



Boxes of Distinction - Pollard Boxes, Enderby, Leicestershire.

East Midlands Packaging Society members had an opportunity to visit Pollard Boxes. Based in Enderby, they are one of the leading paper covered rigid presentation box manufacturing companies in Europe. They moved to their 45,000 sq ft 'state of the art' factory in July 2004 and employ over 100 people.

The business was started 36 years ago. At this time there were over 20 box makers supplying the local shoe and clothes trades. However, as these main activities diminished so did the box makers and they had to look for alternative markets. For Pollard Boxes their opportunity came with the rise of the computer software markets and their ability to respond quickly to the changing and increasing demands of these customers.

Pollard Boxes customer base now caters to the needs of video, DVD, music, confectionery, games, books, jewellery, gift and promotional products. They offer an unrivalled level of service to their customers from initial design through to final production and provide CAD design and sampling to ensure the box meets their customers' expectations. Innovations in the past year have included the Digital Book, the Tardis Box and the Box Sets with a Difference.

Traditionally, box-making production has changed little over the last 50 years. Semi automatic American Stokes and Smith machines ran reliably at only 800 boxes an hour and needed 3 staff, but about 15 years ago an Italian company, Emmeci, designed and built a fully automatic machine capable of running more than 2000 boxes an hour and with only one person. Pollard Boxes saw this as the only way to meet the rising demand and with more than £2 million invested, they now have a range of these machines producing boxes 24 hours a day.

Rigid boxes are made from 800 - 2000 micron grey board and can have a white or black liner. Box blanks are die cut to shape and stay tape is used to produce the box shell. 120gsm paper is used for the printed design and this can be lavishly decorated with matt or gloss film laminate, spot uv varnishing, foil blocking and embossed features to give the desired effect. It is important that a long grain wrap is used to minimise the curl when a hot layer of jelly glue is applied. The box shells are spotted very accurately onto the glued surface as once applied you cannot reposition the box. The sides are then automatically applied, folded in and over the edges to produce the finished box. Internal fittings for the boxes can then be inserted made from card, foam, satin, velvet or vacuum forming.

Of course the process can be done by hand and we were offered the opportunity to try this ourselves. Tara, one of the supervisors, made it look so easy as she expertly applied, tucked round, folded over and smoothed out beautiful business card holders which we were given to take away as a memento of our visit.

Our thanks are extended to Peter Conner, Ian Bason, Neil Jarvis, Tara Mercer and Jan Peel for their time and kind hospitality in making this a most interesting and special visit for branch members.

Ian Morris
Secretary
East Midlands Packaging Society
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