Customer's magazine

express

No. 19/October 2009

Reifenhäuser
KIEFEL EXTRUSION

Customers are the winners from the deal

Reifenhäuser acquires KIEFEL Extrusion

The customers will be the greatest beneficiaries of the deal!", said Edgar Gandelheidt, Managing Director of the company Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion GmbH to express when announcing at the end of August the sale of KIEFEL Extrusion. Reifenhäuser GmbH & Co. KG Maschinenfabrik, Troisdorf has accordingly purchased all shareholdings in KIEFEL Extrusion GmbH from Brückner Technology Holding GmbH, Siegsdorf, with retroactive effect as from January 1, 2009.

From left: Ulrich Reifenhäuser, Edgar Gandelheidt and Klaus Reifenhäuser

A groundbreaking fusion in terms of growth and market leadership has thereby been concluded in the forward-looking business area of blow film extrusion. "With the acquisition, we achieve the best prerequisites to strengthen and extend our leading position in the worldwide market for extrusion lines", said Ulrich Reifenhäuser (53), Managing Director of the traditional family company. And his brother Bernd (43), Managing Director of the parent company added: "By joining our technical competence in the Troisdorf and Worms locations, we are creating the worldwide largest development and know-how pool in blown film machinery and are thereby placing ourselves at the very top of the market."

Edgar Gandelheidt, who becomes Managing Director of the entire newly formed Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion unit, stressed on account of the acquisition: "Together, we offer the most comprehensive programme worldwide in blown film applications! Our customers, whom we accompany as a highly innovative partner, profit from this, and naturally our staff, for whom we remain a reliable and forward-looking employer, will benefit as well."

The headquarters of the new business unit will be in Worms. Producing in Troisdorf and

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Edgar Gandelheidt,
CEO Reifenhäuser Kiefel

When I have tried to explain to my inquisitive children what is happening with KIEFEL Extrusion and Reifenhäuser, I wanted to give easily understandable answers. "Daddy, do we have to move now?" As you, dear customers, know from your own experience, children bring complicated interrelationships very rapidly and precisely down to what are the decisive points for them. My answer, "No, we are remaining in Worms", provided for clearly visible relief.

"Are you sad that Brückner has sold you?" It was not difficult for me to give an answer here either: "No, not at all. Kiefel wasn't sold, Kiefel was bought! This is the small but important difference. Kiefel was wanted. And Kiefel wanted the connection with Reifenhäuser, because there is so much potential there, such great knowledge gained from experience and very good staff...

... And", I added, "There will be a lot of work, like with a large puzzle. But in the end, we will see a terrific picture like never before. Do you know, that it is as though you get together with your friends to buy a new video game. Because you do it together, you have the game already a long time before all the other children. When two companies bundle their development powers together, they are also faster as the others."

Dear customers, there is much to be accomplished, and the team of Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion are getting down to it! You may wait in anticipation of what the new unit has ready for you and will develop. Technicians with experience of 7,000 lines installed worldwide are at your disposal. And express will continue with a new, fresh design, to inform you about all important subjects in the blown film world.

Edgar Gandelheidt

Bread packaging – and much more

Tropic Plastic enhances business with Reifenhäuser Kiefel lines

The family-managed company Tropic Plastic & Packaging Industry Ltd, Durban, South Africa was founded in 1963. Its policy since the very beginning is to offer its customers high-grade packaging at reasonable prices, together with excellent personal service. This creed applies still today, for the around 230 staff as much as for Managing Director Fazel Bhabha!

Tropic has meanwhile developed into one of the most important producers of PE films and also as the leading supplier of converted and printed bags in South Africa. In order to comply with customer requirements, only the best materials are used. "We have furthermore acquired only the most modern extrusion technology", said Mohamed Timol, Operations Director, to express, "in order to ensure that we can continuously produce films of the highest quality." So the company, that has already been a customer of Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion since the 1980s, has recently invested again in KIRION® technology from Worms. The investment involved two fully automated 3-layer coextrusion lines. Production of high-grade films has started at the end of 2008 with the most recently acquired KIRION® 70/100/70 with its net working width of 2,200 mm.

According to Timol, the decision for the Reifenhäuser Kiefel lines was not difficult: the South African company had been convinced of the line technology from Worms, the quality, easy and clear handling and appealing design, but also of convincing support, from consultancy right up to after-sales service. The management finds daily performance of the equipment particularly impressive: "We obtain throughput of 700 kg/h on the latest line with a 500-mm blown film die head and a standard cooling ring, while constantly maintaining highest precision; all of that due, among others, to the KIRION® C2 profile control system!"

