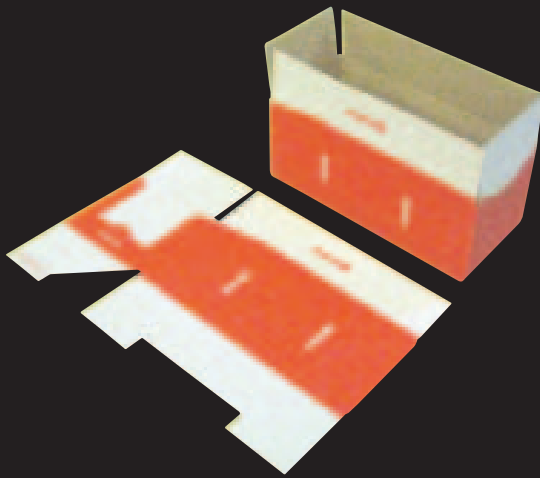




Rapid prototyping comes to market



With its new management team firmly in position and funding from its parent company continuing, UK based Encase look for growth opportunities through design services and Shelf Ready Packaging.

Following our report in December 2007, Encase has reported further developments at its sites in Leeds and Banbury, England. Managing Director, Mr John Lowe said, "We understand the needs of customers and have a new management team in place who present outstanding quality and experience. I have worked with most of them for years. We listen to our customers and offer them innovative and cost-effective solutions. I feel sure that their experience, coupled with our ongoing investment, will be of significant interest to existing and new customers."

Test Drive Centre

Take-away design brings fast-track rapid prototyping from the company's new 'Test Drive Centre'. It offers concept to production-ready in a day, ideal for retail and shelf ready packaging. Customers can arrive with a blank sheet and leave on the same day with a production-ready sample and the design job done. Design includes theme selection and seeing newly designed packaging come to life in the 3D virtual reality of CAD graphic imagery. Next, the physical sample is computer-cut and made, tried, tested and completed — all within one day at our Leeds site.



“We now go even further for supermarket retailers. With a design start on a Monday we can design, produce and deliver packaging to be in supermarkets for the weekend.”

Speaking in Leeds at the launch of the Test Drive Centre in late February, Marketing Manager, Mike Hartley said, “We are responding to the retail industry’s ever increasing demand for speed and efficiency and to maximise opportunities for business growth. We now offer one of the fastest and most comprehensive sampling services in the UK. We have developed this service for customers in supermarket retail, white and brown goods, DIY, component manufacture, chemicals, automotive, logistics and technology sectors.” He continues, “Many of these customers use rapid prototyping in their own engineering development and expect no less from their packaging suppliers. We now go even further for supermarket retailers. With a design start on a Monday we can design, produce and deliver packaging to be in supermarkets for the weekend.”

The benefits of Encase’s state-of-the-art design, graphics and cutting equipment (which includes what is believed to be one of the largest AG/CAD manufactured sample tables in the UK) are enhanced by its advanced Internet-based video conferencing. This means that while design progresses, rotating 3D images can be seen remotely by a client’s other brand managers and marketing teams for their input and reaction in real time. On-line review during design development is aimed at cutting total time to the absolute minimum — ideal for rapid-response in-store multiple retailing opportunities.

Using only a product’s dimensions, or ideally a CAD file sent by a customer, Encase can develop packaging without the need for the product. The soup tin, drink bottle or car radiator need not be physically there. For engineered products, the same applies.

Produced in modern high-strength performance packaging, Encase’s new EcoWall corrugated board meets the demand for machine and automotive parts packaging and for

removal and storage packaging. The Encase total design process optimises packaging for production, despatch, transport, storage, distribution and delivery, display and recycling.

Centre of Excellence

While at the Test Drive Centre, visiting customers, suppliers and staff can become more informed on alternative packaging solutions for transport, retail display and shelf ready packaging. From here, Encase provides training and consultative support for customers, suppliers and staff and develops creative packaging solutions which optimise factory despatch, pallet sizing for most economic use of transport, warehousing (possibly in narrow aisles) and the most efficient use of supermarket shelf and retail space. This includes learning on-the-job in real-time.

