and shafts and chucks for web handling industry applications, has completed the acquisition of **Componex**, Edgerton, Wis.-based supplier of web handling system components, including the popular **WINerti** range of dead shaft idlers. “The acquisition of an innovative brand like Componex adds tremendous value to our family of web handling companies, specifically our Precision Rolls Group,” says Maxcess chief executive officer Greg Jehlik. “Being deeply focused on expansion through organic growth, product development and acquisitions, Componex is a perfect example of a category leader and an addition that will add significant capabilities at other Maxcess facilities around the world moving forward.”



■ Protective packaging product group **Pregis LLC** of Deerfield, Ill., has completed the acquisition of **Rex Performance Products (RPP)**, manufacturer of laminated polyethylene (PE) foam employing 85 people at a 100,000-square-foot production facility in Marysville, Mich. “This acquisition strengthens our position as a leading North American producer of engineered foam, with a vast warehousing network across the continent to serve fabricators,” says Pregis chief executive officer Kevin Baudhuin. “We believe our combined product offering, enhanced foam technology and our teams’ knowledge strengthen our position as a valued partner to our customers.”

■ Rigid packaging products group **TricorBraun Inc.**, of St. Louis, Mo., has completed the acquisition of **Package All Corp.**, a healthcare-focused packaging distributor headquartered in Bayport, N.Y. “Package All has significant exper-

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tise in rigid packaging for the healthcare industry,” says TricorBraun’s executive chairman Keith Strope, “and we are excited about the opportunities this acquisition creates to provide customers of both companies with expanded services.”

■**Sonoco**, one of the world’s largest diversified global packaging companies headquartered in Hartsville, S.C., has reached a definitive agreement to acquire **Highland Packaging Solutions**—Plant City, Fla.-based producer of thermoformed plastic packaging for fresh produce and dairy products—for approximately US\$150 million in cash. Employing about 425 people at a modern production facility in Plant City, the company specializes in providing total packaging solutions that include sophisticated engineered containers, flexo-printed labels and inventory management through distribution warehouses in the U.S. southeast and along the West Coast of the U.S.—generating net sales of about US\$90 million last year. According to Sonoco’s executive chief operating officer Rob Tiede, “Highland’s recognized best-in-class manufacturing and effectiveness in product integration with automated filling machines will add breadth to our growing produce customer mix through a dedicated manufacturing facility located in the important Florida produce market, while also providing us an important entry into egg packaging, which is becoming a fast-growing protein source in North America.”

■**Cincinnati**, Ohio-headquartered flexible packaging products group **ProAmpac** has completed the acquisition of **Pactech Packaging**, Rochester, N.Y.-based manufacturer specialist in pouch manufacturing and converting. “This acquisition expands ProAmpac’s flexible packaging pouch manufacturing capabilities in dispensing and clean-environment production,” says ProAmpac’s chief executive officer Greg Tucker. “In addition, the deal expands our short-run capabilities, allowing us to better serve our customers.” Currently operating a 127,000-square-foot production facility set on 27 acres of land in Rochester, the newly-acquired business will become part of the ProAmpac brand of flexible packaging products, headed by ProAmpac’s chief commercial officer Adam Grose.

■**ORBIS Corporation**, Oconomowoc, Wis.-based manufacturer of reusable packaging products and systems, has completed the acquisition of **Response Packaging**, Piedmont, S.C.-headquartered supplier of reusable custom dunnage for automotive parts and fabricated steel rack solutions for warehousing applications employing 275 people at two locations in South Carolina, one in Michigan and one in Mexico. “This acquisition brings us talented people, efficient plants

and strong capabilities in geographic areas where ORBIS wants to grow,” says ORBIS president Bill Ash. “Response Packaging is strongly aligned with ORBIS in areas like supply chain expertise, innovation and customer knowledge.”

■**Lassonde Industries Inc.**, Rougemont, Que.-headquartered producer of ready-to-drink fruit and vegetable juices marketed under the **Everfresh**, **Oasis** (see picture), **Apple & Eve** and other popular brand names, has reached an agreement to acquire **Old Orchard Brands, LLC**, a family-owned juice and beverage company based in Sparta, Michigan, for US\$146 million, along with an additional US\$4 million



for the property and the on-site production facility. “Adding the Old Orchard brand to our product portfolio will further strengthen our presence in the U.S. national brands sector,” says Lassonde Industries chairman and chief executive officer Pierre-Paul Lassonde, noting the acquisition will provide the company with a new production line for frozen concentrated products. “Old Orchard has a good reputation and enjoys solid brand loyalty, especially in the central U.S.,” says Lassonde Industries president and chief executive officer Jean Gattuso. “The Old Orchard brand complements our existing brands, and the transaction will add a line of frozen juices to our product offering—introducing interesting new growth opportunities.”



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FIRST GLANCE

CLEAR DIRECTIONS



Well-suited for a broad range of position, speed, pressure and force control applications, the new versatile four- and three-way **4WRLE-4X** directional control valves from **Bosch Rexroth Canada** are

designed to provide fewer pressure drops, faster motion sequences, greater poser density and optimal stability to handle even the most demanding control tasks, according to the company. Designed to deliver optimal and dynamic electrohydraulic control capabilities, the high-flow **4WRLE-4X** valves can handle flow rates of up to 4,700 liters per minute in an ambient temperature range from -20°C to +60°C.

Bosch Rexroth Canada

HIDE AND SLEEK

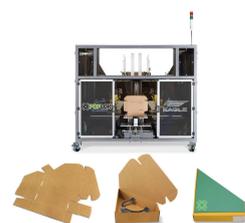


Designed for tricky food packaging applications, the new **Sleek Inverted** machine from **Paxiom Group** is engineered for the optimal handling of soft, sticky, or multipack products that may be difficult to push with the traditional lug chain design found on most con-

ventional flowwrappers. Capable of producing up to 100 packages per minute with a maximum web width of 500-mm, the **Sleek Inverted** system is designed for securely carrying the product on top of the packaging film—including polypropylene, microperforated, multilayer, laminated, co-extruded and foil films—from the machine's former all the way to the cutting head.

Paxiom Group

FLY LIKE AN EAGLE



Manufactured by **Eagle Packaging Machinery**, the innovative **PopLok** machine is a customizable automatic tray-forming solution designed to erect a wide range of self-locking corrugated and paperboard trays with or without a lid. Capable of forming one-, two- and multi-tuck paperboard or corrugated trays, the **PopLok** is built in a heavy-duty welded steel frame to ensure durability and longevity in rugged high-speed packaging applications involving hardware components, automotive parts, and other heavy items. The **PopLok** provides efficiency by gently pulling tray blanks one at a time from the hopper to a forming section, where precise plows then erect the side and end panels of the tray. At the same time, the minor flaps are folded and the tray passes through a set of side bars that

fold and lock the roll-over flaps into place—all without the use of any glue or adhesive tape.

Eagle Packaging Machinery

CATCHING A LIFT



Designed for a multitude of end-of-of-arm tooling, ergonomic lifting, pick-and-place robotics and other applications, the **Vi-Cas** vacuum cups from **Vi-Cas Manufacturing** are offered in a broad range of sizes and shapes—including round, square and oval—to fit virtually any type or brand of vacuum equipment used for safe lifting or manipulation of boxes or other large items. Designed to work with a broad variety of vacuum valves, swivel joints, level compensators and other accessories to increase the productivity and energy efficiency of lifting systems, the **Vi-Cas** cups are offered in a wide choice of materials to suit virtually any application requirement, including food-grade contact, high-temperature materials, anti-static for handling electronic components, etc.

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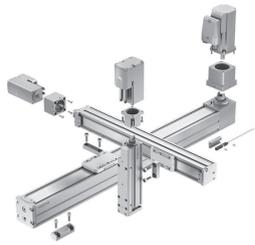
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production, the new **ELGC/EGSC** drive series from **Festo** can be utilized as a single-axis system or joined to form multi-axes systems like cantilevers, pick-and-place solutions, or linear 2D or 3D gantries without the need for external adaptors or special assembly tools. Offering robust load carrying capabilities, a compact space-saving design and a choice of motor kits, the low-cost, high-performance drives series includes **ELGC** spindle axes and toothed belt axes and the **EGSC** mini-slides, as well as axial and parallel kits of matching servo and stepper motors. Boasting a protected recirculating ball bearing guide, the **ELGC** axes are ideal for XY movements and vertical Z movements, according to Festo, while the high-resiliency **EGSC** mini-slides, featuring quiet spindle operation, are perfect for vertical Z movements or guided linear individual motion in any mounting position. The high performance drive and guide elements of these new Festo drives deliver excellent load carrying ability and repetition accuracy (up to ± 0.003 for spindle axes, ± 0.015 mm for mini-slides and ± 0.08 mm for tooth belt axes) and ensure long service life.

Festo Inc.

NEW PET PROJECT



The fourth-generation **APF-Max** stretch blowmolding machinery range manufactured by **PET**

Technologies—distributed in North America by **Sopro Machinery LLC**—comprises three basic models in four-, six- and eight-cavity configurations to cover output rates from 6,000 to 14,000 bottles per hour. Each boasting sleek streamlined design and quick-change-over capabilities, the all-electric **APF-Max 4**, **APF-Max 6** and **APF-Max 8** models utilize high-performance servo drives—embedded in the mold closing unit, preform stretching, heater, preform transfer to the blowing, and bottle out feed system—to ensure superior process consistency and high output of different bottle sizes from 0.2 to three-liter volume capacity. The machines also incorporate innovative short-wave near infrared heating system (NIR) technology to deliver more energy-efficient preform heating with a more compact heater for reduced footprint requirements.

Sopro Machinery LLC

JUST DROPPING IN

Developed by the Packaging Development and Consulting Department of **Krones AG**, the 200-ml droplet-shaped lightweight PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottle was developed as an alternative to the traditional small water beakers



typically sealed with removable film or foil layers. Weighing only 4.4 grams, the droplet container can be closed with a normal screw-cap and designed via a range of labeling options for branding, as well as being able to be manufactured on standard blowmolding machinery. In addition, the container also offers an option for pressurizing it with nitrogen after filling to stabilize it for storage and transportation.

Krones Inc.

RIDING THE WAVE

Designed for lower-volume beverage producers, the new entry-level **G1** applicator from **WaveGrip** can create multi-



packs of four, six or eight cans each, with automatic pack separation, while accommodating a full range of can heights at speeds of up to 100 cans per minute. Compatible with all WaveGrip carriers—available in four stock colors of *Noir* (Black), *Tangerine* (Orange), *Envy* (Green) and *Fury* (Red)—the **G1** applicator features an **Allen-Bradley** PLC (programmable logic controller) control to enable easy integration with other packaging equipment and fully-automated application of standard WaveGrip reels to pack more than 3,000 six-packs over five hours.

WaveGrip



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NATURAL PACKAGING CHOICE FOR THE BEAUTIFUL PERFECT FINNISH

If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, then there's plenty to behold in the fully biodegradable **Sulapac** packaging selected by Finnish cosmetics company **Naviter** for its new *Atopik* range of natural beauty products.

Made entirely from renewable raw materials and wood derived from sustainably managed Nordic forests, the Sulapac packaging was developed specifically for consumer brands that value sustainability and ecological sensitivity, according to Sulapac's chief executive officer and co-founder Suvi Haimi.

"As a natural cosmetics manufacturer and innovator in its field, Naviter is an ideal partner for us because we share the same values and a vision of a future where cosmetics can be packaged and used without generating harmful plastic waste," says Haimi, who co-founded the Helsinki-based Sulapac in 2016 with



business partner Laura Kyllönen.

"Furthermore, both our companies draw inspiration from the purity of Finnish nature," says Haimi, adding the eco-friendly Sulapac packaging—first used on the *Atopik All Over Balm* product line (see picture)—contains zero microplastics.

For Naviter, a fast-growing family-owned company specializing in skin- and hair-care products made with natural ingredients, using Sulapac packaging was a natural choice.

"Thanks to Sulapac's innovative and sustainable packaging, our packaging and content can now speak the same language," says Naviter's chief executive officer Anni Linnavirta.

"Using Sulapac packaging demonstrates our firm commitment to sustainability and eliminating microplastics, which will be important as we begin to expand into the international markets."

UNITED FRONT ON MARINE LITTER

With marine plastic pollution now widely acknowledged to be one of the world's most pressing environmental issues, leading German industrial and consumer products group **Henkel AG & Company** has teamed up with the **Waste Free Oceans** organization to remove plastic waste from oceans and rivers—with the aim of transforming it into over a million bottles used for its *Lovables* liquid laundry detergent brand.

Under the three-year plan announced last month, the two partners aim to remove enough plastic from rivers, lakes, seas and oceans to produce 100 metric tons of usable recycled material each year.

"Oceans and rivers are among the most expansive and diverse resources on Earth, but we don't protect them as well as we should," says Waste Free Oceans co-founder Bernard Merckx, adding this is by far the largest collaborative venture his organization has embarked upon since its 2011 startup.

Says Merckx: "An estimated eight million metric tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year, which is the equivalent of 15 grocery bags filled with plastic for every meter of coastline in the world.

"At Waste Free Oceans, our answer is to enter into partnerships to tackle this problem together.

"We're now delighted to be working with Henkel and organizing remediation actions together: it's our largest and most ambitious partnership with one unique partner so far."

The joint program is being launched this spring with the collection of plastic waste from the Danube River, with target locations ranging from Bulgaria through to Hungary and Romania that were selected based on a detailed analysis of the way the currents and geography of the river cause plastic to accumulate at certain points.

