

Rigid

Director's Report — Julian Freeman



We all thought we had seen the worst of the 'dip' in the economy, but the banks and financial institutions seem to have proved once again that it is still quite a bleak picture out there and we aren't out of the woods just yet. Against this rather gloomy economic background, I am happy to confirm that we are certainly

holding our own at Rigid, with volumes continuing to grow ahead of our expectations. Part of this is thanks to the ongoing investment at both sites, the latest of which is for the corrugator at Desborough — you will see more detail about this project on page 2. We are also excitedly awaiting the delivery of the new Latitude casemaker, which is scheduled for delivery early in the New Year.

The continuing rise in energy prices as well as input costs for raw materials has had a significant impact on our overheads. I have no doubt we are not alone in trying to recover costs, but we are deeply aware that the last few months of price increases have been a naturally unsettling time. We are working as hard as we can with our suppliers to try and keep a tight control on all costs, to ensure that we can maintain consistent prices for our products.

Off the back of a very encouraging start with the new Göpfert printing machine at Selby and the EFIA Gold award, we are continuing to be thrilled with not only the quality of flexo post print work being produced, but also the way in which our customers are embracing the high quality print standards we are achieving. It has certainly opened several prominent 'doors' and we look forward to growing our reputation as one of the country's leading corrugated post print operations.

From litho to flexo

Rigid helps Student-Aid halve their packaging costs

A critical issue facing companies and organisations around the country right now is cost reduction – and it is no different for London based Student Aid, an organisation which delivers 'welcome parcels' on behalf of more than 80 universities to 200,000 students every year. The welcome parcel had always been printed using litho offset and was litho laminated both inside and out. However, cost was the driver, and the organisation looked to Rigid to drastically reduce the production costs of the boxes.

"This was a good year to look at alternative print methods, as we are undergoing a re-brand ahead of the academic year starting in September — we are set to be known as HelloU.com," explains David Corbineau. "We had previously had these boxes printed in five colour litho, both inside and out, but the cost was becoming prohibitive and lead times were an issue. In a drive to reduce

costs, but also pick up on current environmentally friendly themes, we decided we wanted to create a box that appeared to be wrapped in brown kraft paper. To say we have been overwhelmed by the end result is an understatement! The clarity and quality of the print and folds is first rate. To the untrained eye, it just looks like a simple print job, but the reality is something totally different."

The box itself was produced using 186gsm Kraftliner, a 90gsm fluting and a 186gsm Testliner. The board was of E flute construction, and printed in two colours, using a high screen count anilox roll. It was printed and die-cut in-line on the Göpfert Evolution flexo rotary die-cutter at the Selby factory.

"Rigid were not only competitive on price but were able to work with our very tight timelines, which was impressive," explains David. "Our job was printed on the new Göpfert press, which as a small business was

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Rigid helps halve packaging spend for Student-Aid

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refreshing; typically, we would get shuffled down the list, as larger customers tend to take priority!"

David continues, "Delivery targets were met and the Rigid team kept in contact with us at all stages of production. It is not often you use a supplier that takes this level of pride in their work. We were definitely won over by the attention to detail that Matthew Crooks, their High Quality Post Print Business Development Manager, showed us."

In concluding, David commented, "Our box this year is the best I have seen. We are first year 'converts' from litho to flexo and it has been a great move. As for Rigid as a supplier, I will definitely be back again next year!"



Helping our people to help others

Allison Cameron, Payroll Manager, explains some of the incentives being offered to staff

On your bike!

Since starting the cycle to work scheme in 2010, almost 50 employees have taken up the 'Bike to Work' scheme, the majority of these from our Selby plant. Selby now have three bike sheds to store these bikes safely and securely. Plans are being put in place to have a bike shed erected at Desborough too.

The government put this scheme in place to cut carbon emissions and for those that take up the scheme will not only benefit from getting fit and healthy, they will also cut their fuel bills. The scheme works by the employee agreeing to give up part of their salary for an agreed 12 months, in exchange for a non-cash benefit, which is a hire agreement of a bike and safety equipment. Employees must have completed a minimum of three months service to be eligible. This means that each payment is deducted from the employees gross salary before tax and NI are calculated. Employees can choose a bike and selected safety equipment up to a £1,000. Cyclescheme is one of the largest schemes and they have over 1,740 Partner Stores in the UK.

Childcare vouchers

We currently operate a childcare voucher scheme with a company called Computershare. Employees who have children in childcare whilst at work can apply for these vouchers. The cost of the vouchers are free from tax and NI by way of a salary sacrifice. Parents can exchange up to £243 per month (or £55 per week) of their gross salary for childcare vouchers (£124 per month for higher tax payers and £97 per month for additional rate tax payer). Computershare have an online facility so your account is accessible and manageable and payments can be made by e-voucher.

Tax free donation

Did you know that one in three people will get cancer? Many of us know someone who has had or currently has cancer. We all want these people to be well cared for. Marie Curie nurses work day and night looking after patients who want to be cared for at home at the end of their lives. This vital service is free and can only be offered thanks to the efforts of the

supporters who raise millions of pounds for Marie Curie Cancer Care every year.

Rigid Containers are now a part of the support group by setting up a 'Give As You Earn' scheme through the payroll. Your support is essential to Marie Curie. One hour of nursing care in a patient's home costs £20, while £3,000 covers the cost of Marie Curie's nursing service nationally for one hour. Employees can donate as little as 50p per week to this worthwhile cause. Donation forms are available from payroll.

Cut your carbon footprint

For over 12 months, Rigid have had the facility to e-mail payslips to employees. I have worked hard on bringing the payroll into the 21st century and cutting down on the amount of paperwork to be processed in the payroll department. All reports are now electronic. The benefits of having your payslip by e-mail is that they are password protected, you will receive them quicker than if you have a hard copy, you can file them for future reference and can print them if you need a hard copy.

