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Stretchwrapping

New stretchwrapping system fits to a tee at juice-processing plant

Don Campbell of Dynamic Packaging says the Minute Maid installation of a stretchwrapping system was one of the most challenging projects for his company in terms of time and space.

# Minute

We've all heard the "necessity is the mother of invention" aphorism, but in the food business, it's more often than not the mother of innovation to boot. A good example of this could be found at **The Minute Maid Company Canada's** frozen juice concentrates plant in Peterborough, Ont.

Depending on the time of year, over 100 employees work there up to 24 hours a day, from five to seven days a week, producing frozen concentrated beverages for the entire Canadian market coast-to-coast.

Space is always at a premium inside the 116,000-square-foot facility—and so is the downtime allowable for technological upgrades. So, when the moment arrived recently to make improvements to the plant's stretchwrapping and palletizing systems, speed and precision were obviously paramount considerations in the installation process.

"We wanted to incorporate an automatic pallet wrapper right into our system," recalls Doug Clifford, Minute Maid's corporate engineering manager. "Space was at an absolute premium and we had just 24 hours to install the machinery and conveyors."

After shopping around for a company to install the in-line, full-pallet stretchwrapper, Minute Maid opted to go with **Dynamic Packaging** of Mississauga, Ont. In business since 1989, Dynamic specializes in the distribution and installation of wrapping and strapping equipment, as well as providing all the related after-sale service, training and technical support.

The Peterborough site—which began its life as a Minute Maid operation back in 1983—proved to be a formidable challenge for Dynamic Packaging.

"We've been in similar situations," says Dynamic marketing sales vice-president Don Campbell, "but [the work area] was not quite as tight."

The limited floor space allowed for the wrapper wasn't the only factor to be taken into consideration: time was also extremely important.

Before Dynamic Packaging arrived to the scene, much of Minute Maid's pallet wrapping operation was performed manually, which naturally slowed down the whole process quite a bit.

"Our mandate is to deliver to the customer, products of superior quality and zero damage," Clifford points out. "The manual operation and older machinery necessitated double and triple the handling [of the product]."

"Since pallets of frozen concentrate juice are not very stable, it's critical that we minimize the time it is not in the correct frozen atmosphere."

Just imagine a pallet loaded with 3,500 pounds of standard frozen juice cans in trays holding anywhere between 6 and 24 containers. Top that off with the fact that the frozen cans, being exposed to the warm air, all have a slick film of condensation.

"It's difficult to transport on conveyors," says Clifford in a clear understatement. "Acceleration and deceleration onto the wrap table has to be [performed] under extremely controlled conditions."

He does, however, quickly add that pallet wrapping was "never a challenge—just an opportunity." That opportunity went to Dynamic Packaging and **Wulftec International**, Ayer's Cliff, Que.-based manufacturer of end-of-line packaging equipment specializing in stretchwrapping machinery and specialty-applications conveying systems.

Dynamic Packaging, which has been Wulftec's distributor for 11 years, suggested the model WCA200 twister-type stretchwrapper as the right system for Minute Maid.

Equipped with a 24V control system, and capable of handling from 50 to 60 loads per hour, the WCA200

twister offers the flexibility advantages provided by up and down carriage speeds, separate top and bottom wrap selectors (0-9), and independent forward and reverse functions on all the conveyors.

There is a manual/automatic switch, as well as an air pressure switch. To ensure that operators always stay on top of the situation, there are three emergency stop settings, as well as a safety shut-off plate in front of the carriage. The units come with a stand-alone, 12-control cabinet and a visual film break alarm.

A 50- to 300-per-cent pre-stretch ratio can be pre-set to customer specifications, and the WCA200 features an electronic film tension control with analog sensor.

The twister installed at Minute Maid Peterborough facility handles 30-inch, 75-gauge film, which is the wider-than-usual film that was deemed necessary to ensure the pallet's stability.

The installation proved a success right from the very start, as the new equipment fit perfectly into spot to within one-sixteenth of an inch, Clifford recalls, and lag bolt on the floor didn't even have to be moved in order to make room for the new machinery.

"The machine met requirements for online activity, and the after-sale service was of a very high caliber," he says. "Any problems were solved in double-quick time."

To wrap up the deal, as it were, Dynamic followed up the sale and installation with several calls inquiring about the machine's operation.

"Not only is that unique," Clifford says, "it's very much appreciated." □

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For more information on:  
Wulftec International  
Dynamic Packaging

Circle 410  
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