Under the program, volunteers will gather plastic waste from the river banks and beaches, while teams of participating fishermen will trawl the river using a special device that removes floating plastic waste from the water—collecting an estimated two to eight metric



tons of marine litter on each journey. Henkel's recently-launched Lovables brand of liquid laundry detergent (above left) is planning to incorporate recycled marine plastic litter captured from the Danube River by fishing boats equipped with special floating trawling devices (above right) attached to the vessels.

tons of marine litter on each journey.

The collections along the Danube will be followed by activities at several locations in the Mediterranean Sea during the summer months.

Once recycled, the plastic will be included in the manufacture of bottles for the *Lovables* laundry brand.

Launched in early 2018, the *Lovables* brand offers special gentle cleaning that preserves consumers' favorite clothing by protecting the quality of the fabrics and colors.

According to Henkel, the *Lovables* bottles are made from 100-percent recycled material, and the brand aims to include recycled marine plastic litter from Waste Free Oceans in over a million bottles.

"Our partnership with Waste Free Oceans is another step forward in our commitment to promoting sustainable packaging and recycling," says Dr. Thomas Müller-Kirschbaum, head of global R&D at Henkel's Laundry & Home Care business unit. "Together, we can remove a meaningful amount of plastic from the environment, while also raising consumer awareness of marine plastic litter and the need to better protect our oceans and rivers," he says.

Müller-Kirschbaum adds that last year Henkel used recycled plastic in the packaging for more than 1.2 billion detergent, household cleaning and beauty care products globally.

INDUSTRY LEADERS HOOK UP TO BOOST RECYCLING OF SHRINKSLEEVED PLASTIC BEVERAGE CONTAINERS

Successful sustainable packaging development is rooted in partnership and collaborations across the packaging value chain, with the recent joint endeavor between **Sun Chemical** and **Eastman Chemical Company** yielding an innovative new solution for quick and easy removal of recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET) shrinksleeve labels from recyclable plastic beverage containers.

According to the companies, using the new **SunLam De-Steaming Adhesive** for shrink-labeled containers instead of traditional solvents enables the labels to deem and release during the whole bottle step of the wet recycling process prior to the color, infrared and manual sorting stages—thus preventing shrink-labeled PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottles being removed from the rPET stream due to misidentification.

Sun Chemical and Eastman says they performed extensive testing of the **SunLam** adhesive on labels made with Eastman **Embrace LV** copolyester material, which has recently received a *Responsible Innovation Acknowledgment* citation by the U.S.-based **Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR)**.

Utilizing the whole bottle wash equipment used at commercial recycling facilities, the tests yielded results of greater than the required 95-percent label removal—typically exceeding 99-percent success rate.

“When the challenge of removing shrink labels during PET recycling was brought to the industry’s attention by the APR and the National Association for



PET Container Resources in 2012, Eastman stepped up to the challenge and organized a consortium to collaborate on ways to solve this issue,” relates Ronnie Little, market development manager for Eastman in Kingsville, Tenn.

“Because PET bottle bales typically contain five per cent shrink-labeled PET bottles, many of those labels do not come off in the PET recycling process—reducing rPET yield.

“We’re pleased to have partnered with Sun Chemical in this process to develop a technology that satisfies the consumers’ desire to recycle, a brand’s goal to be both responsible and recognizable, and the APR’s mission to eliminate barriers to successful commercial recycling,” Little states.

“Consumers and brand-owners alike expect PET bottles to be recycled but, unfortunately, far too many end up in landfills because the label wouldn’t come off,” adds Russell Schwartz, chief technology officer with Sun Chemical in Parsippany, N.J.

“At Sun Chemical, we consider it our responsibility to address issues in the industries in which we participate and to provide leadership in resolving problems our partners and customers face.

“Upon learning of these concerns, we initiated a major project to solve this industry-wide challenge,” says Schwartz, “and are pleased to introduce the environmentally-friendly SunLam De-seaming Adhesive as part of our contribution to the Circular Economy.”

A WHOLE NEW GREEN START FOR HIGH-END PAPERBOARD PRINTER

After last year’s shocking **Brexit** referendum, many of U.K.’s leading companies had to quickly reexamine their existing supply chains.

For **Windles**, one of Britain’s leading printers specializing in greeting cards and high-end packaging, that meant conducting a detailed review of its supply of paper and paperboard.

After careful consideration, the company decided on using the **Incada** paperboard, produced domestically in Workington by the Swedish-based **Iggesund Paperboard**, while launching a powerful marketing campaign to create better public awareness of the product.

“But the choice was not only nationalistic,” explains Windles’ managing director Bruce Podmore.

“We tried to look at all aspects—price neutrality, availability, quality, and everything that is included in the concept of total cost of ownership.”

As Podmore relates, Windles moved into its new premises in Thame, Oxfordshire, a couple of years ago.

Designed with long-term sustainability in mind, the new factory meets 80 per cent of its heating requirements with biomass, whereby the company extracts the required energy from all the pallet wood it previously had to get rid of.

Podmore explains that the new plant has some very interesting neighbors, including a so-called “bat cave” facility designed to help the local bat population reproduce, as well as a “badger hotel” purpose-built to shelter the local badger population.

“The most important aspects of our decision to choose Incada as our house paperboard was our desire to reduce our carbon footprint, plus Incada’s availability,” relates Podmore.

“With alternative manufacturers offering lead-times of about 15 weeks, we would have needed a buffer of stocks to compensate for disruptions in the supply chains,” Podmore says. “That costs money, and more than we had.

“The lead-times we can get for Incada with its production facility in Cumbria (Workington) are significantly shorter than many of our previous supply arrangements,” he adds.

“It’s also important not to underestimate the value of learning complete mastery of a material if it’s something you use often.”

Purchasing its paperboard supplies via local distributor **Antalis**, the two companies recently cemented their collaboration with Iggesund by jointly visiting the Workington mill for a review of **Incada**’s performance and environmental properties.

“For us, it is ideal to have a high-quality paperboard that is made nearby,” Podmore says. “Minimal shipments, short lead-times, and very good print results are quite simply a winning combination.

“And from a British perspective, it is also positive that we are buying input goods whose manufacture creates jobs in the U.K.”

Moreover, Podmore points out that Windles and Iggesund are very much on the same page in respect to environmental sustainability and carbon-footprint reduction. Since 2013, the integrated Workington pulp and paperboard mill has been powered entirely by fossil carbon-free bioenergy.

The bleached mechanical pulp is processed to suit the special demands of paperboard manufacture, and is combined with purchased bleached chemical pulp into a multilayered board construction ideally suited to the



High-end packaging produced by Windles with the Incada paperboard manufactured by Iggesund’s Workington Mill.

demands of modern paperboard packaging.

After completing the installation of a biomass boiler in 2013, the Workington mill has been essentially a carbon-neutral operation, with the resulting drop in carbon-dioxide emissions said to be an equivalent of taking 65,000 average cars off the roads.

With regard to print properties, Podmore says that **Incada** is one of the whitest paperboards on the market, with its impressive surface smoothness providing the required stability for making creative use of cold-foil stamping—a process that Windles is renowned for.

“Printing is a dream when you don’t have to think about the yellowness of a board when designing,” he says. “Glossy and matte finishes, and true baby blues and pinks can be easily achieved without compensation.

“There’s a huge improvement in lead times and fantastic service from the mill, plus we can guarantee the quality,” he notes.

“Here at Windles, we are always striving to act in the most environmentally responsible way we can, which is why the fact of Incada being produced in the UK, at a mill using biomass for its energy, is so important to us.

“Quite simply,” Podmore concludes, “we really believe that it is the right thing to do.”



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- 2. Newmarket, ON - June 12th, Cardinal Golf Club
- 3. Langley, BC - June 20th, Redwoods Golf Course

- 4. Carlisle, ON - Sept. 11th, Carlisle Golf Club
- 5. Moncton, NB - Sept. 14th, Mountain Woods Golf Club
- 6. Montreal, QC - Sept. 25th, Golf de Saint-Raphael (at the PAC TO THE FUTURE Conference)

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The Lifecycle of Corrugated Packaging

5 The corrugated packaging is recycled by the consumer. Recycled corrugated material from consumer and pre-consumer streams travels back to our partners at Greenpac Mill.

lightweight Rolls of line shipped to at TenCorr

GREENPAC MILL



Corrugated packaging used to ship, package and display products by our customers.

Royal Containers president and chief executive officer Kim Nelson is a 16-time Ironman competition finisher and an Olympic-style weightlifter who has headed the company since 2009.

BY ROYAL CONSENT

Successful corrugated sheet producer leverages high-performance equipment and close supplier relationships to maintain healthy bottom-line growth

BY NICK GRIFFIN

PHOTOS BY NAOMI HILTZ

Royal Containers Ltd. is a far stretch from your ordinary pair of corrugated sheet plants. Employing a total of 245 people at its two Ontario locations in Brampton and London, the company runs between 40 and 45 million square feet of corrugated board per month to supply its loyal customer base, which the family-owned and operated business keeps happy with stellar customer service and impeccable product quality.

As company president and chief executive officer Kim Nelson explains, "We really believe in having strong values and a focus on relationships—not just within the company, but especially with our numerous customers and suppliers.

"Some might just call it service, but really it's about becoming the employer and supplier of choice," Nelson points out. "We have always believed in taking relationships one step further to allow us to build solid partnerships with our employees, customers and suppliers."

"So that when they call in, our customers have a relationship with the woman that answers the phone, the designers, people in our shipping department, many of our truck drivers ... even many of our machine operators are known to them by name," she relates.

"There's a high degree of built-in loyalty and trust in this, which helps attain a certain level of 'stickiness' between us and our customers, Nelson adds.

"Because our customers and employees are on a first-name basis, they are less likely to want to shop around."

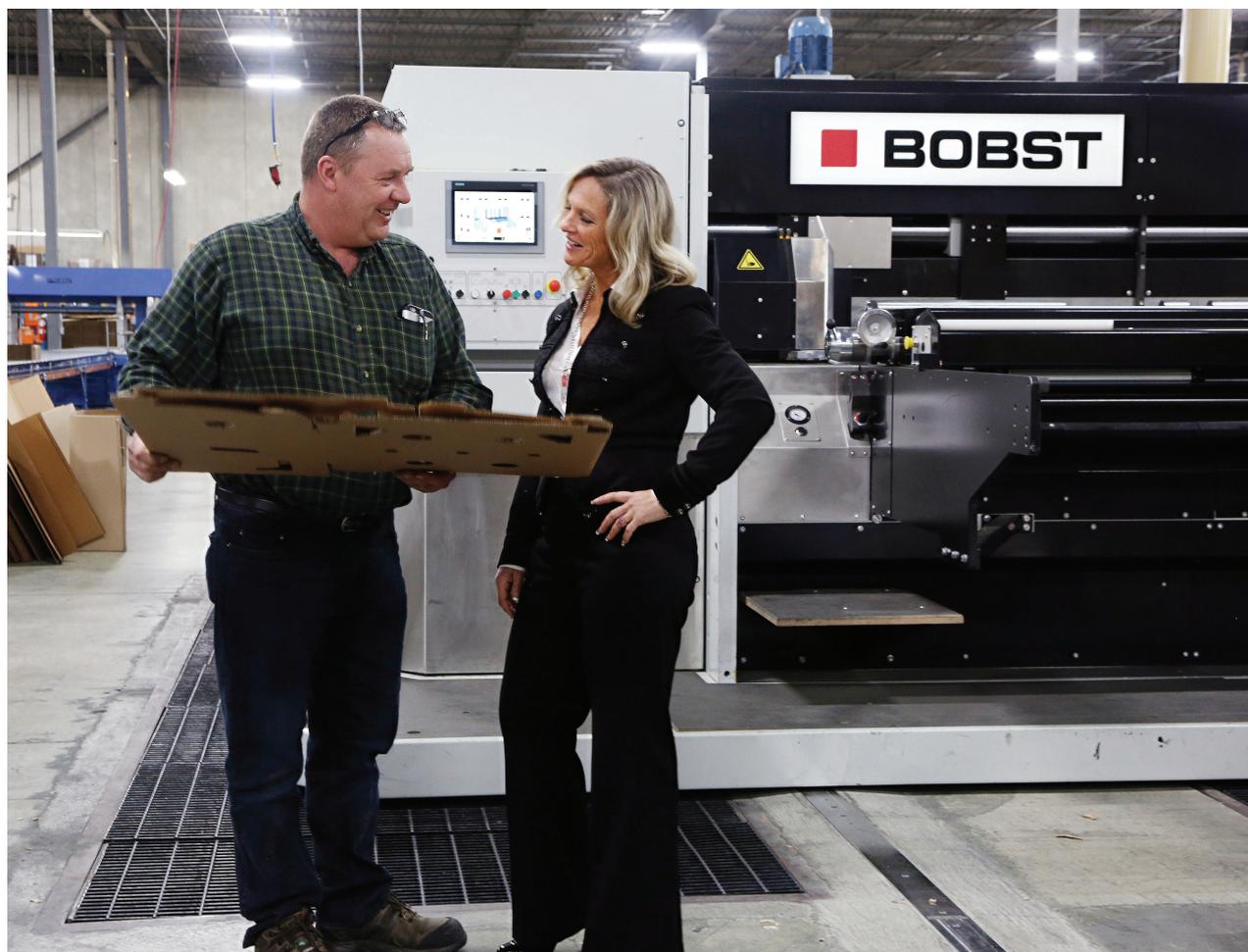
The company known today as Royal Container was formed in the late 1970s by Ross Nelson, who found his entrepreneurial calling after working in design and sales at two leading integrated companies.

After first striking a business partnership with the independent **Central Box & Containers**, Nelson sold his stake in the company, purchased a few pieces of basic equipment and went on to start up **Norbram Packaging**.