Tropic produces not only the films, but also processes them further into bags, that are characterized by high transparency and best optical appearance, as well as excellent penetration strength. Indispensable quality features, if taking the sensitive contents of the bags into consideration: it involves packaging for bread. Peak throughput performance without blockage is also the order of the day during this further processing stage. The newer KIRION® lines have additionally helped the bread packaging specialist to gain further business. This includes high-quality laminated films, that can only be dealt with, as is well known, by sophisticated processing technology, such as that offered by Reifenhäuser Kiefel.

Tropic has committed itself to strengthen and expand its leading market position during the next 10 years. Fazel Bhabha states: "We are sure of reaching these aims with Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion standing alongside us as partner, on account of high efficiency and best film quality."

From left: Sascha Skora (Reifenhäuser Kiefel), Mohamed Timol (Tropic Plastics), Rex Parsons (Printing Products, Reifenhäuser Kiefel representative in South Africa)

Customers are the winners…

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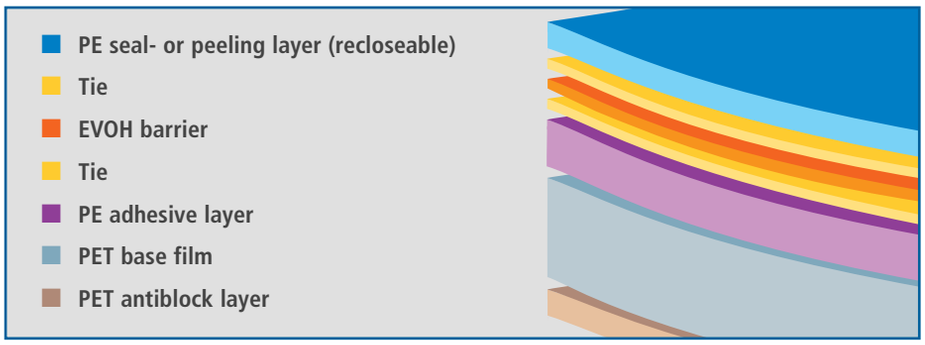
Worms, it possesses a global network of its own service and sales companies. As further evidence of worldwide strength, the Reifenhäuser group operates the largest privately owned technology centre for plastics extrusion – and it will be the customers who will in particular profit on a continuing basis from this centre.

The product lines from Reifenhäuser and Kiefel complement each other almost ideally. There is hardly any overlap in the portfolio. Customers can now choose from the widest offering in blown film die heads worldwide – the same applies for winding units. "We were already the technology leader", Gandelheidt adds with confidence, "now we are also the market leader, with more than 7,000 lines running worldwide!" In addition, the high degree of automation that has been jointly achieved will be of benefit to the customers, he suggests. "Last but not least, all business partners profit from our dense sales and service network stretching around the world." So Gandelheidt is sure that "all customers will quickly appreciate the acquisition, just as the staff of the two companies did immediately after the merger."

Barrier films for lamination of PET

Polyester film is an excellent material for packaging food. PET film is often thermoformed or vacuum-formed; it is characterized by good stiffness, as well as high transparency. The oxygen barrier properties do not usually suffice however to guarantee the required shelf life of fresh foods (for example, meat, sausages or fish). PET film is therefore often laminated with a 5- to 9-layer barrier film.

One of the covering layers has to be tacky in order to guarantee good adhesion to the PET film. This is necessary, as solvent-based lamination adhesives cannot be used with PET films. The 5- to 9-layer films are provided with a tacky layer in order to enhance the initial adhesion of solvent-free adhesives (often aqueous-based 2-component adhesives) during inline lamination.



The typical construction of a 7-layer lamination film is shown in the diagram.
Handling of a 5- to 9-layer blown film is not exactly easy, on account of the tackiness of the outer layer. Lines from Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion master the process perfectly well, on account of their special equipment, as no crease formation or other film defects can arise.
But dealing with tacky films is not completely effortless however: laying flat has to take place at a very low angle that is adjusted according to the specific film. At Reifenhäuser Kiefel, contact-free redirection of the film is achieved with ZEROTOUCH turner bars. Furthermore, specially coated web guidance rolls guarantee faultless transport of the tacky films through the entire line. A specially designed KIRION® W series winder at the end of the line ensures perfect film rolls – from the first layer through to the last.

