

L&M News

“A family owned business, that treats your business like family.”

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L&M Innovations Drive Customer Success: Growth Through Innovation

For some manufacturers, innovation and technology fall under the “nice to have” or “would be great but” categories, but the everyday demands of taking and filling orders can create an atmosphere that’s averse to risk. L&M president Steve Lopes sees it exactly the opposite way, “The corrugated industry has often been slow to adapt or add new technologies, but L&M has always been a customer-driven company. **That’s why we innovate to meet your needs. We don’t force your products into our capabilities.**”

Examples of this customer-centric approach to innovation can be found at both L&M sheet plants, from the plant floor to the front office. Here are four major innovations from a record 2012:

Specialty Folder Gluer

The latest piece of equipment at Zion is truly a game-changer, in terms of speed and capabilities. The name “specialty folder gluer” may be cumbersome, but the machinery is anything but, allowing us to easily handle complex folding and gluing processes in-house and with increased speed. Steven Lopes, operations manager at Zion, reported that one complicated order that used to take them over seven hours



was run in a mere 22 minutes. The new specialty folder gluer allows L&M to handle processes such as auto-lock bottoms, inner partitions, four and six corner trays, and long box styles within a wide range of board grades.

Most importantly, these special cartons help customers move toward more automated processes within their own plants, with the possibility of saving labor costs.

New design lab in Platteville

L&M opened a second design lab when senior designer Paul Barta brought his 23 years of corrugated design experience from Zion to Platteville. With two industry-leader Kongsberg cutting tables in operation, the L&M sales force is primed for quicker turn-around on samples and new projects.

“The beauty of having two design labs is I can design a project here in Platteville, and have it cut out on the table in Zion for our Chicago-based customers,” Barta commented. “We’re not spending so much time shipping samples back and forth between plants.”

Platteville expands to accommodate growth

Being busy is great but it always comes with challenges. The state-of-the-art EMBA flexo-folder-gluer operating in Platteville was so busy that after a (cont. on back)



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Customer Spotlight on Sielaff Corporation: Fine Furniture Maker Chooses L&M to Protect Precious Product

"BEAUTIFUL DESIGN, SUPERB CRAFTSMANSHIP, UNCOMPROMISING QUALITY, ON-TIME DELIVERY." That's how the Mineral Point, WI-based Sielaff Corporation describes not only its products but its core values. Those values also help explain why Sielaff turned from one of the large integrated manufacturers to L&M for corrugated packaging needs, according to Alex Sielaff, company president.



Named a 2008 Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Grand Award recipient, Sielaff Corporation draws on the heritage of its southwestern Wisconsin location, an area with a rich history of fine craftsmanship dating back to a time before the birth of this state. Sielaff creates private-label steel furniture and furniture components for an exclusive list of customers that includes a well-known and well-respected national furniture retailer. Far from the assembly-required, chipboard bookshelves of your local big box retailer, Sielaff's products are decidedly "high-end fine home furniture" and that level of craftsmanship and materials demands a commensurate level of protection. The right packaging "definitely is important. Shipping and handling is a big concern for us, and L&M is really good about sizing considerations. Everything we do for our biggest customer needs packaging," says Sielaff, "and we have to adhere to very well-spelled out packaging considerations."

Having a local supplier who is also a family-owned and operated business helps reduce lead time and manage inventory levels. Sielaff said he appreciates "the investment you've made in equipment," adding "It's a pleasure to work with all of you."



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Innovation (cont.)

second shift was added, it was difficult to produce and ship product without bumping into raw materials and finished goods. "We had outgrown the original footprint of the plant from when we started here in 2007," said Lopes, "and knew it was time to expand." That expansion came in the form of a 14,000 square foot addition, effectively adding 50% more space. "More space equals greater operating efficiency and that translates into more competitive pricing for our customers."

Vendor managed inventory tool makes online tracking and ordering a snap

For companies who require warehousing due to high-volume business, the online vendor managed inventory (VMI) tool eMotion® brings L&M's facilities right to your front door. This powerful tool enables customers to view real-time inventory levels, track multiple items and even place orders directly through the system. According to salesman Andy Hilbrich, eMotion helps one major client streamline the process. "My customer can quickly go online and see what she has on the floor. She loves it because it takes the guesswork out of ordering for her, and helps avoid those unpleasant 'surprises' when someone from the warehouse comes into your office to say, 'We're out of boxes'."

A snap to set up and easy to use, eMotion helps customers do what they need to do, and lets L&M worry about the corrugated.

What's new for 2013?

"We've got some things planned," says Lopes with a smile. "We change our capabilities to package your products. 2012 was our best year ever but I've never been one to rest on my laurels. This year is going to be very exciting with some major changes coming soon." It seems the only thing constant at L&M Corrugated Container is change.