After acquiring two other local independent sheet producers, **Rowland Packaging** and **Tri-County Containers**, Royal Containers entered the market under its current moniker.

In the true Canadian-style spirit of friendly competition, independent producers serving the Ontario market are for the most part uniquely co-operative in their approach to business, with strategic partnerships being fairly commonplace.

In 1993, this enabled several local sheet plants to partner up in the formation of **TenCorr**, which according to Royal was North America's first-ever jointly-owned sheet feeder operation. The venture's first corrugator was installed in Toronto, with additional locations subsequently opened up in Mississauga and



Royal Containers plant manager Henry Lambert (left) and company president Kim Nelson examine a sample of intricately die-cut corrugated sheets coming off the BOBST flexo folder gluer machine behind them.

Brampton.

Around that time, Royal Containers and TenCorr became the first sheet feeder operations to invest in partial ownership of a paper mill.

After acquiring and then selling its shares in **Solvay Paperboard**, Royal had the good fortune to invest in **Cascades'** state-of-the-art Greenpac Mill in Niagara Falls, N.Y., manufacturer of 100-percent recycled linerboard.

These supply chain partnerships with sheet feeders and a paper mill formed a new vertical integration model that has provided Royal Containers with closer control over its own reliable source of paper and board.

In 2009, Royal made one of its larger acquisitions with the purchase of **Morphy Containers Ltd.**—just around the time that Kim Nelson was named Royal Container's chief executive officer.

In much the same way that the company is well above average, so is its leadership.

By any measure Kim Nelson is not your typical box plant chief executive officer. For one, she is a 16-time **Ironman** competition finisher and an **Olympic**-style weightlifter.

An avid athlete and a mother of three young children, she is also a past chair and the current overseas director of leading industry group **AICC-The Independent Packaging Association**.

The 100,000-square-foot Royal Containers plant in Brampton houses an assortment of high-performance BOBST converting equipment operating at optimal efficiency levels to help the company meet its production targets, along with comprehensive design and printing services.

Despite all these extra-curricular and outside activities, Nelson remains firmly focused on her day job of heading a highly successful, vertically-oriented corrugated operation.

For all the hallmarks of a family corporate culture, Royal Containers is very much a productivity-focused company, with efficiency a central goal of all its activities.

While its is capable of producing high-graphics work with its strong and talented design team, "We are more of a brown-box operation," states Nelson.

"We try to achieve our operational goal by driving efficiency at every stage and remaining very focused on performance indicators.

"We like to set goals for ourselves: the business is driven by a leadership group always focused on those specific goals," she explains.

"We have a very clear strategic plan every year posted openly everywhere in our building, so that anyone coming in here can immediately see where we are headed and what our goals are," she says.

"It's just a single page, but it's a page that shows everything we do and every decision we make," says Nelson.

"From the guy who's running a flexo press to the young woman who's answering the phone, everyone knows how they contribute to the goals and can ensure that their decisions are in alignment with those goals," she proclaims.

"I believe that sheer focus is how we consistently achieve our goals."

According to Nelson, the company has been able to achieve its year-to-year growth targets in large part to its nearly-exclusive use of production and converting equipment manufactured by leading machine-builder **Bobst North America Inc.**, including four BOBST-made FFG (folder flexo gluer) machines.

"We have everything from the smallest-capacity on up," Nelson reveals, citing the BOBST model **618**,



CORRUGATED PACKAGING

924, 1228 and 1636 FFGs employed at the plants.

“That’s one of each, in almost every size that Bobst makes,” she points out. “They’re all three-color, except for the four-color mini model, and we also have a three-color BOBST DRO rotary die-cutter in London.”

Nelson points out that Royal is currently in the process of adding a new BOBST pre-feeder and fully-automatic **PAL** pallet takeaway palletizer system to both the 924 and the 1228 units, which should be completed within the next few months.

“The decision to add these and other equipment was driven by existing customer needs,” she explains. “We must continuously drive to achieve greater throughput.

“We are close to capacity in Brampton and soon to be out of space in London,” she relates, “so in order to increase our throughput by 30 per cent and achieve all our goals for this year, we are adding the full-line 924 FFG machine.”

Because Royal Containers maintains virtually zero standing inventory, matching throughput with customer demand is critically important, according to Nelson, as well as upgrading the plants’ equipment on a consistent basis.

“About every two years we buy whatever’s out there that is more technically advanced and more efficient,” she says.

“We’ve always had flexos, so we always keep ourselves competitive by buying the newest, fastest and most advanced flexos.

“Our way of thinking is it’s driven by our customers’ needs.”

Nelson credits BOBST as being “a perfect match for Royal Containers because they are to us exactly what we are to our customers.

“They are important to us and a big part of our success,” she states. “It’s more than just having a knowledgeable sales rep, of course, even though that is in fact the case.

“We’ve enjoyed our relationship with BOBST for many years, and the loyalty that comes with it,” she says, describing BOBST equipment as “the Cadillac of our industry, despite some really good competition out there for them.”

Says Nelson: “We appreciate the relationship because it is mutual and authentic: We know that they’re important to our rep.

“With the quality and depth of our relationship, it’s more important than ever that they’re never more than a phone call away.

“All our relationships run deep,” says Nelson. “Operators, supervisors, plant managers, designers ... everyone is relying on each other when it comes to maintenance and service.”

Nelson says Royal Containers continually benefits from BOBST’s proactive input and suggestions on optimizing its equipment at the plant.

“They can be brutally honest with us: in fact, they have helped us to change our production culture.

“For example, although we’ve been running a flexo the same way for 20 years, they came in and challenged us, telling us we had a problem because so-and-so on the first shift and so-and-so on the third shift were not running the way they were supposed to.”

As far as Nelson is concerned, there is no such thing as too much co-operation, which applies to Royal staff as well as to outside suppliers.

“Early on, as well as throughout the process, we’ll sit down face-to-face with our production manage-



A close-up of the attractive high-strength display box produced for leading Canadian graphic arts and commercial printing supplier Spicers Canada, manufactured at the Brampton plant using state-of-the-art BOBST converting machinery.



Controlled via one of two MPC3 HMI (human-machine interface) terminals (*inset*) that enable just two machine operators control of the entire production run, the user-friendly BOBST 1228 NT flexo folder-gluer can process all common corrugated board grades and flute types to make a broad assortment of attractive containerboard and display packaging for all types of consumer goods and industrial products.

ment to help identify problems and provide suggestions and solutions,” Nelson relates.

“They’ll also sit down with the supervisors and the operators until everyone is on-board.

“They don’t leave until they have helped us improve our processes,” Nelson explains, citing the importance of quantifying and verifying the impact of all process changes and improvements.

“To meet our goals of constantly increasing productivity, everything is measured,” she states.

“And this also ties perfectly into the help and support that Bobst provides us at this stage.

“They align perfectly with our goals because they share these goals themselves,” says Nelson, adding she feels “very optimistic” about what Royal Containers can achieve in coming years with its dedicated staff, top-of-the-line production equipment, and exceptional machinery suppliers such as Bobst.

“Two years ago, Royal’s year over year growth was eight per cent; last year it was 17 per cent; and we are looking for somewhere in the 12- to 13-percent

range this year,” she relates. “And that’s just doing more of what we’re already doing.

“I am still looking for acquisitions,” she notes, “but our growth numbers for this year do not include increases due to acquisition.

“That said, I know that we are going to continue to grow and we are going to continue to acquire other independent companies,” Nelson states.

“It is really important for us to be aware that to stay in the game we need to compete,” she concludes.

“Combined with our unwavering core values and our focus on relationships and partnerships, we really believe we will continue to succeed: it is what drives us all.” 

SUPPLIERS

BOBST
Royal Containers



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THE KITS ARE ALRIGHT!

East Coast salmon processor poised to make big waves in the frozen seafood market through leading-edge product innovation and tasteful packaging execution

BY GEORGE GUIDONI, EDITOR
PHOTOS BY DARREL MUNRO

Urging North American consumers to eat more fish and seafood instead of red meat is in many ways like encouraging them to consume more veggies—a sound advice based on a wealth of nutritional evidence that, for many reasons, often falls on deaf ears.

With today's budget-conscious consumers constantly looking to save pennies and stretch their dollars in a daily quest to keep up with the rising costs of living, seafood is simply not the first thing that comes to mind for shoppers trying to keep their food costs in line.

For a large portion of these consumers, seafood is for the most part normally perceived as a special-occasion luxury item rather than a daily staple, with the prices to prove it.

Moreover, the widespread notion that making a high-quality seafood dish requires an inordinate amount of time, preparation and culinary expertise to pull it off is also a major obstacle to more robust seafood consumption.

Valid concern or not, the onus is ultimately on seafood producers themselves to make their products more accessible to the masses, according to Doug Park, founder and chief executive officer of the thriv-



Having played an instrumental role in the development of the brand new line of easy-to-make Sous Chef Kits brand of frozen seafood entrees, Cedar Bay Grilling Company's general manager Robert Moore (*left*) joins the company's founder and chief executive officer Doug Park in showing off the attractive colorful paperboard cartons, designed by Balance Creative, that are expected to start retailing across Canada at leading grocers by the early fall of this year.

ing, hard-working, and highly innovative Nova Scotia seafood processor **Cedar Bay Grilling Company**.

Tucked away in a tiny South Shore hamlet and fishing village of Blandford, about an hour's drive south of Halifax, the 16,000-square-foot processing and packaging facility is a veritable hotbed of seafood innovation guided by a single-minded quest to make seafood a rewarding, convenient and consumer-friendly experience with affordable, high-quality products designed to enable any home cook to prepare a delicious, gourmet-quality fish or seafood recipe without breaking a sweat.

Having established itself as a notable industry player in recent years with a very successful line of **Cedar Planked Atlantic Salmon** products—sold in airtight vacuum packs containing ready-to-cook salmon fil-

lets and pre-soaked cedar planks—the 40-employee company is now pushing itself on to the next level of innovation brilliance.

Scheduled for a major retail launch across Canada in early September, the new line of **Cedar Bay Sous Chef Kits** are unlike anything everyday seafood lovers have seen in their supermarket freezers to date, as evidenced by the product's selection as one of 10 finalists in the Best New Product competition of the recent **Seafood Expo North America** exhibition in Boston, Ma.

With **Cedar Bay** brand products already retailing at all major Canadian grocers and at seven of the top 10 U.S. chains, according to Park, the attractive, colorful boxes of **Sous Chef Kits**—currently consisting of five mouth-watering recipes—are a testament to the company's genuine commitment to product and packaging



A freshly vacuum-packed four-pack of breaded salmon fillets coming off one of the plant's two high-performance Variovac Optimus machines supplied by Reiser Canada.



Each of the five different Sous Chef Kits recipes contain very generous servings of high-quality seafood and other ingredients to provide a nourishing and delicious meal for two adults at a highly attractive price point of under \$10 per box.



A close-up view of the four-portion pack of German Pretzel Encrusted Atlantic Salmon packed inside tightly sealed freezer bags printed and converted by Farnell Packaging Limited and supplied to the plant by Veritiv Canada, along with the high-quality corrugated display boxes (*inset*) manufactured by Maritime Paper Products.



“Each kit has four individually-packed components with clear instructions on how to use it in that particular dish, which engages the consumer to participate in the creation of their meal and, critically, always obtain a good result.”

According to Park, the kits offer a perfect meal solution for young busy professionals who lack extensive cooking skills, as well as the

empty-nesters who will appreciate the portion control aspect of the *Sous Chef Kit* recipes.

The new kit line currently comprises five different recipes—including *Atlantic Salmon Pho*, *Shrimp Pho Bowl*, *Vegetable Alfredo with Atlantic Salmon* and two varieties of *Seafood Chowder (Original and Smokey Bacon)*—that were picked from more than a dozen inspired suggestions, according to Park.

In addition to the sensory appeal of the dishes themselves, the ease-of-preparation was also an important selection criterion, Park relates.

“To make the Shrimp Pho dish, for example, you take out the packages of broth concentrate, mix it with two cups of water and bring to boil, add the packet of shrimp, bring it all to a simmer, and add the vegetables packet at the last minute so that they’re warm but still crunchy,” Park explains.

“You then place the kit’s rice noodles into the two pockets of the bowl supplied in the kit and pour the broth with shrimp and veggies over them, which heats up the noodles and completes the dish.”

It’s a very similar prep process with the two chowders, Park explains, except the noodles are replaced with pre-diced potatoes and the protein comes in the form of shrimps, scallops and salmon chunks—each in their own vacuum-packed pouches.

“It’s really a ‘paint by numbers’ approach to seafood

innovation.

“Our retail customers love us because we always bring innovation to the table,” Park told *Canadian Packaging* in an interview from the company’s recently-opened U.S. subsidiary in Miami, Fla.

“It all about challenging ourselves to solving problems for consumers.”

As Park relates, the original inspiration for the kits came from an intense collective brainstorming session about a year ago, when Cedar Bay employees and a

few professional chefs were challenged to come up with ideas for a new product line that was not only unique in the market, but could also be produced cost-effectively on the company’s existing equipment.

“That’s where the idea of a multicomponent kit came about,” Park recalls.

“There are a lot of consumers out there who feel they do not have the right skillset to make a proper seafood dish, but the kit concept eliminates that fear factor,” Park says.



Cedar Bay Grilling founder and chief executive officer Doug Park says he loves everything about the versatile, user-friendly and high-performance Variovac Optimus vacuum-packaging machines (*background*) installed at the company's Blandford processing facility, noting that they play a key role in enabling the company to develop innovative and affordable seafood meal solutions for Canadian and U.S. customers with exceptionally quick time-to-market.

cooking that is impossible to mess up if you follow the directions,” Park extols, complimenting the outstanding package design graphics developed for the kits through a collaborative effort by a package design agency **Balance Creative**, and Cedar Bay’s in-house design team lead by Doug’s wife Barb.

