

# Board Converting

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NEWS

## Bay Cities Speeds Customers To Market With Conveyorization

BY LEN PRAZYCH

Digital printing is nothing new to Pico Rivera, California based Bay Cities. The company was one of the first independents to make the leap into digital several years ago with an HP Scitex FB700 press to expand its manufacturing and printing capabilities for its award winning corru-



**Bill Sterkel, Maintenance Manager at Bay Cities, left, and Mark McGinnis of Systec Conveyors next to the new load inverter and conveyor line.**

gated packaging and POP displays. Customer demand in the southern California Market – one of North America’s most competitive – for newer, better and faster technologies led to Bay Cities’ investment in an HP Scitex 15500 in 2017 and earlier this year, a high-speed, single-pass Barberán Jetmaster 1750.

“Digital printing has certainly evolved in terms of efficiency and now that we’ve entered the world of single-pass printing, we will be better equipped to provide our customers with different ‘flavors’ and styles to help them create and build their brand,” said Gabriel Perez, Plant Manager at Bay Cities.

The benefits of digital printing notwithstanding – the elimination of printing dies and their storage, litho labels and their lamination, and the clean-up that accompanies the flexo process – the high quality of printing graphics directly to multiple substrates, especially corrugated, has only enhanced its marketability and profitability.

With a minimum sheet width of 23-inches, a maximum of 76-inches, and a length minimum of 17-inches through 196-inches, Bay Cities has been printing many configurations, including pallet skirts and TV boxes

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on its Barberán, which can print up to six colors of G7 certified UV inks and is capable of printing 80 meters per minute on corrugated.

“In a time where demands are increasing and lead times are decreasing, we will have a machine that can meet customer demands. Customers nowadays don’t want mass quantities, they want fewer quantities with more variety,” said Perez.

“For us, ultimately, speed to market was key,” said Bill Sterkel, Maintenance Manager at Bay Cities. “The Barberán allows us to do fast changeovers and thus maintain faster production, which translates to quicker to market and higher profits. And our customers are happy because of the rapid turnaround, something several of our competitors can’t do. Instead of doing hundreds of pieces per hour, we can now do thousands.”

To accommodate the speed of its digital printers and to avoid bottlenecks, Bay Cities had to address moving finished product through its facility and out the door. The company partnered with Inspire Automation, parent company of Automatan and Systec Conveyors, to create and install a material handling and conveyorization solution.

An Automatan Load Inverter reduced the time-consuming, physically demanding and costly tasks of manually turning loads, chang-

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ing pallets or inserting slip sheets to a simple one-person operation taking only a fraction of the time required for manual stacking. Using circular steel side frames cradled on heavy rollers, one electric motor effortlessly turns even the largest loads. Each load is securely held within the



**Bay Cities' Barberán Jetmaster can print up to six colors of G7 certified inks and is capable of printing 80 meters per minute on corrugated.**

turner by a mechanically operated platen and the entire machine rotates on the cradle. Photo beams ensure safety. Interrupting the photo beams will stop machine rotation and platen operation until the area is clear and the reset buttons have been pressed.

"Our purchase of the Automatan load inverter was based on the fact that Inspire Automation was the parent company," said Perez. "The inverter is a robust, heavy-duty piece of equipment that can handle very large loads and we were extremely confident it could do what we needed it to do."



"We've been customers of Automatan for many years and have an Automatan Laminator we are very happy with," added Sterkel. "We have also been customers of Systec for years. We have a successful pivot conveyor on another machine, so choosing Systec was the obvious choice for this project. The fact that Automatan and Systec are sister companies and work hand-in-hand is a great ad-

vantage for us."

"Mark McGinnis of Systec put in a lot of time creating CAD drawings, developing a layout in the plant and helping us work through the design process," continued Sterkel. We also had some smaller maintenance work on another conveyor project that needed to be done and Systec stepped in and help us with those repairs, as well."

Sterkel also said that one of the things that helped Systec win the job was that they would have little time to respond to service requests, but they stepped up every time and even asked to come in early to get equipment installed.



"We really do see the benefits of buying from one supplier," added Perez. "Sometimes we run into trouble with pieces of equipment working well with the conveyor system. Having both Automatan and Systec together is a great fit because as their customer, we don't have to wor-



ry about whose responsibility it is to make it work. With Inspire Automation, we know the entire line will be maintained and controlled by the same company."

Perez admitted he gets nervous when dealing with too many suppliers and is concerned that it's too easy for information to be miscommunicated or lost, but that hasn't been the case with Inspire Automation. "The merger brings a comfort and confidence level that we will get the answers we need, when we need them, so we can move ahead with our projects."

As for the future, Perez said that given the current success and projected demand of its digital initiatives, another press may be 'in the cards' and certainly, more automation to handle materials in a digital world would be needed.



He and Bay Cities consider Inspire Automation the partner that can help achieve its goals.

“I have no reason to doubt things will work out well,” he said, “but the results will speak for themselves.”