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Tavens Packaging: On A Mission With Hycorr

by Len Prazych

As any sheet plant that has tried to reinvent itself knows, the word “rebranding” is synonymous with changes. Usually, several of them. Approximately two years ago, Cleveland, Ohio based Tavens Packaging & Display Solutions underwent a rebranding effort – facility and equipment upgrades, personnel modifications, a name change (it was formerly Tavens Container) and even a new mission statement with an emphasis on quality, pride and customer service.

Tavens offers a traditional mix of one- and two-color corrugated packaging, litho printed P-O-P displays and approximately 50 different styles of stock boxes, with shorter runs and smaller quantities its sweet spot. But recent changes to improve upon those capabilities have continued. Mike Schaefer was brought in as Tavens’ new president in June of 2012 and was tasked with implementing the initiatives that the ownership team wanted to make, which included building the systems to take care of customers and get the company where it needed to go.

Until his move to the presidency at Tavens, Schaefer had been with Buckeye Corrugated since 1996. He started his life in the industry as a designer cutting samples by hand, worked his way up through prepress, printing, sales and finally, management. Assisting Schaefer in his effort at Tavens is Doug Hagmeier, who had recently been promoted to Production Manager.

“As we looked at our plant and our capital needs, it became obvious that one of our shortcomings was that our old two-color press was worn out,” says

Schaefer. “The cost to repair it to ‘like new’ condition was prohibitive compared to buying a new machine. This is why we started looking at new rotary diecutters and this was why we looked at Hycorr’s rotary diecutter.”



From left, Doug Hagmeier, Production Manager at Tavens Packaging; Doug Moulder, Director of Sales at Hycorr; and Mike Schaefer, President of Tavens, in front of Tavens’ new Hycorr rotary diecutter that will elevate the company to new customer service heights.

The decision to invest in Hycorr was also driven, in part, by the new Tavens Mission Statement. According to Schaefer, it required the company to look for higher-margin, higher-value business. So it didn’t make sense to spend the money repairing a two-color machine without adding some major advantages. The solution was going to a four-color machine with drying capabilities, which would allow Tavens to take care of existing customers that currently have two-

and three-pass jobs and handle them in one pass. It would also allow the company to increase production speeds.

“We compared the major manufacturers and there were several things that led us down the road to Hycorr,” says Schaefer. “They’re an American manufacturer, support is nearby, and replacement parts are available off-the-shelf and easy to procure. Hycorr has a great reputation on its diecutters and both Doug and I are familiar with its technology. And delivery was fast enough that we were able to purchase the machine in time to take advantage of the Ohio tax breaks. The right combination of all of these factors led us to Hycorr.”



Hycorr’s 7590 VO 66-inch by 115-inch four-color rotary diecutter is equipped with a Hycorr lead edge feeder with a vacuum sheet cleaner.

The decision was made at the end of September 2012 to purchase the Hycorr 7590 VO (Vacuum Transfer System) 66-inch by 115-inch four-color rotary diecutter with scoring shafts. The old two-color was scrapped and in its place is the Hycorr, which was installed and running before the Christmas holiday. Schaefer commends Hycorr on the outstanding job it did of getting the machine installed and operating before the end of the year.

The machine was equipped with a Hycorr Lead Edge Feeder with a vacuum sheet cleaner. The first print station has a 35-inch frame with an Interstation flexo, a JB extended dryer and a JB Kleenplate Wash Eliminator. The second and third print stations are on 27-inch frames, also with Interstation flexos and JB dryers, and the fourth and final station is on a 66-inch frame with a JB dryer. All four stations are equipped with Hycorr’s quick-change anilox roll system.

The changes in production and capacity have been significant.

“The existing business that was being run across our old diecutter is being run on the Hycorr at significantly higher speeds,” says Schaefer. “A doublewall job we

used to run at 2,000 kicks per hour with poor registration we can now run at 6,000 kicks per hour. We’ve tripled the speed on that job. From a quality standpoint, the vacuum transfers allow us unbelievably accurate print registration as well as diecut registration because we have great control of the sheet. Lastly, because we’ve got the JB dryers and the new EFLO



All four print stations on the Hycorr 7590 VO are equipped with JB Machinery dryers. The first also has the JB Kleenplate Wash Eliminator.

Anilox rolls from Pamarco, the print quality is head and shoulders over what we have been doing with our old equipment. We’ve got great coverage on uncoated sheets, great registration color to color, and transfer from anilox roll to plate and plate to sheet is incredible over what it was in the past and what it is on our other equipment.”



Tavens has tripled production on a doublewall job that used to run at 2,000 kicks per hour. The Hycorr 7590 VO can run the job at 6,000 kicks.

Tavens work was not quite done. This past February, the company moved the stacker from the old diecutter to another piece of equipment and replaced it with a Hycorr 7590PS 115-inch Stacker to go against the diecutter. The Hycorr Stacker features an independent beater section, lift bed/shingling control and a 3-out accumulator. The Hycorr combo now joins

Tavens existing equipment mix - a 42-inch by 98-inch Latitude flexo folder gluer with a diecut section, an S & S two-color 50-inch flexo folder gluer, an EAM Mosca unitizer and three strappers - in the 115,000 square-foot facility once occupied by Weyerhaeuser.



Against the 7590 VO, Tavens installed a Hycorr 7590PS 115-inch Stacker, which features lift/bed shingling control and a 3-out accumulator.

As far as training operators on the new Hycorr rotary diecutter, Schaefer says crews are in place and are continuing to train on the complexities of high-graphics printing. Tavens runs two-man crews on two shifts to operate it and a skeleton crew on second shift floats between machines.

“Our operators have worked on the jobs they had to two-and three-pass in the past so they had a basic understanding of it. Now we’re heading toward the next level of print performance with the Hycorr,” says Schaefer, who adds that he plans to send his operators to the Sonoco PrintCon class at Clemson University that is offered in the spring. He is also having vendors and plate suppliers come in to give seminars on everything else to bring operator crews up to speed in high-graphics.

“I think it’s going to give us a leg up in the market,” says Production Manager Doug Hagmeier. “With our

mission statement and commitment to our customers, the Hycorr gives us the ability to provide the ‘value-add’ that I don’t think there is a lot of capacity for in this area. We’re now in the market generating more activity for the machine but as it is a replacement machine, we have plenty of capacity to operate it without high graphics. We’re finding more opportunities and moving the ‘brown work’ to other equipment. We have a base of that business and continue to work toward growing the business even further.”



One of two operators on the Hycorr 7590 VO’s loads sheets into the rotary diecutter’s lead edge feeder.

Tavens has customers in industries “across the board,” usually within a 100-150 mile radius. Adhering strictly to its Mission Statement, the company continues to provide fast service - and with the Hycorr it will be even faster - and rapid turnaround. “We’re not running truckload business like the integrators, but we’re able to service our customer base in such a way that we’re not tied into any specific market,” says Schaefer. “We’ve got the most diversified customer base than any company I’ve ever worked for. This is our vision for the future and how we will continue to grow the company. The key is giving our customers what they want and giving it to them without fail. This is where our success will come.”