“It is really hard work to get a message across on a billboard this small,” he says, “and we actually had two messages to relay: what’s in the box and just how easy the product is to make.

“It took multiple go-arounds to get it right,” he recalls, “but the team worked relentlessly, full-tilt, to get it right.

“Full credit to them for simplifying what we wanted to convey to the consumers: These kit dishes can be made in under 20 minutes, using just one pan, to make enough delicious and healthy food for two adult servings.”

Remarkably, all the kits are priced under \$10 apiece, Park points out, making them affordable for even the most modest household budgets.

“We are very generous with our portions: there is no skimping or short-changing consumers with the protein or any other ingredients,” Park says.

“When someone uses one of these kits to make a meal, they will see a lot of value-added in it.

“With our chowders, the consumer will actually be able to see, make out and taste the individual shrimps, scallops and chunks of salmon and enjoy their distinct textures and taste profiles—it’s not just a glob of stuff held together by creamy liquid.

“We want to satisfy consumers to the max with these products,” says Park, citing 18-month frozen shelf-life for each of the five *Sous Chef Kit* recipes.

While salmon still accounts for the lion’s share of



Pieces of breaded premium Atlantic salmon being hand-placed into their proper compartments on top of the high-strength clear plastic film, manufactured by Winpak and supplied to the Blandford plant by Veritiv Canada, prior to being sealed into tidy four-packs (*inset*) on the high-performance Variovac Optimus equipment purchased from Reiser Canada.

processing at Cedar Bay Grilling, as well as the bulk of about 25 different SKU’s (stock-keeping units) produced over the one-shift, five-days-a-week work schedule, Park says that adding other seafood species to the company’s repertoire can only strengthen its overall processing and packaging expertise and core competencies.

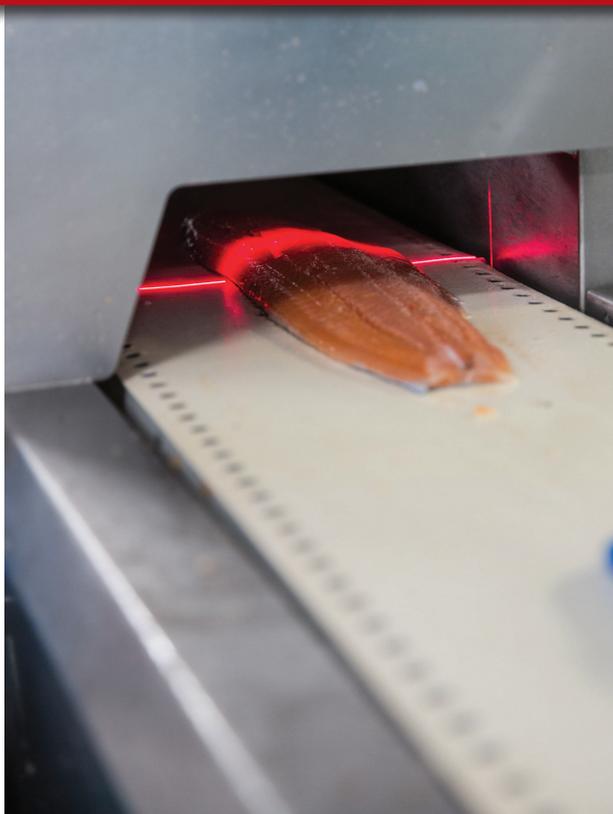
“We don’t see a reason for intentionally limiting ourselves to just one type of seafood,” he states.

“In order to be able to market ourselves as a category

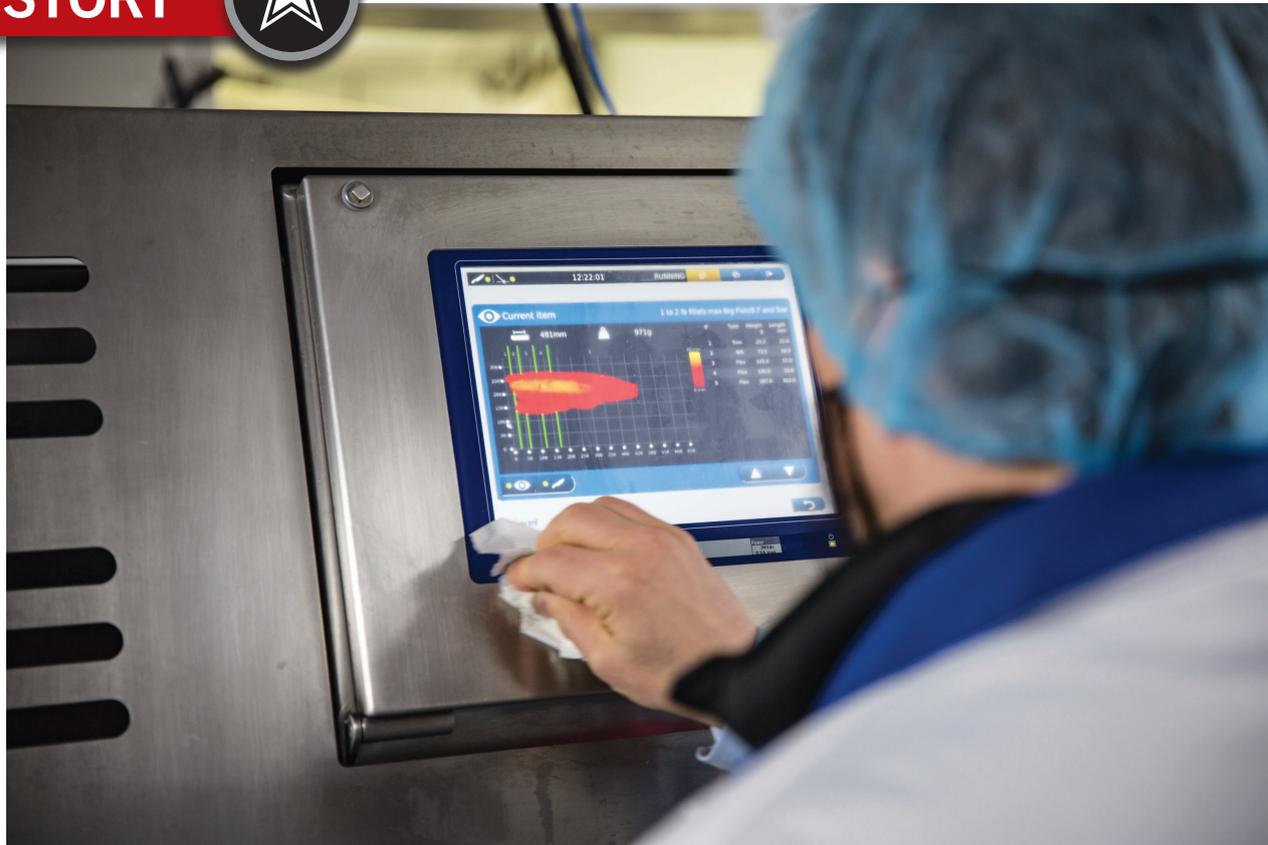
innovator, we see great potential value in diversifying our game a little bit by developing more value-added solutions for the consumer.”

This mindset also applies to the salmon-only products, Park points out, citing the new **Bake it Easy** brand of frozen entrees containing generous chunks of seasoned Atlantic salmon placed in a cooking pan, and topped off with shredded potatoes, large pieces of broccoli and a zesty cream sauce.

“We’re starting with salmon, but we fully expect to



The Blandford facility uses a state-of-the-art Marel laser portion cutting machine to ensure superior portioning accuracy with virtually zero food waste.



A touchscreen interface terminal provides a real-time graphic display of all the critical product data gathered by the unit's high-speed vision systems incorporated inside the machine.

extend this brand to other types of fish and seafood on by-request basis.”

In a similar vein, the company's line of globally-inspired breaded frozen salmon fillets—such as the four-pack bags of **German Pretzel Encrusted Atlantic Salmon**—reflect virtually limitless capacity for imaginative product innovation.

“We have actually just completed an order for this product for one of the leading Club Store chains in the U.S.,” Park relates, “and we're very hopeful on being able to bring it to the Canadian retail market soon.”

For now, however, the company's primary marketing focus is to ensure a smooth and well-received national Canadian retail launch of the *Sous Chef Kit* product line this fall.

Some of the kit products are already being test-marketed down in the U.S. at selected retailers in and around Philadelphia, and Park says he is very encouraged by the positive feedback so far.

Says Park: “We got a lot of positive comments at the Boston seafood show about how innovative our kit products are, and also on just how good they taste.

“Seafood retailers and buyers are not an easy crowd to please,” Park notes. “Whenever a new product is introduced, there is always a suspicion that it will either taste lousy, be too salty, too expensive or whatever.

“With this product, we managed to hit all the marks on both taste and affordability.”

As Park relates, nearly all of the retail products produced at the Blandford plant are packaged on three

high-performance **Variovac Optimus** vacuum-packing machines supplied to the plant by **Reiser Canada**, a subsidiary of Canton, Ma.-headquartered food processing and packaging equipment manufacturer **Reiser**.

“We got our first Variovac machine in 2012, purchased another two years later, and just got our third one earlier this year for the Miami plant,” says Park, adding he is extremely satisfied with the equipment's performance, reliability, user-friendliness and flexibility.

“Almost everything we package goes through a Variovac machine,” he says. “They are real workhorses for us and we make full productive use of them.

“They are easily interchangeable machines, so we



The Blandford facility makes exclusive use of the high-performance Domino product coding equipment, such as the model Ax 350i continuous inkjet coder above, for all its product identification and traceability requirements.



Packaged on the Variovac Optimus machines using high-barrier plastic film manufactured by Winpak, the *Sous Chef Kits* components offer 18-month product shelf-life.



Maritime Paper Products is the primary supplier of corrugated display and shipping boxes used to get Cedar Bay products to market.



COVER STORY

can use them to run any line of products at any one time with minimal disruption,” Park reveals, although he expects one of the **Variovac**s to be soon dedicated to the *Sous Chef Kit* production full-time as the launch date approaches.

“This is intended to be a very mainstream product for us, which I expect to provide a full workload for one of our Variovac machines during the busy fall and winter seasons, when people are not barbecuing as much.”

Designed as a high-performance plug-and-play system solution for cost-effective food packaging automation, the compact *Variovac Optimus* machines feature stable stainless-steel construction, a state-of-the-art **Variovac RapidAirSystem** for optimal packaging precision and shaping; sanitary design; and robust packaging outputs of up to 13 cycles per minute.

Equally proficient at all the common sealing, vacuum-packing, MAP (modified-atmosphere packaging), skin-packing and shrink packaging techniques, the highly versatile machine can work with a vast range of film types and thicknesses to produce all manner of packages up to 110-mm in depth.

Park says he is very fond of the machine’s quick product changeovers and flexibility that allow Cedar Bay to “partially vacuum-pack” each individual kit component to ensure optimal product shelf-life and contents protection, with very gentle handling of the product itself.

“Reiser is a fantastic company to work with: their equipment is superb and their technicians are exceptionally knowledgeable people that fully understand their equipment as well as our production needs and demands—helping us maintain a very efficient production flow,” he acknowledges.

In fact, the *Variovac* equipment has performed so well at the Blandford plant that Park had no qualms about purchasing an additional *Variovac* machine, featuring advanced skin-pack capabilities, for the company’s new 7,000-square-foot Miami operation started up earlier this year—specializing in planked fresh salmon products.

Park says the company takes a lot of pride in having maintained the coveted, internationally-recognized **BRC (British Retail Council)** certification for food safety at its Blandford plant for the past four years, achieving *AA* status for the last two years.

“It’s one of the highest food safety standards in the world, and because it started in Europe, we needed to obtain it in order to be able to sell in European markets one day,” he explains.

“It was a huge effort for our staff and required significant investment to put new systems in place to achieve compliance,” says Park, citing installation of **Loma Systems** metal detectors to inspect finished packages for any possible metal contamination.

“I am glad we made the effort to obtain BRC certification because now that it is starting to be applied in North America, we are in a very good position in terms of being ahead of the curve,” Park explains.

For all of the company’s market growth and penetration to date, Park is very level-headed and rational about the risk of getting ahead of himself by competing directly with the industry’s dominant players with far greater capital resources and market clout.

“What we try to do is carve out a niche with some specialty items that do not go head-to-head with the mass-produced brands,” he opines.

“In fact, rather than competing with other salmon producers, our planked salmon products are actually helping to drive the overall salmon volume up because we have created a whole new consumer event that wasn’t there before,” Park says.

“That said, in the big picture we are competing not only against other people’s salmon, but also against other seafood protein and other animal protein in general.

“That’s why our pricing has to be sharp, our logistics have to be tight, and our production equipment, like the Variovac Optimus machines we use, must be top-quality stuff.”

As for logistics and warehousing, Park credits **Veritiv Canada** for providing superior service in looking after all of the company’s needs for packaging consumables—including folding cartons from **RockTenn**, corrugated containers from **Maritime Paper Products Ltd.** and plastic packaging films from **Winpak, Ltd.**—by serving the Blandford plant in true JIT (just-it-time) fashion from two distribution centers in Dartmouth, N.S., and Moncton, N.B. .

For all his enthusiasm about the pending launch of the *Sous Chef Kit* product across Canada, Park says he and his staff are already bouncing around ideas for further product innovation down the road.

