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Colepak Succeeds With Commitment, Investment

by Jackie Schultz

The history of Colepak, Inc. is a true American success story. Based in Urbana, Ohio, a small town about 47 miles west of Columbus, Colepak specializes in custom-designed corrugated and solid fiber partitions for the packaging industry. The company reflects the strong family ties of the Cole family, which includes Rick, his wife, Deborah, and their four children, Jason, Ryan, Adam, and Esther. Rick and Deborah founded Colepak in 1985 in a 20-foot by 20-foot garage with the help of their children. The oldest was eight at the time and is now 38.

“It feels like it was just yesterday,” Deborah says. “Assembling the partitions was a labor-intensive process with larger ones taking as long as five minutes to assemble.

Sometimes it was necessary to provide motivation to keep the kids focused on the job, so we would make it a contest to see who could assemble the most partitions in a given amount of time. That made the work more enjoyable.” Even the Colepak logo was the result of a family contest. “From the very beginning it has been a family effort,” Rick says.

Production Efficiencies

The past 25 years have brought about significant growth opportunities for Colepak. A 12,000-square-foot facility was built in 1994 and has been expanded three times to its current 120,000-square feet. The

majority of customers are located in the Midwest; however, Colepak also ships product into Canada and Mexico. It supplies an assortment of industries with partitions. This includes automotive, food and beverage, cosmetics, pharmaceutical, glass, and electronics. The company has 50 employees.

Colepak inventories a wide variety of coated and uncoated paper stock, as much as 1,200 tons of raw material to ensure on-time delivery of orders. “We see

quick response to our customers as an important company value that we have to maintain no matter how much we grow,” Rick says.

Although partitions made from corrugated board were the primary focus in the early years, it became apparent to the Coles that there was also a need for partitions made from recycled fiberboard. As the requests for fiber partitions grew, the

family saw the necessity to purchase more modern and automated machinery to keep pace with customer demand. Recently, three fully-automatic partition assemblers have been purchased and added to the production floor with one more currently on order. This has positioned Colepak as a leading partition supplier in the U.S. market.

A similar scenario was occurring on the corrugated side of the business. Requests for large volume orders became more frequent and made it necessary to look



From left, Ryan, Rick, Deborah and Jason Cole.

for a high quality, high capacity diecutter. In 2012, the Coles invested in a C-170 flatbed diecutter from Baysek Machines. “We looked extensively at other



Colepak’s 120,000-square-foot plant has been expanded three times. models and there is a lot of good machinery out there, but the Baysek fit our needs the best and we have not been disappointed,” Rick says. “It cuts clean and strips so well. It’s a good machine. It has also added versatility to Colepak’s offerings and has attracted new customers and opportunities that would not have been possible before the Baysek diecutter purchase.”



Colepak’s new C-170 flatbed diecutter from Baysek Machines can handle F-flute through doublewall as well as solid and thin board.

The machine can handle a 55-inch by 67-inch sheet and F-flute through doublewall as well as solid and thin board. Features include: one operator capability, large die format, quick setup, no makeready, and user-friendly touch screen control.

The C-170 can diecut one out to complex multi-outs, requires no special stripping tools, and provides finished product with no nicks/tags or angel hair, making it ideal for Colepak’s high quality value proposition.

The self-contained suction cup die board — pneumatic waste extraction system eliminates hand stripping and outputs precisely cut, accurately counted and neatly stacked units. With a cycle speed of 1,800 sheets per hour, production is completed efficiently and quickly.

Order volume is usually the determining factor as to which jobs are run on which machines. Most of the jobs run on the Baysek are high volume repeat orders, such as beverage and automotive partitions, according to Ryan Cole, Director of Operations.

Rick says the new diecutter adds versatility to Colepak’s corrugated product offerings. “It’s able to run very large and very small order sizes and it has opened up other opportunities for us outside the partition world. We are still strictly a partition house but we can now do other products that aren’t just partitions,” he says.



Finished diecuts off the Baysek await transportation.

Colepak has attracted additional customers as a result of installing the Baysek, according to Ryan. Initially, the company had about one day a week worth of business for the new diecutter. “Now we’re running the Baysek 12 hours a day so it has worked out well,” he says. “We are able to compete on volume jobs that we’ve not been able to compete.”

In addition to fiber partition equipment and sheet diecutters, the company has slotters and automatic specialty assemblers. Last year, it installed an MSK Covertech shrink wrapping machine.



Colepak installed an MSK Covertech Shrink Wrapper last year.

Rick and Deborah say they are extremely proud of their children and what they have been able to accomplish these past several years. “The company continues to grow and flourish, but what we are most grateful for is that it has always been a family effort,” Deborah says.