



A WELCOME ADDITION

The recent acquisition of Netherlands-based Nelipak by the global manufacturer of materials and systems for the fresh food packaging industry Sealed Air has created a formidable opportunity. Emma-Jane Batey spoke to Sealed Air managing director Bert Verheugen to find out more.

With more than 58 years at the forefront of the European rigid packaging industry, Nelipak's recent acquisition by the globally-respected materials and systems manufacturer for protective, presentation and fresh food packaging Sealed Air has enabled the company to bring its expertise to an even wider audience.

Nelipak converts thermoplastics into a range of types, dimensions and colours and offers a turnkey solution. Following the acquisition, the company is now called Sealed Air Nelipak BV, with 'Nelipak' becoming the brand name for rigid trays within Sealed Air Nelipak. At the same time, Sealed Air also acquired another complementary packaging business so the company has grown considerably in the last two years, bringing an even greater portfolio to its customers and taking the company's total workforce to over 26,000 and its turnover to more than \$1 billion.

Joining the family


Managing director of Sealed Air Nelipak Bert Verheugen told Packaging Europe about the core benefits that Nelipak brings to the company. He said, "The Nelipak brand name is very well known in a number of territories world wide, so its acquisition by Sealed Air was a very attractive prospect. As we are continuing to use the Nelipak brand we can ensure that our previous customers and our new customers get to appreciate the quality and service that have helped contribute to the excellent reputation of Nelipak products."

Already working well in attracting new business, the Nelipak brand is synonymous with quality products at competitive prices, offering value for money from a very service-orientated company. Mr Verheugen is keen to point out that Sealed Air Nelipak is fully committed to the long-term Nelipak promise of providing a 'one-stop shop' solution for its customers. He added, >

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We know that in order to continue to succeed in what is an increasingly challenging market, you have to be flexible and able to quickly and effectively deliver exactly what you customer wants. We are proud to do that – if you are not flexible you lose out!

“Our main focus has always been our rigid trays and the rest of our business has steadily developed in order to support that. We deliver a total solution to our customers, from design to validation to actual packaging.”

It is this total solution provision that helps to set Sealed Air Nelipak apart from the competition, with the company unique in its ability to validate medical device packaging from first sketch to prototype through to contract packaging, and then build and sell the sealing machine to actually package the product. This means that Sealed Air Nelipak customers do not need to go anywhere else for any part of their packaging requirements, allowing the company to build strong relationships with its customers and a complete understanding of their demands.

Mr Verheugen explained how this total solution approach has evolved through listening to customers and matching the products and services

to their changing needs. He said, “The majority of our customers utilise our one-stop shop approach as it saves them time and money, as well as offering considerable peace of mind in knowing that we listen to their demands and respond accordingly, with only one point of contact. But customers can also pick any aspect of our products and services, such as just the design of their packaging moulds or blisters. We know that in order to continue to succeed in what is an increasingly challenging market, you have to be flexible and able to quickly and effectively deliver exactly what your customer wants. We are proud to do that – if you are not flexible you lose out!”

Succeeding in a challenging market

The challenging market is a response to the difficult economic situation, although Sealed Air Nelipak is in a strong position thanks to operating world-

wide. The company is noticing trends radiating from financial issues such as people being slow to invest or move capital around, but it is fortunate to have a very loyal client base and is dedicated to looking after it. With 92 per cent repeat business, Sealed Air Nelipak primarily works hard to hang on to its existing customers rather than chasing new business, although its recent activities show it is performing admirably in both areas.

In 2012, Sealed Air Nelipak will be launching around 200 new products. Primarily these are a result of direct customer demands whereby a customer request is transformed into a physical supply which is tailor made for that specific customer, with the resulting product, where suitable, launched onto the market. Nearly every product is manufactured following a specific customer request, with no standard products offered. Mr Verheugen added, “We have practically no boundaries when it comes to thermoforming techniques

– our equipment is state-of-the-art and we say if Nelipak can’t make it then no-one can!”

Recent investment in Sealed Air Nelipak’s 17,000m² production facilities in the Netherlands has seen a number of brand new thermoforming machines added to its capabilities, with more than 70 per cent of its production exported, primarily to Europe, particularly Germany, the UK and France, and with around seven per cent sold to Israel. The majority of Nelipak’s customers are in the medical industries, with its trays for the pharmaceutical industry a particularly strong growth market. The company expects to see growth in its North American and Asian activities in the coming years too, with its ‘follow the customer’ strategy already proving successful. □

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