“Let’s just say we already have some pretty good ideas in the hopper about what we could add to the kit products, as well as some other product lines,” Park says, citing speed-to-market as one of Cedar Bay’s critical core competencies.

“Once we decide on what we’re going to do, we move very fast to make it a reality,” he remarks.

“We only conceived the Sous Chef Kits last May,” Park points out, “and we were



All finished packages are put through a Loma Systems combination metal detector and checkweigher system, comprising a model IQ2 metal detector and model AS checkweigher, as part of the strict food safety procedures that the Cedar Bay plant in Blandford has implemented as part of its globally-recognized BRC (British Retail Consortium) food safety certification, which the facility has maintained in flying colors for the past four years.



A line worker guides filled bags of breaded salmon through the modular Emplex bag and pouch sealing machine.

ready to go to market with them by January.

“That kind of turnaround is virtually unheard of in this industry,” Park concludes, “but it is a big part of our corporate culture and a big part of what makes our job so much fun for everyone working at Cedar Bay Grilling.” 🍁



To see a video of Reiser’s Variovac Optimus machine in action at Cedar Bay Grilling, please go to Canadian Packaging TV at www.canadianpackaging.com

SUPPLIERS

Reiser Canada

RockTenn Company of Canada Inc.

Maritime Paper Products Ltd.

Winpak Ltd.

Loma Systems (Canada) Inc.

Veritiv Canada Inc.

Domino Printing Sciences

Emplex Systems Inc.

Balance Creative

Cansel



TURNING UP THE HEAT

Processing expertise and leading-edge product inspection technology help set innovative gluten-free bakery onto firm path to market success

In 2007, Linda Fitzerman discovered that she had gluten intolerance. She stopped consuming foods containing gluten, and her health quickly improved. However, she missed and craved delicious foods containing gluten which she loved but could no longer enjoy and was largely disappointed by the gluten-free products available.

So in 2010 she put on her apron, went to her kitchen, and began experimenting.

After taking about a year-and-a-half perfecting her recipes, Fitzerman promptly proceeded to start up a unique new bakery called **Local Oven**.

Starting out in a modest 3,500-square-foot commercial bakery, the pioneering upstart quickly developed a strong reputation for making gluten-free baked goods that have excellent texture and rich flavors and that taste as good, if not better, than traditional bread products.

Before long, the company soon expanded into an adjacent space to grow into an 8,000-square-foot operation that also began to offer other alternatives to traditional wheat-based products—including gluten-free pasta imported directly from Italy.

Having recently moved to a new 30,000-square-foot location in the Farmers Branch suburb of Dallas, Tex., Local Oven specializes in supplying gluten-free products to the restaurant industry, industrial gluten-free manufacturers and gluten-free wholesale distributors, while also co-packing for other gluten-free baked-goods manufacturers.

Nowadays producing about 70,000 pounds of croutons per month, along with a growing range of breads, pastas and sweets, Local Oven products can be found at leading restaurants and hotels across the U.S., including **The Hyatt, Fuddrucker's, Ruth's Chris Steak House, Schlotzsky's** and **The Ritz-Carlton**.

According to founder Linda Fitzerman, Local Oven's success is founded on the company's commitment to making products with great flavors, under the highest-quality standards, with efficient and safe processes facilitated by strong strategic partners such as processing and packaging equipment specialists **Heat and Control**.

"Heat and Control's equipment allowed us to grow into producing those larger quantities so that we could service the customer with the right price and great quality," says Fitzerman, "and our quality is second to none in large part because their equipment is second to none."

Headquartered in Hayward, Cal., Heat and Control is a globally operating manufacturer, distributor and integrator of processing and packaging equipment for food industry applications, operating 10 manufacturing facilities as well as 11 testing centers and more than 30 offices around the globe—including the **Heat and Control Canada Inc.** subsidiary in Cambridge, Ont.

Founded in 1950, the privately-owned company offers a wealth of production and technical expertise through its global network of engineers, food technicians, field service technicians, skilled tradespeople and support teams to help food manufacturers achieve their production goals.

For the Local Oven plant, Heat and Control supplied the **Spray Dynamic Season-**



Heat and Control supplied the Local Oven bakery with a custom-designed Spray Dynamic Seasoning System that enables reliable and consistent coating of the 70,000 pounds of croutons produced by the facility each month.



All finished goods at the Local Oven plant pass through the CEIA THS series metal detector for reliable detection of any metal contaminants that may have slipped into the manufacturing process.

ing System to enable reliable and consistent execution of Fitzerman's baking recipes.

According to Heat and Control, the system's coating drum was custom designed, engineered and manufactured to meet the plant's specific product requirements and is available in several sizes and configurations if additional lines are needed as the company grows.

The shell-in-shell drum design facilitates optimal sanitary operation and simple cleaning, and the variable tilt frame assembly and product flight design exposes each piece of product to the application of liquid and/or dry coatings.

To ensure all products leaving the Local Oven plant are of highest quality, all the finished goods go through a **CEIA** model **THS** metal detector to be screened for any metal contaminants that may have inadvertently slipped into production process.

Manufactured by prominent Italian metal detection technologies group **CEIA S.p.A.**, the **THS** model metal detectors supplied to Local Oven by Heat and Control feature several levels of sensitivity, immunity to interference to meet strict quality control standards and quick reject response upon contaminant detection.

"Those metal detectors provided us with an amazing peace of mind because we have great quality control procedures in place, and we take them very seriously," says Fitzerman.

According to Fitzerman's husband, Todd, who handles the operational side of the business, "If it were not for Heat and Control's guidance, compassion, and understanding of working with a company that was small in nature but had a great product to bring to market, we would have failed."

"If not for the equipment supplied to us by Heat and Control, we would not have been able to accept the purchase orders for companies that entrusted us to produce their product: we would have failed miserably," he states.

"But despite us being just a small manufacturer, Heat and Control was willing to walk us through the entire process of how to manufacture croutons properly, as well as to determine the optimal equipment for our needs."

"Heat and Control has never let us down," Fitzerman extols. "They have been with us every step of the way during our manufacturing journey, and that is why we fully intend to continue going to Heat and Control as we grow and find ourselves in need of new pieces of equipment."

"Any small food business owner starting out needs to align with good, solid strategic partners, and Heat and Control is definitely a company where spending your money will provide a great investment, as they will never let you down." 🍁

SUPPLIERS

Heat and Control Canada Inc.



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Sessions Craft Canning founder and chief executive officer Jeff Rogowsky (*left*) and lead shrink sleeve technician Jake Dunn stand aside the company's new Aesus Packaging Systems model Delta Shrink MB sleeving unit that can sleeve silver bullet cans at a rate of 200 cans per minute at the Mississauga, Ont.-headquartered facility. (*Inset*) A few examples of the stellar can sleeving work performed by Sessions Craft Canning.

SOMETHING UP THEIR SLEEVE

Ontario mobile canning company for brewers now offers sleeving and branding capabilities for cans

ANDREW JOSEPH, FEATURES EDITOR

PHOTOS BY NAOMI HILTZ

Many a person has dreamed about creating their own beer, and thanks to many home starter kits, the dream has become a reality.

For other dreamers, they want to take that newly created beer taste sensation and start up their own brewery in the hopes of becoming the next John Labatt or John Molson or John Sleeman without having to change their name to John.

And then there are the dreamers who simply want to brew beer, maybe make a little money on the side, but are content maintaining their hard fought craft brewer status,

something that the 242 operating breweries—and growing—in Ontario alone are doing, according to the association of **Ontario Craft Brewers**, as of February 2018 data.

Within the Canadian packaging industry, there are a host of ancillary enterprises that work to help the craft brewer in its day-to-day operations, such as those who manufacture and supply the brewhouse, fermenting tanks, fillers, coders, and even delivery trucks—it's a long line of men and women who work behind the scenes to enable a consumer to go to a refrigerator to crack open a cool one.

And then there's **Sessions Craft Canning Ltd.**, a Toronto-area company located in Mississauga that helps facilitate some of the more boring aspects of brewing, that allows the brewer to get back to doing what they do best—crafting an atypical, often edgy beer.



CANNING



At the Sessions Craft Canning facility in Mississauga, empty silver bullet cans move through an Aesius Packaging Systems model Delta Shrink MB sleeving unit (*left*), before riding a conveyor system through an Aesius Hybrid 72 inch heat/steam tunnel that gives the operator six different controls apiece near the entrance and exit to manipulate the exact needed pressure to ensure a proper shrink of the sleeve to the can.



Employees of Sessions Craft Canning are trained in all technical aspects of the company's daily business, including shrink sleeve operator Julian Pek, taking care to provide a visual check of the just-sleeved cans to ensure the plastic film adheres properly so craft brewery and cidery customers will receive perfect packaging.

“Our company provides a mobile packaging solution that helps new and existing breweries scale their brands without having to invest a significant amount of capital on equipment that they might only be using a few times a month,” Sessions Craft Canning founder and chief executive officer Jeff Rogowsky told *Canadian Packaging* magazine during a recent visit to its new 33,000-square-foot facility that the company moved into earlier this year.

Even before starting up Sessions Craft Canning, Rogowsky had been involved in the industry for five

years with a company that manufactured and distributed beer and beverage chilling and dispensing equipment.

Using his contacts within the industry, and realizing he needed to spread his wings, Rogowsky took that leap of faith into not only starting up his own business, but starting up a new business segment in a province that had not yet seen its like before.

“It could have gone bad, quickly,” notes Rogowsky, “but I did have a couple of aces in the hole.”

Incorporated in late 2014, Sessions received its first piece of filling equipment in the early days of January 2015, and with Rogowsky armed with the knowledge it had two customers willing to grow with him, it began its mobile canning operations.

At that time, Sessions Craft Canning occupied just 1,000 square feet of space within an industry friend's business, but with craft breweries catching on quickly to the advantages of the mobile canning operation, a few years later they moved into an 8,000-square-foot facility, before quickly expanding after another year to the current 33,000-square-foot facility.

While **West Coast Canning** in B.C. was the first Canadian company to offer the mobile canning service, Rogowsky quickly realized an opportunity existed to bring the same service to the Ontario region.

Now, two short years later, Sessions and West Coast are sister companies—having formerly merged under one parent company, but keeping both operating names—that not only provide mobile canning services, but also offer much more.

“We are now a complete supplier for all things cans,” begins Rogowsky.

“We are a distributor of printed cans—where the label is direct printed onto the aluminum can—and we supply blank or silver bullet cans,” he continues, “but the biggest change is that we now have the space and application equipment to provide the relatively new to the craft beer and cidery industry service of shrink sleeve labeling on a can.”

Because of its relationship with West Coast Canning, Rogowsky says they now use synergies between the companies when it comes to operations but also the

combined purchasing power of both companies helps to reduce the cost of various supplies, which they can then pass along to the breweries it works with from coast-to-coast.

Along with a mobile canning line and a crew of two in the nation's capital of Ottawa, Sessions Craft Canning has three other mobile canning lines based at the Mississauga facility, all of which are usually out on the road these days.

“When we began, we only one mobile canning line and only two customers that first month, then three the next month, and four or five the next month,” Rogowsky explains. “But nowadays with the four mobile lines, we can sometimes be out canning up to 20 jobs a week, and soon it will be more as we add our fifth mobile line, which we are preparing to add shortly to our Ottawa location which will help us with growth into the neighboring province of Quebec and fulfill some of the demand we are seeing with breweries in Montreal.”

As of April 2018, Sessions Craft Canning had canned just over six million cans for a wide range of Ontario craft breweries, cideries and beverage companies.

They travel all across the province and are now starting to branch into Quebec.

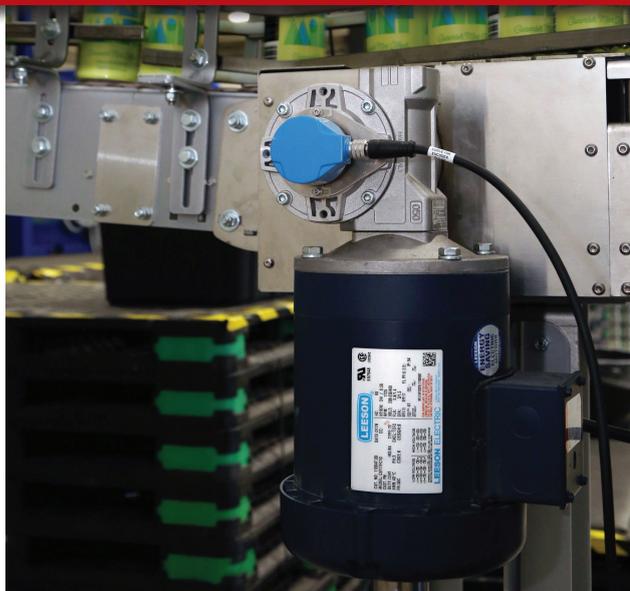
“While I had driven seven or eight hours to do a job when we first started, nowadays with the addition of our Ottawa location, we generally drive one to four hours away in any direction to get the job done,” Rogowsky acknowledges.

He says that for any one brewery or cidery using its mobile canning services, Sessions Craft Canning is able to package up to 65 hectoliters in an eight-hour shift—which is more than 13,000 16-ounce cans of beer or cider.

A typical day involves arriving at the location, taking about 60 to 90 minutes to unload, set up and get their equipment ready before the canning begins. Once the canning is done, it takes about 60 minutes to pack up and be on the way.

Depending on the size of the job, the company will often work double shifts or stay for two or three days at a time for some of its bigger customers.

CANNING



A motor manufactured by Leeson, a division of Regal Beloit, helps provide quick and smooth operation of a conveyor line moving sleeved cans to a repalletizer.



