

PACKAGING DIGEST

Old packages are refurbished

A new shrink wrapper helps Returns Distribution Specialists, Bell, TN, refurbish out-of-date and/or out-of-season products for resale.

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Jack Mans, Plant Operations Editor

Returns Distribution Specialists (RDS), Bell, TN, receives out-of-date and/or out-of-season bottles, cans and cartoned products that have been on the retail shelf and need to come off. RDS sorts, inventories, cleans and revitalizes products, such as bottles of shampoo, tubes of suntan lotion and jars of lotion, making them shelf-ready again. After the products are refurbished, RDS rebundles as many as 200 different products into multipacks for redistribution to retailers. The company was doing this semi-manually with workers using L-bar sealers, when vp Adam Rains was approached about a more efficient operation. "Bill Trapp of Turnkey Packaging, Inc. suggested that I look at a bundler/wrapper from **Polypack, Inc.** (www.polypack.com) for my operation," says Rains. Turnkey distributes Polypack equipment.

In 2004, Rains purchased a Model ILB-32 DHL two-lane, intermittent-motion Polypack bundler that provides a bull's-eye wrap to products longer than 4 in. In operation, workers place groups of the containers to be wrapped (typically three to six items) onto the infeed conveyor, which contains transverse rods that separate the conveyor into sections and controls the products as they are transported through the wrapping and heat-shrink zones.

Two rolls of film are mounted above and beneath the machine, respectively, and the film is pulled over dancer bars into the wrapper, where the edges are sealed together to form a curtain of film. The conveyor carries the packages through this curtain of film, which is pulled across the tops and bottoms of the packages as they travel through the film. A sensor detects when the last item in the group passes through the film and triggers a Teflon(R)-coated seal bar that descends to seal together the trailing edges of the two strips of film and simultaneously cut the film wrapped around the packages. The conveyor then transports the bundle of products through the shrink tunnel.

The machine's dual-lane capability allows RDS to run two distinct groups of packages simultaneously. The same conveyor transports both group, but they can have different numbers of containers, and each group can have different sizes and types of containers. The wrapper can run round, rectangular- and oval-shaped products of a wide range of sizes. In this mode of operation, each lane has its own dedicated rolls of film.

Film for this operation, which is a 1-ml metallocene-based linear low-density polyethylene, is supplied by Carolina Industrial Resources, Inc.

"We replaced nine L-bar systems with this equipment, and it has worked out great for us," says Rains. "With all of the products that we run, versatility is very important to us, and this is the only piece of equipment that I know of that can run different size products without any changeover time. Another feature is the system's ability to run aerosol products. RDS has the only EPA-approved reclaim, recovery and recycling system for aerosol products in the U. S., and they require that the heat tunnel must be evacuated in case of a spill. Polypack developed an air motor that will evacuate the tunnel."

More information is available:

Polypack, Inc., 727/578-5000. www.polypack.com.



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