

VPK ROLLS INTO POLAND

The five colour Göpfert Evolution rotary die-cutter, equipped with five JB Machinery IR dryers.



SHEET PLANT NEXT TO AQUILA SHEET FEEDER IN RADOMSKO MARKS A FIRST FOR THE VPK GROUP AND EXTENDS THE REACH OF BLUE BOX PARTNERS. A REPORT BY DANIEL BRUNTON.



Lukasz Necki and Pawel Rogalka.

Belgian packaging group, VPK, has now extended its European reach to include Poland, following the opening of VPK Packaging in Radomsko. Based in a significant factory expansion at the group's wholly-owned Aquila sheet-feeding operation in central Poland, the new factory is well equipped to serve the Polish market.

"Up until the opening of the new sheet plant in December 2014, VPK had no presence in Poland for the supply of corrugated packaging," explains Pawel Rogalka, Managing Director of VPK Packaging (Poland)

and Aquila. “Poland is a huge market and we identified that we needed a manufacturing presence, not just for VPK, but also for the Blue Box Partners packaging alliance. The opening of this new facility, which was completed in the early Spring, has been totally driven by the needs of VPK’s pan-European customers.”

Blue Box Partners

Blue Box Partners is a pan-European alliance with one clear aim — to provide customers with optimum supplies of corrugated packaging. As their website suggests — ‘Whatever you need, wherever you need it, across Europe.’ Each of the four partners in the alliance has decades of experience in manufacturing corrugated boxes and they all use state-of-the-art machinery. All Blue Box Partners are family run businesses and well established in their home markets. The partners include Klingele (Germany), VPK (Belgium), Hinojosa (Spain) and the latest addition, Cart-One (Italy).

Polish experience

“Thanks to the experience we have with the Aquila sheet feeding business unit, our understanding of the Polish corrugated market is good,” explains Lukasz Necki, Plant



Four colour Latitude miniline.



Signode ISB bundle strapper behind the Latitude casemaker.

“THANKS TO THE EXPERIENCE WE HAVE WITH THE AQUILA SHEET FEEDING BUSINESS UNIT, OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE POLISH CORRUGATED MARKET IS GOOD,” EXPLAINS LUKASZ NECKI.

Manager – Radomsko. “However, it is not just a case of being given business by existing VPK customers. We are having to prove to the market that we have the technical capabilities and that we can be trusted as a reliable supplier in terms of cost and quality.”

He continues, “We are actively making tenders for new work all the

time and have invested heavily in our design department, both for structural and graphical designs. We can produce samples efficiently thanks to an Esko cutting table and a fully equipped laboratory means we can accurately test the quality of the board being used in terms of BCT and ECT.”

The new facility has the capacity to convert about 70 million sqm of corrugated board per annum. A wide range of converting machines will allow for a diverse product portfolio, allowing VPK Poland to service a broad range of industries.

Leading OEMs

The plant is well equipped. They have invested over €14 million on state-of-the-art converting and materials handling equipment. “As corrugator people, my team here in Poland had to make good use of our converting specialists within the VPK Group,” explains Mr Rogalka. “I have been out of the converting part of the market for over a decade, so I was keen to take guidance from colleagues such as Marc Van Damme when it came to specifying which machines to go with. Ultimately, we looked at the set-up of each converting department at VPK businesses such as Rigid Containers in the UK, Ondulys in France and VPK in



Dücker Corpal palletiser on the end of the Göpfert die-cutter.



“WITH THIS EXCELLENT RANGE OF MACHINERY, WE CAN PRODUCE THE WIDEST RANGE OF CORRUGATED PACKAGING POSSIBLE,” CONCLUDES MR ROGALKA.



Top: The Altair speciality gluer from Vega.
Main: Four colour midline Latitude casemaker and inset: The Alliance eSBF pre-feeder.

Belgium to make sure we had the right tools for the job. The result is a world-class operation here in Radomsko.”

The plant is equipped as follows:

- A five colour Göpfert Evolution rotary die-cutter with Göpfert pre-feeder, five JB inter-station IR dryers and Dücker Corpal palletiser and bundler;
- A four colour Latitude midline casemaker, with Alliance eSBF pre-feeder, Dücker Corpal palletiser and JB IR dryer after the final print unit;
- A four colour Latitude miniline casemaker, with ISB bundle strapper from Signode;
- A Vega Altair four corner speciality gluer;
- A reconditioned Bobst SPO 2000 flat bed die-cutter from Celmach;

- Materials handling system, including pallet inserter, from Minda;
- End of line pallet strappers from Maillis.

The plant is scheduled directly from the Aquila headquarters in Wrzesnia near Poznan, by way of OMP and SAP systems. All management and administration functions are undertaken centrally, but the plant has its own Plant Manager — Mr Necki — and shift supervisors.

Growing customer base

“With this excellent range of machinery, we can produce the widest range of corrugated packaging possible,” concludes Mr Rogalka. “This is a great move for VPK and for the Blue Box Partners, as it broadens the supply chain into this important market for the first time. We are well set with this facility and look forward to a bright future in corrugated packaging production.” ■