Manufactured by Marathon Electric—a division of Regal Beloit—a microMAX brand inverter-duty motor helps keep things running smoothly at the Sessions Craft Canning headquarters in Mississauga, Ont.

“We regularly have canning jobs where we stay for three days at a time and will package upwards of 50,000 cans,” notes Rogowsky.

But why cans?

Rogowsky points to the science of aluminum cans chilling faster, offering more space to apply cool craft beer graphics to make it stand out on the shelf, and the fact that the cans are able to block out 100 percent of UV (ultraviolet) light which could affect the taste turning it skunky.

As well, there’s the green aspect.

“Since a beer can weighs significantly less than a beer bottle, there’s a huge difference in shipping costs,” mentions Rogowsky.

Also, because of a reduction in shipping weight, greenhouse gases produced by transporting trucks are reduced.

He also points out that the aluminum cans are 100 percent recyclable—indefinitely recyclable, even.

“Our mobile canning lines are very high quality packaging lines,” he relates. “We typically have better canning equipment than what most breweries just starting out are likely to own.”

Equally important, Rogowsky explains, is that Sessions Craft Canning travels with a wide range of quality control

instruments that are often cost prohibitive to new companies starting out.

These instruments can check dissolved O₂ levels—an important indicator of shelf-life—examine the CO₂ levels that dictate the carbonation in the beer, and also provide bacteria swabbing after cleaning to ensure its equipment is free of any unwanted organic or inorganic material prior to packaging for the day.

“Sanitation is extremely important to us and for our customers,” Rogowsky states. “We bring all of our own chemicals into the customer facility, run a full clean-in-place on our equipment before and after a canning job.”

The pre-canning sanitation check ensures that everything is clean, and before canning, they confirm the sanitation data results with the owner and/or brewmaster before the actual packaging begins.

At the conclusion of the filling, Sessions Craft Canning provides a detailed report to the brewery including such information as how many cans were filled, weights of the cans, details about sanitation, and the overall quality checks that were done during the day.

“But it’s all part of the service Sessions Craft Canning offers,” smiles Rogowsky.

Despite the success the company has enjoyed since its launch in 2015, Rogowsky isn’t one to place all of his beer in one case, and has sought to diversify Sessions Craft Canning’s efforts into other aspects of the third-party filling market segment.

In an effort to increase its presence in the brewery and cidery markets, Sessions Craft Canning is now not only an official distributor of printed and silver bullet cans for Crown, but it now works alongside customers to design and pre-print cans at Crown, providing them with a one-stop canning shop.

And, for those that don’t wish to go the pre-printed can route, Sessions Craft Canning offers a special labeling service—shrink sleeving, whereby it will take a preprinted plastic film, and drop it over a silver bullet can before running it through a steamer or heat tunnel to present a brilliant graphic image around the beverage container on behalf of its brewery customers.

“Depending on the arrangement,” explains

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A close-up view of an igus wireguard system within an Aesus Packaging Systems model Delta Shrink MB sleeving unit at Sessions Craft Canning.



ABB Group's Dodge brand pulley components help ensure a smooth delivery of empty silver bullet cans to and from the Aesus sleeving unit at Sessions Craft Canning.

Rogowsky, “we either ship the sleeved cans to those customers who have their own canning lines, or we take the sleeved cans with us along with our mobile canning line and fill and seal the cans on their premises.”

The allure for craft beer brewers and cideries is the ability to create affordable small print-run labeling.

When a brewery decides it wants to package in cans they previously only had one option which was to buy a full truckload (~160,000 cans) of one brand at a time. This, says Rogowsky, is how the big can manufacturers sell cans which is often quite prohibitive for a smaller brewery starting out.

Most smaller breweries won't have the space to store the cans, the cash flow to buy them, or even the demand to sell 160,000 cans of one brand.

The smaller- to medium-sized breweries are all looking for flexibility of selling multiple brands and are also testing out which one of those brands they eventually might want to buy full truckload quantities of, as a full truckload will always be the lowest unit cost/can to a brewery.

“Our shrink sleeve labeling option creates a viable alternative for the true small-run brewer of beers or ciders,” extols Rogowsky, “knowing we can supply them with just the right amount of cans for that five-, 10- or 15,000 can run.”

“That being said, we are now getting orders of well over 100,000 shrink sleeve cans as a lot of breweries now just prefer this look.”

While it is true, says Rogowsky, that the downside to the mobile canning service is that when a brewery becomes big enough and is canning more than two to three times a week it might make sense for them to eventually buy their own canning line.

But when Sessions Craft Canning loses a mobile canning customer due to growth, it has not lost them for good, as it can retain them by offering different services, such as selling them pre-printed cans or shrink sleeve cans, trays or lids.

“Since a craft brewery or cidery has already developed a successful relationship with us—and knowing we played a part in their economic success—they are apt to continue working with us, if we give them a reason,” he says.

Rogowsky says that for the first two years of operation, Sessions Craft Canning only offered a mobile canning service, but at the beginning of 2017 it acquired a sleeving system from their now partner company West Coast Canning that provides labeling at a rate of 50 cans per minute tightening the plastic sleeve to the can via radiant heat.

Thanks to the success of that, it recently installed a brand new **Aesus Packaging Systems** sleeving system earlier this year that can be utilized with either radiant heat or with steam, as some plastic films bond better



Sessions Craft Canning utilizes ULINE shipping supplies to stretchwrap pallet loads of its sleeved and silver bullet cans to its brewery and cidery customers in Ontario and Quebec.

with steam, while others work better with heat.

Located in Pointe-Claire, Que., Aesus is a well-known and well-respected manufacturer of robust sleeving machines, labelers, fillers, cappers, conveyors and turntables.

The entire new line at Sessions Craft Canning consists of: a **Ska Fabricating, LLC** depalletizer with **Siemens Simatic** HMI (human-machine interface) to automatically off-load the silver bullet cans into the system; an Aesus **Delta** shrink-ready rotary sleever; an Aesus **Hybrid** 72 inch heat/steam tunnel to shrink the sleeves tightly to the cans; and a Ska Fabricating repalletizer with a **Simatic** HMI.

Sessions Craft Canning utilizes plastic **Crown Link & Seal Pallets**, as well as cans manufactured by Crown—two sizes of 355 millimeters and 473 ml.

“One of the main reasons we purchased the Delta from Aesus is because West Coast Canning has two machines from them, and we knew that if they had nothing but good things to say about theirs, it would be a smooth ride for us,” states Rogowsky.

Sleeving technology, according to Rogowsky, is not as simple as turning the machine on and watching the sleeves fall around a can. His operators maintain that it takes a deft bit of artistry to make each run of cans come out perfectly.

The pre-printed plastic film that is the sleeve contains variances when the operators are sleeving cans for different customers, as well as for different brands belonging to the same customer.

“Shrink sleeve labels for the beer industry are fairly new, only really happening the past three or four years, and there are limitations to the sleeve.

“The colors you can use, the design elements, how much ink is on the label, the spacing of the ink and how they are being applied by either radiant heat, steam or a combo unit can all affect the quality of the end product,” explains Rogowsky. “It’s an art to create a really good shrink sleeve labeled can, and we’re pretty darned good at it.”

There are two types of Aesus **Delta** sleeving machines: the **Delta Shrink LB** that uses a linear blade to cut the sleeve after it has been placed over the container or onto the container neck for neck bands; and the **Delta Shrink MB** as purchased by Sessions Craft Canning, where multiple blades spin around the mandrel to part the sleeve before application to the neck or container, which then quickly plunges the sleeve onto the container or neck of the product.

While the **Delta Shrink SB** has a top speed of 120 cans per minute, “The Delta Shrink MB has been designed by Aesus to provide an intermediate speed system that can operate as slow as 60 cans per minute up to 250 cans per minute,” says Rogowsky.

“Following the lead of West Coast Canning, we are finding that our optimal speed at this time to be around

CANNING

200 cans per minute,” he continues.

Providing tremendous accuracy to cut the sleeves, the **Delta** systems use servo feed mechanisms and multiple servo knives, according to Aesus.

When the container is underneath the mandrel, the **Delta Shrink MB**'s servo-controlled feed system spins the sleeve down onto the container.

Because the sleeves are not released until they are on the container, static electricity that could cause the sleeves to crumple as they are applied, is not in play.

“We really like this sleeving system from Aesus,” states Rogowsky. “It’s very easy to set up for new jobs, and we’ve become pretty adept at adjusting the steam controls to ensure a perfect graphic application on the cans.”

Providing the plastic shrink sleeve film is Montreal-based **IMS (Identification Multi Solutions)**, a product identification solutions provider since 1958 that designs and manufactures printed products for a diverse field of industry segments.

The company offers a sweeping range of shrink sleeve printing services, including digital, flexographic and rotogravure to help achieve whatever aesthetic aspects the customer is looking for, while also being flexible enough to print any volume of high-quality label needed—a huge boon for craft breweries who tend to specialize in low-run beer products.

“IMS has been our sleeving partner from the get-go,” says Rogowsky, “and we couldn’t be happier with the product they supply to us for our customers.”

Used with the Aesus line, Rogowsky says they are able to get a nice soft seam that is tight to the top, while providing vibrant colors, all of which play a crucial aspect of a great shrink sleeve can.

“One of things we can offer that other label providers can not, is that all of the employees at Sessions Craft Canning actually care about the craft beer industry,” he relates.

Summing up, Rogowsky is extremely optimistic about Sessions Craft Canning and its future growth within the craft beer and cidery market.

“I really enjoy the sleeving and sales of pre-printed cans that we are able to offer the ever-changing craft brewer,” he says. “And along with the continued growth of our mobile canning operations both here in Toronto and Ottawa areas, the future looks very bright.” 🍁



Please see the Aesus Packaging Systems **Delta Shrink MB** sleeving system in action on Canadian Packaging TV at www.canadianpackaging.com.

SUPPLIERS

Aesus Packaging Systems, Inc.

Ska Fabricating, LLC

Siemens Canada Limited

Crown Holdings Inc.

Resolution Inplant Services

Identification Multi Solutions Inc.

Uline Canada Corporation

Regal Beloit Corporation

Marathon Electric, a div. of Regal Beloit

Leeson, a div. of Regal Beloit

Rockwell Automation, Inc.

ABB Group

igus



TOO GOOD TO WASTE

Modern metal detection technology can be a valuable production asset in ongoing efforts to reduce food waste

Reducing food waste during production and packaging is a growing priority for food manufacturers the world over, for many good reasons, as it is no secret that North Americans waste an unfathomable amount of food.

A recent study by the United States **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** estimates that more food reaches landfills and incinerators than any other single material in everyday trash—about 21 per cent of the waste stream.

Moreover, this estimate does not even take into account the significant pre-consumer food waste generated during the manufacturing and packaging of food products.

Appallingly, about 60 million tonnes of fresh produce, worth about US\$160 billion, ends up in North American landfills year after year.

While both consumers and retailers both have to play a major part in reducing all that waste, one cannot ignore the significant contribution that manufacturers themselves can make in this challenge by making the right choices about their production equipment—especially metal detection and other automated quality control solutions.

According to the **Food and Agriculture Organization** of the **United Nations**, North American consumers waste between 209 and 253 pounds of food per year.

While some of it can be attributed to quality standards and consumer obsession with the cosmetic appearance of fresh produce, approximately 60 per cent of the total waste is said to occur between the production and retail stages.

Though some of that output may be redistributed to food banks and other charities, and some recycled as animal feed, a great deal of it continues to end up in the landfill.

It is indicative of the seriousness with which these losses are now viewed that reductions in food waste play a prime role in the U.S. *2030 Food Waste Loss and Reduction Goal*, which aims to reduce food loss and waste by 50 per cent over the next 15 years.

The EPA's **Food Recovery Challenge** forms part of this program, with organizations pledging to improve their sustainable food management practices and report



An estimated 60 million tonnes of fresh produce is wasted annually.



False rejects, which occur when good product is identified as containing a metal contaminant, can cost a food manufacturer up to \$14,000 in lost product annually per line.

their results.

Today, there are an estimated 77 global grassroots organizations that are collectively pressing the food waste message home on a daily basis.

Just like environmental accountability and reporting are now facts of life for most food manufacturers, being able to reduce food waste in the first place has, like energy efficiency, a direct impact on any food manufacturer's bottom line.

Naturally, doing so requires a certain investment in staff training and improved processes, with the related decision over which equipment offers the best contaminant detection and the amount of false rejects being generated.

In the case of food product inspection, specific features of likely contaminants, the product, packaging, processing and supply chain all may determine whether metal detection is chosen for a particular point on the production line.

For example, if a processor needs to detect physical contaminants on free-falling products, they should use metal detectors rather than X-Ray due to the inconsistent density within the falling product stream.

For manufacturers constrained by limited line space, however, the larger size of the X-Ray units may also be a decisive factor.

Cost is another consideration. The X-Ray system remains the far more expensive option—both in terms of capital cost and running costs.

Whereas one should expect to pay in the region of US\$50,000 to US\$57,000 to install an entry-level X-Ray machine, an effective metal detection system can be installed at a cost from US\$5,500 up to US\$25,000, depending on the size and complexity of the application.

In many cases, a food processor's decision will depend on a very careful evaluation of the pros and cons of each technology.

Some businesses may run away with the idea that because X-Ray is the more 'modern' technique, it should therefore be the default choice.

In fact, the arguments about metal detection versus X-Ray are much more subtle, and any serious risk assessment needs to be approached from multiple perspectives.

Because the size, orientation, density of contaminants and other variables will always impact detectability, metal detectors are inevitably set up and calibrated in order to err on the side of caution.

At the same time, manufacturers will want to avoid excessive levels of false rejects, which is precisely where the competing demands of food safety and food waste start to overlap.



