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Editorial Advisory Board Roundtable

Sawing Systems

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Sealed Air's newly streamlined operations



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On the surface, frozen turkeys and Hollywood blockbusters don't have a lot in common. But to make their way into American homes, foodstuffs, DVDs and a whole slew of consumer goods must all be properly packaged. Shoppers everywhere benefit from the work done at Sealed Air Shanklin Corp., which produces a wide variety of shrink-wrap equipment and supplies.

As the innovators of Bubble Wrap back in the 1960s, Sealed Air can easily be recognized as a forerunner in industrial packaging. In 2006 the company realized revenues in the amount of \$4.3 billion. Its presence can be found throughout the world, with over 100 manufacturing facilities in 51 countries. To stress its global impact, the company's Web site notes that Sealed Air products reach nearly 80 percent of the world's population.

In order to keep up with such high demand, the company is constantly taking measures to streamline its operations. At its Ayer, Mass., location, where Sealed Air's Shanklin shrink packaging equipment is produced, increasing manufacturing efficiency has been a paramount endeavor during the past year. Taking a close look at plant layouts and investing in reliable equipment were key components of the process.

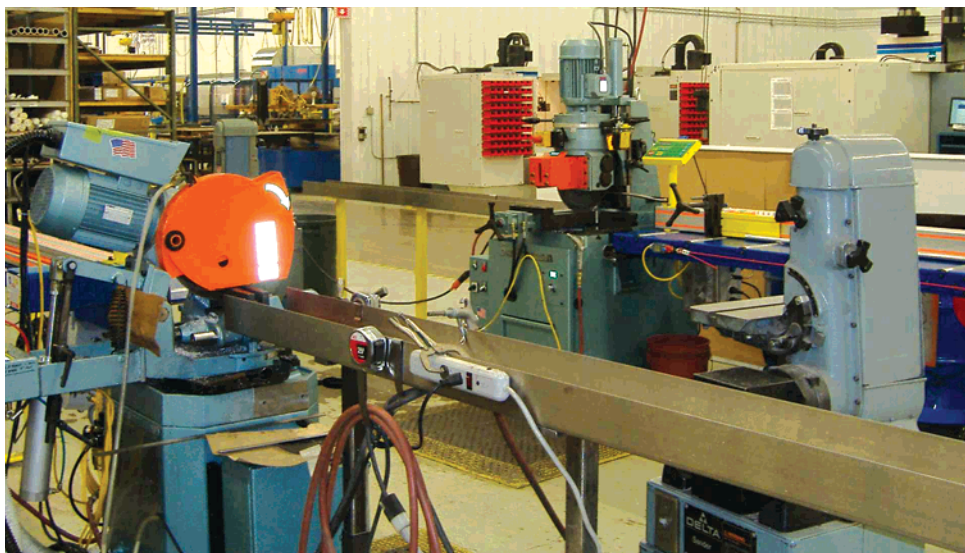
Organized operations

The Shanklin line of equipment includes more than 50 different models, ranging from shrink wrappers to automatic feeding systems. To kick out all of these items, 11,000 fabricated piece parts are created in-house. On average, depending on the quantity of the runs and the types of material, between 35 and 50 jobs are handled each day. Steven Fay, director of fabrication and facilities at Sealed Air, says that many strides were taken to up the ante at the Shanklin plant.

"We relocated all of our equipment from five different buildings—a big spaghetti flow—and streamlined our operations, putting everything in one building," he says. "The machine shop flows

purchasing additional Scotchman saws was a safe bet. The company couldn't accept anything that wouldn't be robust and reliable.

"The saw is a pretty critical piece of equipment because it's step one in the manufacturing process," Fay says. "We depend on those big time. They support a variety of milling centers, well over 12 to 15 of them, along with the manual machines and a CNC lathe. Almost 95 percent of the things that go through our machine shop need to be cut on the saw."



right into the sheet metal. Basically, it comes in one door and 100 yards down the line, goes out another one." At the front of the line are the company's four-month-new Scotchman saws.

Sealed Air, however, wasn't unfamiliar with the Scotchman brand. Prior to the recent purchase, the Shanklin facility had manual Scotchman chop saws in place. Considering that they'd been in use for more than 40 years, Fay knew that

Up and cutting

Jerry Kroetch, president of Scotchman, says that Fay ended up investing in two different systems, both of which are semi-automatic cold saws that have been coupled with Scotchman advanced feed systems. The feed systems cause the machines to become fully automatic, allowing an operator to program up to 99 different lengths. The CLM 350, a vertical column design with hydraulic downfeed and hydraulic clamp-

Start with sawing

Sawing Systems

ing paired with a 24-ft. feed system, and the CPO 350 PKPD, a pivot-style machine with a 10-ft. feed system, have exceeded expectations in more ways than one.

The programmability achieved with the feed systems has changed the way that parts are tackled at the Shanklin facility. Stainless, aluminum and cold-rolled bar zip through the saws with the press of a button. "Before, if you had a 24-ft. bar, you could only cut one job, meaning you were only able to program it one time," Fay says. "Now, you can hold up to 100 programs. You can put a 24-ft. bar in and cut multiple jobs—different lengths. As long as it's the same material, you can program a variety of lengths. Like, 'Give me 10 jobs that are 3 in. long, give me 15 jobs that are 5 in. long, then give me another four that are 8 in. long.' That's the nice thing about this system."

"A cold saw is designed to run at a low rpm, giving you a square cut at ± 0.002 in. per diameter," Kroetch explains. "They also give you a milled finish, free of burr. By giving this quality of cut it can eliminate the re-squaring and deburring of a part after it's cut." That it did. Fay appreciates the benefits that come from eliminating extra operations, but says that the additional advantages provided by the Scotchman saws just keep on coming.

"For one, the saws are a little bit quieter," Fay explains. "Two, they're not working as hard, which is a good thing.

And they don't break down. The operators aren't constantly finagling or jerry-rigging stuff. On top of that, they're handling material a little bit less because they're able to take five or six jobs with similar material and group them together. They program it and it's off and running."

The dependability factor is essential; bottlenecks can't be tolerated. "It'll cripple you," Fay says. But since the Scotchmans have been in place, he has yet to experience a logjam. "It's been a reliable cutting system with its repeatability, its accuracy, its squareness and how easy it is to cross-train people on it." Fay could have a new employee—someone who's been around machining milling centers or lathes—comfortable with the saws within a day.

As new products are continually hitting the shelves, Sealed Air Shanklin Corp. continues to examine its operations to keep up and even get ahead. And from the looks of things, it's highly likely that Scotchman saws will be a partner in that goal. "Right now we're looking to staff a second shift," Fay says. "We're looking at another saw down the road because as we staff more people we're going to need to be pushing more out."

For now, however, the improvements to the plant's layout and the willingness to make substantial capital expenditures have Shanklin sitting pretty. Fay stresses, however, that the successful



floor plan couldn't have happened without tapping into the expertise of Sealed Air's highly skilled workforce. To realize the best possible layout, the staff were consulted for suggestions—from Mike Moran, the fabrication manager, to each and every member of the manufacturing team. "These guys live this everyday," Fay says. "Without their input, this company wouldn't be so dialed in right now." **FFJ**



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