

Rigid

Directors Report — Steve Roche

Looking forward...



The demand for our products began to recover during the third quarter and the Management team are feeling optimistic for normal levels of business during the final quarter of the year. There are signs that the recession has bottomed out and we are in a positive position to take

advantage of future opportunities that come our way. The sales team have been working extremely hard to successfully bring in new work during this economic downturn; this has reduced the impact of the temporary slow-down in demand from some of our existing customer base.

In Operations, we are focusing on improving the Planning, Transport, Manufacturing and Warehouse Systems at our Desborough site. We have appointed Les Swanick as Production Manager (Desborough); he has over 35 years experience in the industry and we are delighted to be able to utilise his valuable input in improving the Desborough operation.

The Selby management team are committed to giving every assistance to our team mates at Desborough and we are confident that we can attract further investment for the Desborough site. This can only be done with complete commitment from every employee in the business; we must focus on reducing our costs through efficiency gains and group purchasing power. The introduction of Machine Data Capture (MDC) will give both sites valuable information for analysis, allowing all teams to agree on how we can improve productivity and reduce down times. This information is live and will give shift management an instant view on how all of the equipment and teams are performing.

I would like to take this opportunity in thanking everyone for their continued hard work and commitment to Rigid Containers and I look forward to a busy fourth quarter.

Real Yorkshire Pudding Co opt for Rigid

Picking a real box company was key

Printed corrugated fibreboard transit cases — manufactured by Rigid Containers — are playing an integral role in the UK and overseas distribution of the traditionally made chilled and frozen products supplied by The Real Yorkshire Pudding Co.

Paul Holmes, Managing Director, The Real Yorkshire Pudding Co, says, "Rigid is a real box company with the manufacturing facilities and expertise to help us meet the demands of our expanding customer base in terms of service and price. Our company's success and growth reflects a tight focus on the highest standards of quality, first class service and use of only fresh ingredients — and we expect the same high standards from our suppliers.

"Times are tough and in order to retain our position as a leading supplier of pre-baked Yorkshire puddings, it's essential we can rely on our packaging suppliers to provide



cost-effective products, backed-up by on-time deliveries."

Rigid's transit cases protect the Yorkshire puddings during storage and distribution. Supplied to leading supermarkets, independent retailers, the foodservice industry and ready meal manufacturers, the high quality puddings are available in 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 inch sizes. Marketed under The Real Yorkshire Pudding Co and private label brands, the products are packed in a variety of printed flow-pack film units and Rigid's printed one-colour outer cases.

Based in the heart of South Yorkshire, The Real Yorkshire Pudding Co produces a wide range of chilled and frozen Yorkshire puddings, including bespoke recipes tailored for individual markets. The company has over 12 years of production experience providing services throughout the UK; along with an expanding presence in the export markets of Europe and Canada.



Raising the bar in customer service

By Joanne Deez — Customer Service Manager

In an era of electronic communication and ever shortening lead-times, customer service is critical. Over the last year, we have introduced many new systems and processes to help provide better information for our team, which has enabled them to increase the level of service offered to customers. Some of these developments include: new pricing system to speed-up quote generation; new telephone system to give a more efficient call delivery and ongoing training for our customer service agents.



All of our staff have embraced the new systems and processes positively and enthusiastically and to thank them for all of their hard work, we held the first 'Rigid Customer Service Awards' on Friday 14th August. The Customer Service team were joined by Design and Graphics, Samples, Estimating, Marketing and Planning in an event to celebrate the past year's achievements and everyone who attended was acknowledged for their contribution within their specific teams.

There were also five awards, the winners of these being:

- Newcomer — **Ersilia Gibbons**
- Team Player — **Jo Blenkinsop** and **Carole Brede**
- Customer Service Agent as voted for by KAMs — **Bernice Bensted**
- Support Person — **Matthew Price** (Graphics)
- 'Going That Extra Mile' — **Paul Egan** and **Kay Dines**

Everyone made a great effort in dressing up for the occasion which finished with some great disco moves by various members of staff and all agreed the event was a great success.

people news... people news... people news... people news...

Baby news

We're delighted to report that **Liz Rhodes**, part of the Administration team, gave birth to a baby boy — Cameron Roche — on 9th June, weighing in at a respectable 9lb 1oz. Congratulations and best wishes to you both.

Champagne award

At the Pro2pac Exhibition, Rigid held a Prize Draw for a bottle of champagne. One company that visited our stand was Rensow Patisserie. Pictured here is Bogumila Ziaja, the Planning and Purchasing Assistant from Rensow, receiving her prize.



Running for charity

On 20th September, many thousands of runners, both pro and amateur, line-up for the famous Great North Run. One of the keen amateur runners is our very own

Ersilia Gibbons, who is running to raise funds for the Lakelands Hospice in Corby. Good luck Ersilia, what a great cause to be running for.

Exam success

Proving the team at Rigid are committed to furthering their qualifications, there has been a huge amount of success in exams recently, reports Paul Coates, Group Financial Director. First to mention is **Michael Houghton**, who recently qualified as a Chartered Management Accountant. Michael tells us that he took a total of 16 exams. "The whole process took me about six years to complete, with my membership being granted this year. Sincere thanks to the Owners and Directors of Rigid, who supported me through the course, covering the costs and exam fees. It means a great deal to me." Others to pass exams within the Finance Department include **Nicola Harlow**, who works as a Management Accountant — she recently passed the CIMA

Strategic Level exams. The course consisted of three papers — Financial Strategy, Risk & Control Strategy and Business Strategy. The final part of the exam is the TOPCIMA, which she sat on 4th September. Well done Nicola and fingers crossed for the TOPCIMA paper. We're also delighted to report that **Allison Clark** has passed her first exam of the Payroll Management Diploma with a Merit. She jokes with us, "I'm not sure that is worth putting in the newsletter until I have passed the full diploma, as I have another four exams to go!" Wishing you the best of luck with those last exams, we're sure you'll do yourself proud.

Wedding bells

Claire Headland, a member of our Customer Service team, sends us news of her forthcoming wedding. To be held on Saturday 19th September at Kirby Hall near Corby, Claire will be tying the knot with Liam Keelan. We send all our best wishes for a great day.

about us

Who we are

Rigid Corrugated is part of VPK Packaging Group - one of the fastest growing independent European manufacturers of recycled paper and corrugated cases with an annual turnover of some €480 million. Apart from the UK, it has a network of operating plants in Belgium, Holland, France, Poland and Romania.

In recent years the Group, (which is listed on the Belgium stock exchange), has evolved from a product-focused organisation to a service organisation, concentrating on customers' specific needs in terms of tailored packaging solutions, supply chain optimisation and just-in-time deliveries.

Part of VPK since 2000, Rigid Containers has been an industry pioneer in meeting the demands of the modern supply chain in the UK by introducing innovative, integrated manufacturing and logistics facilities with large warehousing capabilities for an unrivalled outstanding ex-stock service.

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