FOOD SAFETY

This is where the latest metal detection technology comes in.

False rejections, which occur when perfectly good product is identified as containing a contaminant, are most common on lines handling the so-called 'wet' items.

While this way of categorizing products does include literally wet or moist consistencies in anything from dairy, ready meals, dips, meat, poultry, fish and bakery, it also refers to any food matrix containing high levels of salt or other mineral fortification—like chips and cereals.

The key common element here is a strong 'product effect' (which registers relatively high conductivity and magnetic permeability) mimicking the signal picked up from metal, and so making any distinction between the two hard to establish.

Traditionally, stainless steel has been especially difficult to detect in wet products because any signal can be effectively disguised by the product effect.

To overcome this hurdle, Toronto-based metal detection systems manufacturer **Fortress Technology Ltd.** has recently introduced the **Interceptor** metal detector, which applies both high- and low-frequency ranges in order to isolate the product signal and provide a more precise identification of any contaminant signature beyond that.

Extensive trials involving stainless-steel particles in wet products have shown that the **Interceptor** enables the pinpointing of contaminants as little as half the size of those detectable by the company's previous generation of equipment.

False rejects don't just impact the physical waste whenever perfectly good food is discarded. Lower factory yield can undermine the cost-effectiveness of an entire operation, while repeated stoppages and troubleshooting will incur unnecessary cost.

Industry estimates put the cost per line of false rejects at over \$14,000 per year, depending on the scale of the problem.

Increasing the volume of inspection lanes for specific product ranges can also result in reduced food waste and enhanced inspection productivity.

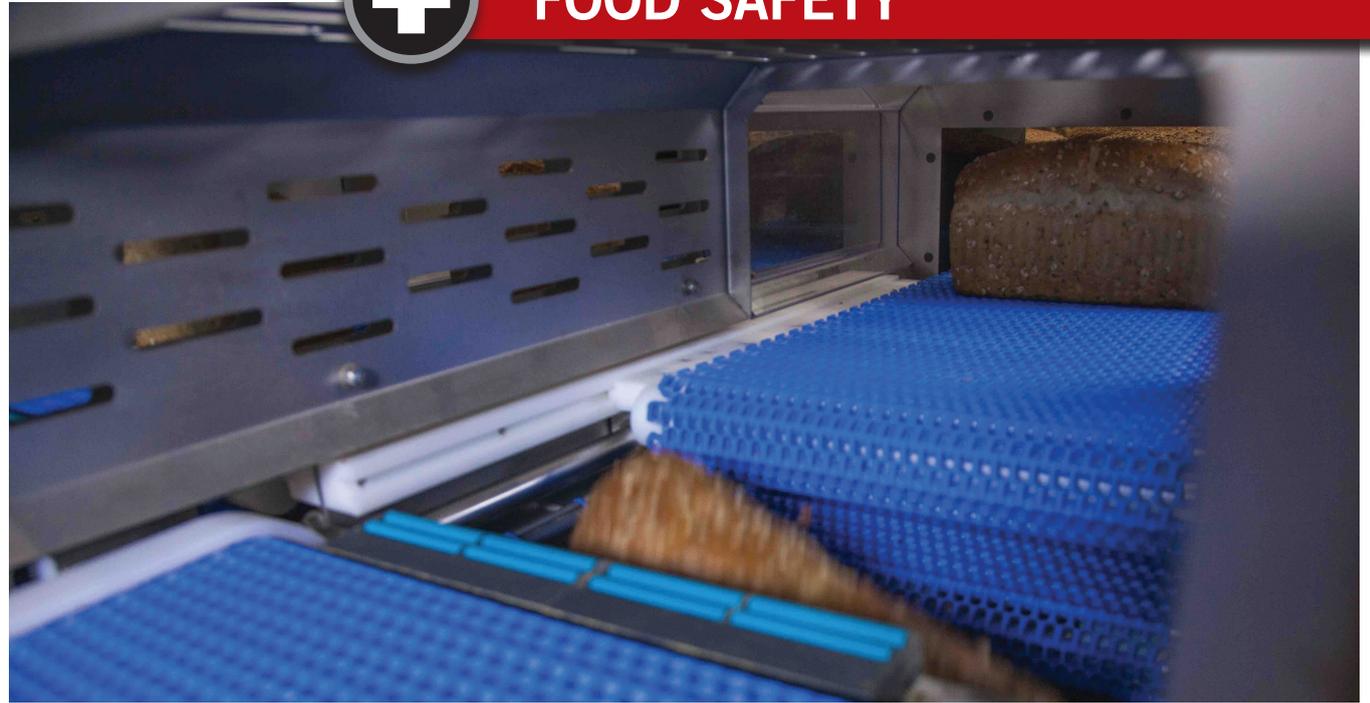
High-speed, multiline food packing operations have a number of options when it comes to contaminant detection. While manufacturers can channel multiple lanes through a single, large metal detection aperture, the clear drawback with this method is that the larger aperture size sacrifices valuable levels of sensitivity.

In addition, any reject system will remove an entire line of product across all of the lanes being checked, thus creating unnecessary waste.

There is also the option of positioning a separate metal detector over each lane. While this ensures that a suspect product is only ever rejected from one lane, this approach has major impacts in terms of cost and space efficiency.

In today's food factories, many of them working around legacy equipment and within severe spatial limitations, compact design is often a prime consideration.

The Fortress solution, already installed on multiline operations checking sachets of herbs and spices and snack pots, is a single metal de-



With the multi-aperture, multi-lane metal detector, each lane works independently, enabling a potential contaminant to be isolated without rejecting good product from other lanes.

tection system with multiple apertures for each lane and a single operator panel, with each aperture sized as closely as possible to the product.

On the sachet line, for example, Fortress recently became the first company to deliver a five-lane, ferrous-only multi-aperture detector.

The potential benefits are immense. On five conveyors, end-users can save up to 50 per cent of the space required by individual metal detectors; about 17 per cent of the installation cost; and up to 65 per cent of the total cost of ownership when considering reduced maintenance and parts requirements.

Because this multilane metal detector has a dedicated aperture for each lane, the system is more sensitive to smaller metal particles and copes better with orientation and product effect.

Best of all, each aperture operates like a standalone metal detector—inspecting and rejecting products on each line. So in a twin lane configuration, for example, false reject waste can be instantly cut in half.

A single control panel manages all lanes, which stream-

lines operator access and enables users to select and view production data by individual lane, as well as analyze comparative lane data side-by-side.

Because each lane can be programmed to run asynchronously from each other, if one lane goes down or requires maintenance, the remaining one continues to run as normal—meaning that production never has to grind to a halt.

Such recent developments in metal detection deployment have a direct bearing on the amount of food waste manufacturers generate. It serves to demonstrate that food safety on the one hand and concerns about cost and waste on the other do not necessarily pull the food industry in opposite directions, as technological improvements can be leveraged to help to contain costs, maximize space, and reduce food waste. 🍁

SUPPLIERS

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FLEXIBLE BENEFITS

New flexible packaging powerhouse ready to flex its might in the highly competitive landscape

Getting to the top of industry pecking order or thereabouts is often just a prelude to the really hard job of staying there for the long-term, but given its colorful corporate history of sustained growth and strategic business acumen, Montreal-headquartered **Transcontinental Inc.** is more than a match for the huge tasks ahead, as it works to realize significant business synergies and cost-savings in wake of its sensational US\$1.32-billion acquisition of Chicago-based **Coveris America** in early April.

Instantly positioning **TC Transcontinental** as the seventh-largest flexible packaging converter in North America—behind only **Bemis**, **Sealed Air**, **Sigma**, **Berry**, **Novoflex** and **Printpack**—the “transformational” deal is the proverbial game-changer for a company that built itself into a \$3-billion-a-year enterprise largely through decades of prominence in commercial printing and newspaper publishing.

But with flexible packaging now expected to account for 48 per cent of the company’s annual revenues, there is naturally much interest in flexible industry circles about the impact the company’s transformation will have on the North American flexible packaging market estimated at US\$59.7 billion last year and projected to surpass US\$70.5 billion by 2023, according to market research by **Mordor Intelligence**.

With a strong position in dairy, pet food, beverage, agriculture and consumer products sectors, **TC Transcontinental** has significantly expanded its product portfolio offering with barrier films, thermoformed films, shrink bags, cast nylon, multiwall bugs, mulch films and coatings, while vastly widening its global client base with over 3,500 new customers.

The **Canadian Packaging** magazine recently caught up with Rebecca Casey, senior director of marketing at **TC Transcontinental Packaging** to get a better feel for the company’s plans to establish itself as major



industry player in this dynamic and fast-evolving marketplace, despite the fact that it only got involved in the packaging business just a few short years ago in 2014.

What would you say are the most important marketplace trends driving the brisk growth in flexible packaging markets today?

There are several, but consumer convenience is undoubtedly the key driver behind development of convenience features such as easy-to-open capabilities, resealability, portability and one-handed use of consumer products packaged in flexible formats.

Features such as zippers, handles, spouts, venting for microwaving, and oven cook-in features can nowadays be added to the bags and pouches in a cost-effective manner—continuing to drive innovation in flexible packaging.

Finally, single-serve and controlled portion packaging appeals to several different consumer demographics because they allow consumers to snack healthy without being concerned with measuring to determine the nutritional content of a single-serving size.

Consumers can take advantage of the grab-n-go and easy-to-use convenience that enables them to just place the pouch in the microwave to make a quick healthy snack, without sacrificing quality, in mere seconds.

Q. What are some of the key selling features that make flexible packaging a preferred option for CPG (consumer packaged goods) manufacturer and brand-owner to package their products?



Rebecca Casey,
Senior Director, Marketing,
TC Transcontinental Packaging

Because flexible packaging is so customizable, brand-owners and retailers can have the choice of virtually any shape or size to fit their product or needs.

High-performing and functional, flexible packaging can protect the product by incorporating barrier materials for protection against moisture, oxygen or contamination, with each package tailored to meet customer’s design and functional requirements.

Stand-up pouches are also very popular with





FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

shoppers for their many added benefits, including a gusset that helps hold the package upright preventing spills; slim package profile allowing for easy refrigerator storage; resealable zipper for reclosing the package to maintain product freshness; and a large window to view the fresh produce.

Although your company has not been active in this business for long, are there notable packaging innovations or breakthroughs you could cite that reflect your company's expertise in this field?

We all know that sustainability is a major concern in today's markets, and our teams at **Transcontinental Ultra Flex** (Brooklyn, N.Y.) have developed two products that support our commitment to sustainability.

One is a first-of-its-kind 12-ounce, completely certified compostable coffee bag, valve and all, they created for **Oakland Coffee** and their sustainably-grown organic coffee.

To meet this challenge, our team developed a three-ply metallized structure for the compostable bag and sourced bio-based, starch and sugar, materials with the optimum barrier properties required for the coffee.

The outcome was a perfect eco-friendly substrate, one that is made out of 100-percent compostable plant-based, **BPI (Biodegradable Products Institute)**-certified materials—rather than petroleum-based plastics—to allowing the consumer to bypass the global trash stream and dispose of coffee products in a municipal compost bin.

The structure also allows for reproduction of impactful graphics and stands up to filling machine performance.

But how is it different for other compostable flexible packaging products out there?

The true innovation breakthrough in this package is the so-called 'degassing valve,' which allows pressure to be released from airtight bags critical to maintaining freshness in coffee bags.

We are very proud to be able to offer an eco-friendly, reliable and high-barrier alternative to packaging made from non-renewable materials.

Our eco-friendly innovations also include compostable 'mother bags,' a package that holds single-serve coffee pods and compostable lidding for the single-serve pods.

Q. What is the other sustainability innovation you mentioned?

The second product our teams developed is a compostable peanut bag that was designed to support various sports arenas and stadiums' green initiatives and helping sports teams, venues and leagues achieve the next level of landfill waste diversion. (See Picture)



Designed using certified compostable materials, it replaces the current laminated



polypropylene bag that is become steadily barred from stadiums—thereby eliminating a classic game-day menu offering.

The new packaging now offers a workable alternative made of two-layer adhesive lamination consisting of certified compostable materials. The print and barrier layer is comprised of **NatureFlex**, a cellulose-based film structure developed by **Futamura USA**, and the heat-seal layer is composed of **ecovio**, which is a compostable

biopolymer from **BASF**.

One of the challenges of this structure was in the adhesive lamination of the two plies, which was overcome with the **Epotal** product line.

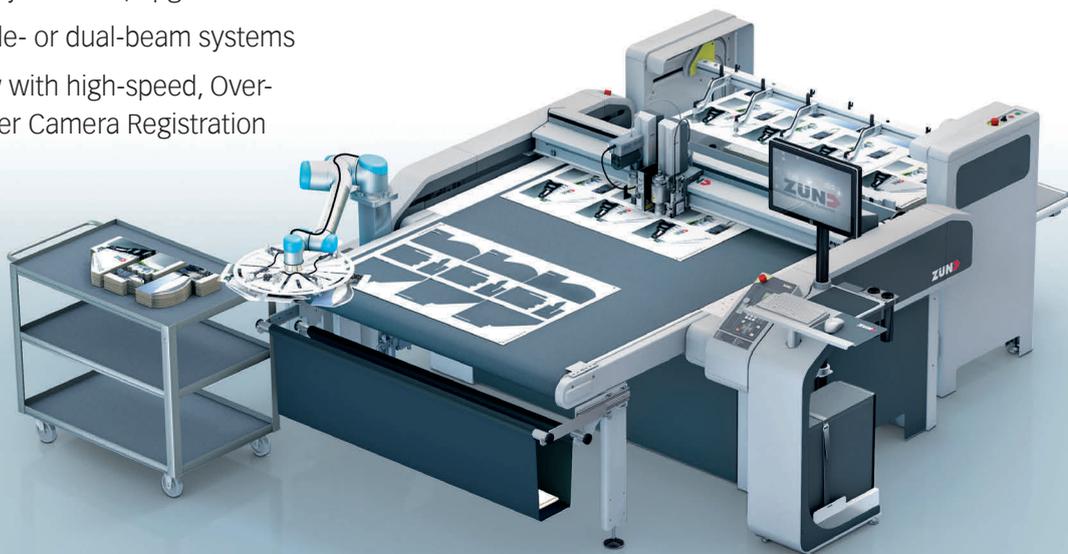
Also developed by **BASF**, **Epotal** is a compostable water-based adhesive that allows the packaging to pass the **ASTM International** standards it needs to be considered compostable.

