

## Visionary ePac Disrupts Flexible Packaging Marketplace with Key Suppliers Nordmecannica & Enercon

To disrupt an industry, you first need to understand how it works, find the opportunity gap, and then commit to filling it with purpose. The visionary team of ePac Flexible Packaging are well on their way of creating a new business model that provides brands of all sizes with access to high quality, custom flexible packaging. And now, with the help of leading technology suppliers like Enercon, they are taking their business model international.

Carl Joachim, co-founder and CMO of ePac says, "It all began for me 7 years ago as digital converting technologies began to take foothold in labels and packaging and brand demand fueled SKU proliferation. We studied the market and saw a connection between innovative new printing and converting technologies and the need for short run, quick-turn flexible packaging. Our vision was to create a disruptive model that would level the playing field for small and medium size brands in local communities and give them the ability to go to market with big brand presence."



While the first operation opened in Madison in 2016, Joachim says the master plan envisioned replicated facilities across the USA. The company identified the HP Indigo series of digital printers and Nordmecannica solventless laminators as key to filling the market need. Finding additional trusted partners like Enercon Industries Corporation for mission critical applications like integrated corona treating for laminating has proven remarkably important for ePac's scalability. In only four years the company has expanded to thirteen plants in the United States. This speed of expansion has been fueled by a winning proposition to their customers: speed to market.

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### Speed to Market

ePac's team has focused on speed to market with a pledge of a 10-15 business day turnaround for their customers. The ePac team recognizes this as part of their vision. Robert Schultz Director of Operations in their Chicago plant says, "We know a lot of our customers are family operations and they are depending on our fast turnaround for the livelihood of their business. That's one of the reasons we strive to ensure the repeatability of our processes."

A great example of this is a family run business called Phong Kee. The company was trying to earn placement at large retailers and needed sample packaging to seal the deal. Phong Kee's Susan Tran says, "We could never imagine that the package could be so gorgeous and that we could be in big-name stores. It's more than any person could ever dream of. After 38 years of my mother and father's hard work to raise us and live this American Dream, I wanted to take the business to the next level. ePac is really helping us make this dream come true," says Tran



## Scalability

With short turnaround times the orchestration of the product moving through the ePac plants needs to be efficient and well timed. As printed films roll off the HP Indigo printing lines, they are loaded onto Nordmecannica solventless laminators. To ensure lamination adhesion, Enercon High Definition Corona Treaters raise the surface energy of the films for proper bonding. Schultz says that reliable performance of the solventless laminator and corona treater is critical because if they go down or fail to add value to the flexible packaging product as designed, significant plant downtime can result. "We're pleased to say we've never experienced any downtime due to the Enercon corona treaters, which is important because we have teams of workers ready for the rolls to come off the laminator to complete production."

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ePac's Director of Continuous Improvement, Jay Sniker, has lots of experience with lean manufacturing. He's responsible for ensuring each new facility is properly configured and plant operators are properly trained. With more than a dozen facilities in operation, Sniker and his team have gotten better and better at replicating their success. "We really work closely with our vendors to ensure our operators have the knowledge needed to keep the operations running smoothly. For example, we rely on Enercon training webinars and in-person visits." Enercon provides ePac with free training, webinars and educational materials that ePac uses to train their teams across plants and create standards.

Training is recognized as an important component of ePac's success and they are using their Chicago plant as a Center of Technical Excellence where operators establish best practices. Repeatability of processes is key to international growth where time and distance provide additional challenges.

## International Growth

The new business model has been wildly successful with international demand for ePac's services. The company has an operation in Canada, a second plant opening in the UK and a new operation in Indonesia starting up. Standardizing on partner suppliers like Enercon and Nordmecannica who can deliver performance and support anywhere in the world makes expansion go more smoothly. However, the company is not resting on its laurels.

## **An Ongoing Revolution**

While ePac is replicating facilities, they are also keen on adding new technology that can improve their operations. With Nordmecannica, they are piloting a new laminator that will expand their capabilities further. Meanwhile, they have taken advantage of Enercon's latest power supply, the Compak™ Pro, which provides operators with a host of powerful operating and troubleshooting features through an intuitive touchscreen interface.

According to Joachim, the visionary company sees more innovation coming soon. "We're looking at ways to speed the adoption of variable data printing in packaging. One way is to serialize every package to enable consumer engagement, track and trace, and brand protection applications. This can really only be realized by digital printing and working with the right partners".

ePac's recipe for success includes passion, vision and purpose. In fact, if you get a chance to speak with an ePac employee, you'll find they share purpose for helping local brands be successful. And the company promises it's just getting started helping small and medium brands achieve big brand presence with the latest converting technologies.