Easy opening of boxes made simple with Rippatape!

The end of September sees the culmination of a £120,000 investment, with the installation of a new, state of the art 'Rippatape' application unit on the corrugator at Desborough. "The application of Rippatape to corrugated boxes enables fast and efficient case opening," explains Julian Freeman, Sales and Marketing Director. "While we have been able to offer tape application for some time, this brand new unit allows us to run as little as 1,000 linear metres of board cost efficiently, further adding value to the USP of our Desborough site."

Julian continues, "This additional product certainly compliments our new 'Rigid Performance Grade' board by allowing superior strength, improved printability and now easier opening of the cases."

The tape applicator system, which is manufactured by Payne, has a fully automatic set-up and runs via an easy to use touchscreen. The system automatically tracks the web of the corrugator to give accurate tape lay down and it can run tape widths of between 4 and 25mm. It can run standard tape and double side sealing tape used on items such as CD and DVD mailing sleeves and book wraps as well.

"Due to the quick change over and splicing function, we achieve the highest accuracy of application at the start — and throughout — the run," he continues. "As well as fast, effective opening of sealed boxes, Rippatape ensures a clean and accurate tear and improved strength in the box as there are fewer opening perforations," concludes Julian.

Introducing Chartapad — recycled and recyclable

Protective pads and fitments from Rigid Charta help ensure maximum protection for bulky items in transit



In the last issue of our newsletter, we told you about the rebranding of Rigid Charta, the latest addition to the Rigid Group. But how many of you know exactly what Rigid Charta does, or what the Chartapad product is? David Linton, General Manger of Rigid Charta gives us the low-down on the Birmingham based business unit.

“I am sure we have all faced the same dilemma at some stage — how to really protect a big or bulky item that has to be despatched to a customer at the other end of the country. Well, the answer is quite simple really – you need Chartapad fittings and fitments!”

David continues, “Designed specifically to provide highly effective transit protection for a whole range of products, no matter how bulky or fragile, Chartapads do not break under impact and have excellent load bearing properties, which allow them to withstand and protect against transit damage. The wide range of items we manufacture offer the ultimate in cushioning, strength and resilience.”

With a dedicated team of 28 people working on a double shift basis, five days per week, Rigid Charta supply to customers up and down the country —



from Southampton to Scotland! Since its acquisition by Rigid, the company has seen investment in the factory infrastructure as well as a new canteen for the operators. “Health and Safety is always a key concern within the VPK Group, and Rigid Charta has benefited from investment in general factory improvements, making it one of the most safe places to work,” explains David.

“As well as the range of Chartapad

products, we also produce reels of corrugated single face in B and C flute,” he continues. “Like all products manufactured in the group, customers benefit from the fact that all Chartapad protection pieces are made of recycled corrugated board and are therefore fully recyclable.” For further information, visit www.rigidcharta.co.uk or call **01757 293930**.

Ian Rose joins as new Key Account Manager for the Midlands

We are happy to announce the appointment of a new Key Account Manager to the sales team. **Ian Rose** joins us, having been active in the corrugated industry for over 20 years. "Ian will be operating in the West Midlands, Warwickshire and Staffordshire and will be based from our Desborough site," explains Julian Freeman, Sales and Marketing Director. "Ian is well known in the market, and will cover the entire range of our products, from simple brown boxes right through to our High Quality Post Print boxes." Ian can be contacted on IanRose@rigid.co.uk or on 07796 941235.



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Wedding bells

We are delighted to report that **Tom Gould**, our IT Support Engineer, recently 'tied the knot' with fiancée Frances Amy Clarke. The wedding took place at St Michael and All Angels church which is set in the beautiful grounds of Brooksby Hall, Melton Mowbray on 28th August 2011. Congratulations to you both from us all at Rigid and we hope you enjoy your honeymoon!

Baby news

Weighing in at 4lb 10oz, we are happy to report the birth of Luke Charlie Bennett, who was born safely on Friday 8th July at 15.18. Mum **Victoria Lockwood**, who works in our accounts department tells us that her and partner Darrel are over the moon with the new arrival. Well done indeed!

Exam success

Allison Cameron has been hitting the books hard and all that work is paying off. She achieved a distinction for the second module of her Diploma. She tells us there is only one more to go, which was submitted on 11th August. Results are due in September — fingers crossed!

Wizard of Oz

When Julie Carter of the Kettering Buccleuch Academy approached Rigid for help in supplying board for a local amateur dramatics society, Sales and Marketing Director **Julian Freeman** was more than happy to help out. He tells us, "We were asked if we could supply some large pieces of corrugated board to enable the KBA to make some 5 foot cut-outs of characters for the Wizard of Oz. The life-size cut-outs were of the key characters, namely Dorothy, The Scarecrow, Tin Man, The Lion, The Witch, and the Good Fairy. We duly obliged and the show went ahead in late July to great reviews!" Here are a few of the life-size models that KBA made.



Carnival prize

When Louise Key approached **Vanessa McErlain**, (one of our Key Account Managers), for help, Vanessa jumped into action. The request was for a supply of corrugated board to help local children create a carnival float for the Grantham Carnival. Louise commented, "I'd like to say a huge thank you to Rigid Containers from all of the club for their donation of corrugated board to aid with the costumes. The material was used to make playing cards, butterflies, our caterpillar and many more props on the float, which I am delighted to report earned us second place in the competition. The girls and boys had a fantastic day despite the early downpour, which dampened the corrugated board but not their spirits! Maybe we can have waterproof corrugated next year?!" she jokes.



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 €600 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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