The inks are fully tested for eco-toxicity and the

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competencies that will enable it to be competitive and successful in the flexible packaging arena?

We constantly look for new materials, technologies and techniques that will allow us to provide superior packaging solutions for our customers.

We've made a lot of capital investment to get state-of-the-art equipment to better serve and support our current and new customers.

Some of these investments have provided increased printing capabilities on up to 11-layer film structures, and higher converting capacity—including four-corner flat bottom box/pouch manufacturing.

Also, our advanced coating technology allows for flood and in-line registered specialty coatings, including matte, gloss, tactile, special effects, soft touch and many more.

Since our beginnings 40 years ago, our strong culture forged by our values has set us apart and guided our management approach.

Our growth over time stems from building solid long-term business relationships with our clients. We have grown because of our obsession with anticipating our customers' needs.

Hence we have constantly evolved to stay close to our customers and partner with them to ensure their success. Their successes are our successes.

We also believe that our entrepreneurial approach and our urge for innovation gives us a competitive advantage.

We always raise the bar high by challenging ourselves to beat our already high standards and make something work that's never been done before.

Q. Can you provide an example of such first to-market mindset?

TC Transcontinental Packaging works directly with our customers to develop flexible packaging solutions that drive innovation and consumer convenience.

One good example of that is our cross-directional laser scoring capabilities at our Transcontinental Flexstar facility in British Columbia, which uses this technology, is able to create a package with two different laser score patterns.

The first score is a contour score that aligns perfectly with the tear notch in our customer's sealing jaws. This score will provide the consumer with a small corner tear for easy, consistent, steamable microwave cooking of a frozen meal.

An additional cross direction laser score is added to the same package for easy to open and pourability after the meal is microwaved for serving.

Like I mentioned before, consumer convenience is at the core of all our thinking at TC Transcontinental Packaging. 🍁

now available to consumers, **Transcontinental Robbie** (Lenexa, Ks.) developed 'snacking on the go' pouches designed for in-store packing of fresh snacks—both salty and sweet.

In fact, our teams spent several months in the lab developing our one-of-a-kind **Oven N' Done Bags – Fresh Meals Made Easy** line of packaging. (See Picture)

Developed with the retailers firmly in mind, it is an innovative alternative solution intended to increase their perishable sales by offering their customers convenient pre-packed meals that are both fresh and healthy.

Consumers take the bags home and pop them in the oven or microwave and enjoy a healthy, fast and fresh meal made as easy as easy gets. We're certain they will embrace the convenience and time-savings this bag provides.

This new bag is actually of vital strategic importance for TC Transcontinental Packaging as well, as it allows us to enter the seafood departments at the retailer level, while also expanding our footprint in the deli sections.

Q. What are your company's key core strengths and

graphics are reverse-printed using standard flexographic printing technology, with the bag clearly displaying all the printed verbiage to help consumers understand that it is compostable and is part of the venue composting program.

This innovative bag recently won the Gold Award for Sustainability Packaging at the **2018 Flexible Packaging Achievement Awards Competition** of the **Flexible Packaging Association (FPA)**.

Q. These sound like great solutions for individual consumers: what about your retail customers?

After seeing the popularity of processed snacks and meals

hhs
Baumer Group

Let's stick together

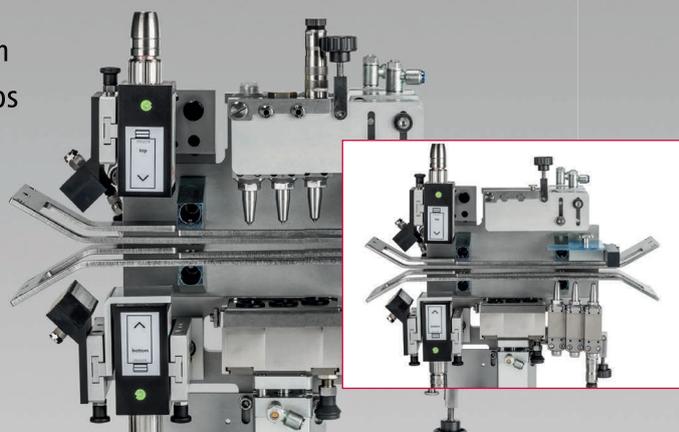
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Inverto



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■ **Sonoco**, a leading diversified packaging product group headquartered in Hartsville, S.C., has appointed Robert Tiede as the company's new president and chief executive officer.

■ **Dynamic Conveyor**, Norton Shores, Mich.-based manufacturer of the *DynaCon* range of modular plastic industrial conveying systems for food and other packaging applications, has appointed Andrew Hartline as sales manager.



Hartline

■ Printing inks manufacturer **INX International Ink Co.** of Schaumburg, Ill., has appointed John Hrdlick as president and chief operating officer, and Bryce Kristo as executive vice-president and chief financial officer.



Hrdlick

■ **SUN Automation Group**, Glen Arm, Md.-based manufacturer of feeding, printing and converting equipment for the corrugated industry, has appointed Greg Jones as vice-president of global sales and aftermarket operations.



Jones

May 23-24

Toronto: CPES 2018, Printable, Flexible & Wearable Electronics Symposium by intelliFLEX. At Centennial College. To register, go to: www.intelliflex.org

May 23-24

Boston, Ma.: Robotics Summit & Showcase 2018, international technical design end development event for robotics and intelligent systems by WTWH Media, LLC. At Weston Boston Waterfront. To register, go to: www.roboticssummit.com

May 29 – June 1

Milan, Italy: IPACK-IMA 2018, international processing and packaging technologies exhibition by UCIMA-Italian Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Association. Concurrently with MeatTech, Plast, Intralgitica and Print4All (including Grafitalia, Converflex and Imprinting) exhibitions. All at Fiera Milano. To register, go to: www.ipackima.it

June 4-5

Jersey City, NJ.: Active & Intelligent Packaging Summit Americas, by Active & Intelligent Packaging Industry Association (AIPIA). At Westin Hotel. Register online at www.aipia.info

June 5-8

Mexico City: EXPO PACK México 2018, international packaging and processing technologies exhibition by PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies. At Expo Santa Fe México. To register, go to: www.expopack.com.mx

June 6-7

Chicago: American Packaging Summit 2018, conference by Generis. At Hyatt Regency O'Hare. At Westin Hotel. To register, go to: www.uspacksummit.com

June 13-14

Paris, France: Pack&Gift, promotional and event packaging trade fair by Idice. At Paris Expo Porte de Versailles. To register, go to: www.packandgift.com

June 19-22

Munich, Germany: Automatica 2018, industrial automation and robotics exhibition by Messe München GmbH. At Messe München. To register, go to: www.automatica-munich.com

July 29-31

Las Vegas, Nev.: Cosmoprof North America, beauty products and cosmetics exhibition. At Mandalay Bay Convention Center. To register, go to: www.cosmoprofnorthamerica.com

Sept. 5-6

New York City: ADF (Aerosol & Dispensing Forum) & PCD (Packaging of Perfume Cosmetics & Design) New York 2018. Both by Easyfairs Group. At Metropolitan Pavilion. To register, go to: www.adf-pcd.com

Sept. 10-11

Amsterdam, The Netherlands: AWA IMLCON (International In-Mold Labeling Conference & Exhibition) 2018, by AWA (Alexander Watson Associates). At Novotel Amsterdam City. To register, go to: www.awa-bv.com/events

Sept. 25-27

Montreal: PAC to the Future II: Retail Reinvented, conference and exhibition by PAC Packaging Consortium. At Hotel Omni Mont Royal. To register, contact Lisa Abraham at (416) 646-4640 or via email labraham@pac.ca

Oct. 14-17

Chicago: PACK EXPO International 2018, packaging technologies exhibition by PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies. Concurrently with *Healthcare Packaging EXPO*. Both at the McCormick Place. To register, go to: www.packexpointernational.com

Nov. 19-20

Amsterdam, Holland: World Congress and Exhibition on Active & Intelligent Packaging, by Active & Intelligent Packaging Industry Association (AIPIA). At Westin Hotel. To register, go to: www.aipia.info



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THE MILLENNIAL PACKAGING ‘WOW’ FACTOR

Today, accounting for the one of the largest segments of general population by now surpassing the Baby Boomers, the Millennial generation has quickly grown up to expect packaging innovation to be part of their everyday consumer experience—forcing brands to rethink many of their time-tested ideas about package design and consumer engagement. Providing a unique consumer experience is a key part of this new narrative, often with the ironic outcome of celebrating the not-so-recent past to reach out to potential brand loyalists of the future with clever use of modernized retro fonts, color palettes, and portrait illustrations. As a case in point, the 120-gram pack of *Epsom Salt Soap* from **The Grandpa Soap Co.** is a masterclass of playful attention to detail to lure with a simple, yet mighty paperbox utilizing embossed font to emphasize the look and feel of this vintage-inspired brand. The eye-catching ‘Proudly Made in America since 1878’ stamp and old-school portrait graphic of the company founder inserted into the logo ooze with genuine product authenticity and purity, with the graduated muted tones of deep blue letter coloring paying due homage to the simpler times, before brands had every color under the sun to splash all over their packaging to get noticed. This intended simplicity is a charming presentation for the all all-purpose bathing essential—ingeniously enhanced with a side panel’s “Simply Scented” slit enticing the consumer to take a whiff of the “hardworking, simple and pure” soap bar. For all that retro pastiche, though, the brand is clearly on top of all the motivational touchpoints that make the Millennial consumers tick, with the soap being made exclusively from palm oil derived from **Rainforest Alliance Certified** farms, in addition to boasting other certifications designating it as a gluten-free, environmentally responsible, cruelty-free product, with recyclable packaging to boot!



to connect and engage with consumers is now even more convenient in the digital age of branding. Trendy and low in sugar, California-based **Halo Top Creamery** is quickly becoming a top player in the North American ice-cream business with its remarkable social media savvy—yours truly becoming a fan after reading more than a few positive *Instagram* posts and online product reviews raving about the new guilt-free sweet indulgence. This techie spirit is well-served by the brand’s unique package design that creates its own spotlight in the supermarket’s freezer section with a subtle gold lid topping innovative flavor varieties such as *Pancakes & Waffles*, for example. Patterned after the nooks of a waffle being slathered in sticky maple syrup, the tantalizing graphic design—topped off with Halo Top’s signature logo depicting a melting scoop of ice cream—is pure packaging eye-candy for younger shoppers looking for something different. Removing the lid reveals a gold-foil tamper-proof seal featuring one of several clever puns spread out over the ice cream line, such as, “I’m Cold Let’s Spoon,” along with the brand’s hashtag #halotop encouraging further consumer feedback on *Instagram*, *Facebook* and *Twitter*.



PHOTOS BY MEGAN MOFFAT



Like most consumers in most demographics, Millennials want to support a brand that also supports their core values and strikes a personal chord with them. As someone who is trying to be more conscious of sustainable packaging, I recently discovered the *Charity Pot Body Lotion* from **LUSH**, where the product comes in an unassuming black matte container made from 100-percent post-consumer recycled plastic bottles and pots. Moreover, LUSH goes the extra mile by explicitly encouraging consumers to return these little pots to reduce waste: return five containers and get a free facemask. It’s a wonderful little incentive to reward the

consumer on both a personal and conscientious level, with the company earmarking 100-percent of each *Charity Pot* sale to be directed to a worthwhile community cause or charity as selected by the consumers from an expansive list of worthwhile beneficiaries. In my case, the **Ecologos Environmental Organization** got my nod of approval for their tireless work in protecting our fresh water sources. Keeping your skin silky smooth while helping out the environment, threatened animal species and disadvantaged people is in many ways a dream come true for the modern generation of consumers.

With social media now being such an integral part of everyday communication, connecting and engaging with consumers has become a much more level playing field for smaller companies relying on positive word-of-mouth to grow their market share. With trendy flavors and low-sugar recipes, trying



As a refreshing countertrend to complicated graphics, some brands are cleverly using simple child-like illustrations in their package design to give consumers comforting reassurance about their purity of intent and purpose. Based in Oakville, Ont., popular local craft-brewer **Cameron’s Brewing** gracefully leverages seemingly simple, yet nuanced multilayered designs for the cans of its *AmBear Red Ale* and *Cosmic Cream Ale* to project the image of artisanal craftsmanship and quality, while letting each beer tell its own unique story with depictions of a wandering black bear against a mountainous backdrop, or that of silhouetted Canadian pine trees reaching up to the twinkling stars dancing in the dark night sky above. With informative liner notes on the sides of the can providing a good insight on each beer’s origins and inspiration, and a crisp-and-sharp brand logo being an instant eye-catcher, the attractive beer cans deftly capture the essence of life’s simpler pleasures to be joyfully discovered in our Great White North.

Megan Moffat is a proudly Millennial freelance writer living in Toronto.

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