



Tap Packaging Solutions develops new applications and markets with digitally printed packaging

Following the recession, Tap Packaging Solutions recognized that it had to make some serious decisions about its future direction. Its new strategy was to utilize its existing skills and experience and apply them to new markets while at the same time opening further opportunities by installing an HP Indigo 30000 Digital Press.



Industry sector: Labels & Packaging; Folding cartons

Business name: Tap Packaging Solutions

Headquarters: Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Testimonial from: Jordana Revella, vice president, sales and marketing,
Tap Packaging Solutions

HP solution: HP Indigo 30000 Digital Press

Website: tap-usa.com



Challenge

“As a leading supplier to the photo industry, producing photo-mounts and photo packaging, the rapid shift to digital photography was a serious blow to us. Followed by the recession, it was evident that any future for the company would have to be different.”

Jordana Revella, vice president, sales and marketing, Tap Packaging Solutions



Defining a new future

For nearly 110 years, The Chilcote Company focused on paperboard mounts and packaging for the photographic industry with products for professional photographers. The company, still on its original site in Cleveland, Ohio, had grown both organically and through acquisitions, adding products and developing them to meet current trend.

“The combined impact of digital photography and the recession forced the company to take a hard look at its position and future,” says Jordana Revella, vice president, marketing and sales, Tap Packaging Solutions. “We knew we were at a crossroads and our old markets were contracting.”

The company considered its equipment, experience, capabilities and decided that the confection market shared a similar reliance on image and quality as the photographic market. One result of this re-evaluation was the rebranding of the company as Tap Packaging Solutions, which not only reflected the new strategy, but also the employee ownership of the company.

“Confection packaging is about image and expectation,” says Revella. “The experience begins with the box; its look and feel enhances the anticipation. That’s a characteristic it shares with luxury photo packaging, such as for weddings, anniversaries, or important corporate events.

“Having made that decision, we felt we had to do something to differentiate ourselves, attract some attention and give us an advantage in our new markets,” she continues. “The result was the decision – enthusiastically endorsed by the employee-owners – to install the HP Indigo 30000 Digital Press.”

Solution

“Digital print quality was never an issue. What our customers saw was high quality packaging, available in short runs and reduced turnaround times. They also understood the potential to reduce stocks, and shorten supply chains and delivery times.”

Jordana Revella, vice president, sales and marketing, Tap Packaging Solutions



Responding to the digital difference

“We knew we needed a short-run solution; something that could cut set-up times and enable us to work more efficiently,” she says. “Secondly, we wanted to offer our customers something unique; we were used to being a market leader, and this press enables us to lead in a new market, to differentiate ourselves and to be at the forefront of this revolution in the folding carton market. Finally, it shows that we continue to evolve as a business; that we’re looking to the future. That’s exciting for us and for our customers. It’s also ironic that digital technology hit us hard once, but now we’re using it to our advantage.”

Adding the HP Indigo 30000 Digital Press to the company at the time it was turning around was a bold move, not least because it added a lot more press capacity to the company.

“We have two conventional presses and a wide range of finishing equipment for foiling, embossing, debossing, windowing, laminating, die-cutting and coating and varnishing,” she continues. “We also have an experienced team of hand finishers which we use for finishing set-up boxes in runs under 1,500 units, or for particularly elaborate projects.”

Tap Packaging Solutions installed an iCoat 30000 inline coater from HP partner TRESU at the same time as it installed the HP Indigo 30000 Digital Press.

“Every package receives a UV or aqueous coating,” says Revella. “It not only enhances the look of the packaging, but gives it a quality feel and protects the images from abrasion.”

Result

“Talking to customers about their print jobs now is more of a marketing conversation. They are excited by the possibilities of digital printing and want to come to see the press. It’s opened the door and given us the opportunity for a broader reach.”

Jordana Revella, vice president, sales and marketing, Tap Packaging Solutions



The value of digital technology

“Having the HP Indigo press has enhanced our culture,” says Revella. “We’ve overhauled our entire workflow to include a quick turn solution; we’ve reduced inventories and rationalized our product range, taking advantage of shorter runs to create more variety in existing products like our stock auto bottom boxes, which have many seasonal images for confectioners.

“We’re doing more samples and trial packaging, too, enabling companies to be bolder and try new things,” she continues. “We’ve also been able to assist companies whose packaging has failed to arrive on time. We can react quickly and help them to meet their delivery dates.”

Tap Packaging Solutions’ success in the confection market has led them into the cosmetics, skincare, fragrance and luxury brands’ markets.

“We’ve even established a relationship with a technology company that developed a paperboard virtual reality viewer,” Revella says. “The viewer was designed for promotional purposes and branded by different companies. Each week we receive a number of orders with artwork files for different skins for the viewers. We’ve been doing about 10,000 per week, in batches of one, five or 10 and up to 5,000. It’s a job that couldn’t be done without digital printing.

“Working with HP has been a very positive experience. The support and training was very good. Everyone – at all levels of the company – has learned a lot and is making it work. I’ve always said that good packaging is about making a statement without saying a word. The HP Indigo press is making our packaging more innovative and immediate,” Revella concludes.



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