Flexibility – adaptability – diversity

Producing 5-layer films on Reifenhäuser Kiefel lines

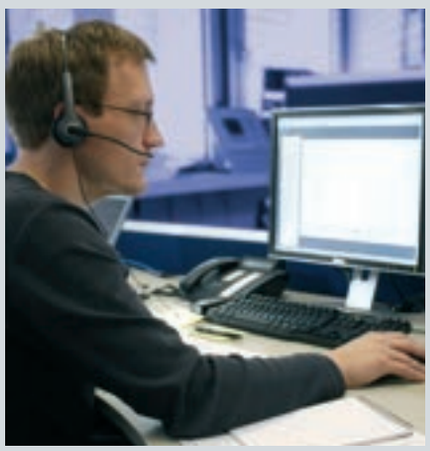
There is nothing more permanent than change, it was said in one of the previous issues of express. This applies also to the by no means insignificant market segment of lines for barrier films with narrower lay-flat widths (under 2,000 millimetres). A marked shift in demand from 3-layer to 5-layer lines has been observed for quite some time in this plastics processing sub-segment. Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion can bee seen here as being well prepared.

The reasons for the shift in demand are of different nature. In many cases, 3-layer films are already produced on 5-layer lines, because the savings that can be achieved are by no means insignificant. The outer or functional layers produced with expensive raw materials are split then: a metallocene layer comes out much thinner than normally, for example, if it is split out into 2 layers with the new layer of less expensive LLDPE. The 2 additional extruders are available so that these new layers can be applied.

But 5-layer lines are also of great interest for new entrants in barrier film production. Should the recently acquired machine initially not be fully utilized for producing barrier films, the plastics processor can also use it for classic 3-layer applications (such as for production of laminated films). This way, such a multi-use line enables the highest flexibility and greatest possible capability of adaptation to new market requirements.
Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion has barrier lines with smooth bore extruders and the entire range of KIRION® modules in its programme that allow for the different configurations and equipment variations. With die head diameters of 150 to 600 millimetres, the diversity in materials and film structures that can be processed are therefore almost unlimited. Producers of vacuum block-shaped packaging for cheese, nuts or tea leaves count, for example, among those customers who already use 5-layer lines today. The blown films produced by them with small diameter die heads possess widths of approx. 500 millimetres. But the lines from Worms also offer all required prerequisites for FFS applications with barrier properties. Plastics processors active in international markets increasingly appreciate these numerous application possibilities. The latest and most current example is a customer in Indonesia who has only recently started up operation of such a line.

Reifenhäuser Kiefel services

Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion has always stood for outstanding service support. Service to its customers starts well before signing of any contracts and continues on well after installation is complete. In order to further enhance this performance and to offer even more intensive and comprehensive service support, the staff in Worms have established a dedicated business unit for upgrades to Reifenhäuser Kiefel as well as competitive lines, retrofits, parts supply, as well as technical consulting services: Reifenhäuser Kiefel PROSERV. All service concerning blown film production has been brought within the PROSERV group, with immediate effect. Film producers now will have the ability to have their production optimized by specialists from Reifenhäuser Kiefel while their lines are in operation. Furthermore, staff training for special application areas is available as well. Extensive retrofit and conversion packets are offered – always accompanied by on-the-spot technical and operational support. Further detailed information on the diverse services available from Reifenhäuser Kiefel PROSERV can be found in the service area under www.reifenhauser-kiefel.com.



Three principles for success

Perfect teamwork since 1994: Hamilton Plastics and Reifenhäuser Kiefel

15 years is a long time in international markets with increasingly frequent short-term and short-lived business relationships. It really needs a partnership based on trust if two companies continuously co-operate with one another over such an extended period of time; such is the case of Hamilton Plastics Inc. and Reifenhäuser Kiefel Extrusion.

Bridge to Chattanooga, Tennessee, headquarters of Hamilton Plastics

It was in 1994 when the plastics processor from Chattanooga, Tennessee (USA) acquired its first extrusion line from Reifenhäuser Kiefel. Meanwhile 7 lines of the present KIRION® generation and numerous others from previous model generations have been aquired by Hamilton Plastics. It is mainly multi-layer films for packaging purposes and for production of plastic bags for customers in the food industry and the health sector that are produced on the machines. For company founder and CEO Harshad Shah it became clear after acquisition of the fist line from Reifenhäuser Kiefel: he had found a machinery supplier whom he could trust. Not only were his expectations in terms of film quality and output soon fulfilled but even exceeded. An important aspect as well is the modular concept of the KIRION® range allowing retrofitting of existing machines at any time with additional components, for example, when the company observed increased demand for lamination films in 2006. It is also the proverbial excellent service of the team from Reifenhäuser Kiefel that is highly appreciated by Shah and his staff.

Loyalty, quality and personal attention, three characteristics that Harshad Shah has rated as the principles for his personal and business success, also apply in the co-operation between Hamilton Plastics and Reifenhäuser Kiefel. That such values can retain their validity – also in times of the challenges facing the flexible packaging business today – is a continued demonstration of the trust between these two successful medium-sized companies.

Reifenhäuser
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Design: DingeldeinDesign
Phone: +49 (0)69 35 35 06 71