In this learning and training environment, Encase runs its popular ‘It’s Only a Box’ training course. Staff, suppliers and customers jointly participate in learning the most efficient and best practice solutions in developing, designing, producing, using and recycling packaging. By educating customers, suppliers and staff they also gain from delegates’ contributions — ensuring that customers know how to get the best value for their total business process from packaging.

New multi-point gluer

To meet the rapidly growing demand for retail and shelf ready packaging, the company has recently commissioned a new Duran Omega Bella 170 multi-point gluer at its Banbury plant. “Demand for



quick erect boxes has never been greater and the need for flexibility and choice never higher," comments Mr Hartley. "We chose a versatile and flexible machine so we can be genuinely creative and produce designs others find difficult," he said. "We selected a machine which would give us the scope to be proactive in design. Customers now look to us as packaging designers and suppliers to offer them new ideas — not just to react to requests. We relish that opportunity. As an independent we have the resource, know-how, flexibility and speed of action to assist customers achieve far more from the best of modern corrugated packaging. Our new multi-point gluer is a key part of that service."

Manufactured by Duran Machinery, the Omega Bella 170 has a maximum blank width of 1700mm and a maximum blank length of 1300mm. It can perform straight line, lock bottom, double wall and 4 & 6 corner gluing. It can handle board in

a range from 300 to 800gsm, including E, B and C flute. The machine is 17m long and has a line speed of 250m per min. Different from the other machines in the Duran range, the Bella 170 has a steel side frame thickness of 25mm, to enable it to run corrugated board.

It is equipped with a servo back folding system, with single finger for 4 & 6 corners. The folding corner is single sized and adjusted by a motorised, vertical action. It comes as standard with a crash lock attachment. Additionally, the machine features: motorised carriers with digital indicators; pneumatic lead-in carriers; single key for adjustment; hand control on upper rail; touch screen control panel and four synchronised AC motors and Siemens drives.

The Feed Section is a modular feeding unit with rack gear extension and motorised vibration. It features stainless steel hopper side plates, dual diamond tipped feed gates with one extra pile

support, individual belt tensioning cam action release for consistent tensioning, individual modular feed carriers, extendable rack style blank support at feed for longer cases and an air fluff system on feed gates (as well as vacuum on feeder)

The pre-fold/final fold sections incorporate seven lower folding carriers with eleven independently adjustable top carriers. Belt pre-break is 160 degrees. It has a drop in centre carrier in the final fold and the upper carriers are raised or lowered with an easy system. The speed of the folding belts can be adjusted independently of each other and the carrier arm is of a rounded profile design. With a long final fold section and a pneumatic squaring device at the end of the final fold for squaring crash lock bottom, this machine is ideal for shelf ready applications. The transfer/delivery sections feature a heavy duty trombone unit, pneumatic multi functional delivery and an additional control board at the end of delivery section.

This is another milestone in a major investment programme at Encase by international parent company, the COPI Group. This stage of the investment programme illustrates the company's determination to develop further in a very competitive marketplace. Encase has been trading in the UK since 1969. Operating from sites in Banbury, Leeds and East Kilbride, the company employs 300 people. The company is owned by Canadian Overseas Packaging Industries (COPI), who are registered in New Brunswick. In addition to its UK operations, the group also has packaging plants in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad, where it trades as Caribbean Packaging Industries Ltd. In Kenya, East Africa Packaging Industries Ltd has factories in Nairobi and Mombasa. Encase Corrugated is accredited to ISO 9001 2000. The company also holds BRC/IOP Global Standard — Food Packaging and Other Packaging Materials (Issue 2) for the manufacture of corrugated packaging. All the manufacturing plants are totally CFC free and manufacture to the latest ISO environmental standards.

