

LANGSTON BUILT THE FIRST FLEXO FOLDER-GLUER IN NORTH AMERICA FOR HINDE & DAUCH (NOW DOMTAR).

# CANADA'S CORRUGATED CONTRIBUTION

THE COUNTRY WAS AT THE FOREFRONT OF FLEXO PRINTING, INSTALLING THE FIRST FLEXO FOLDER-GLUER BUILT IN NORTH AMERICA.

A REPORT FROM THE CANADIAN CORRUGATED & CONTAINERBOARD ASSOCIATION

Canadians have a multitude of reasons to be proud of their country, their success on the world stage and their stars and celebrities that are known worldwide. Last year Canada celebrated 150 years as a nation.

This story is also about Canadian success achieved in the corrugated packaging industry in the early 1950s and '60s. As the industry matured during the '50s the standard for printing was oil ink. High graphics at that time were achieved by skilled operators on printer-slotters laying down oil inks on bleached linerboard with precision. The stock came off the press and was stacked to sit on conveyor lines for at least a full day to dry before the closure operation was completed. Box plants required massive space to accommodate this process.

This all changed when flexo inks were presented to the industry in the late 1950s. The big question was how could flexographic water-based inks ever provide the caliber of print achieved with oil-based inks? Would customers accept such a difference in print?

## Taking The Lead

Hinde & Dauch was a progressive company that dominated the growing corrugated packaging market in Canada at that time. New plants had just been opened in Montreal and Toronto and they were eager to establish a competitive edge.

The late Bill Hurrell was the key manufacturing leader for Hinde & Dauch. Clifford Pyke was also a member of the management team and he recalls the order





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highly focused on the beer packaging market that required traditional oil ink. Drying time was required before the boxes could be glued and this meant occupying huge amounts of conveyor space during the waiting time.

Flexo inks offered a one-pass manufacturing process that would be a giant step forward.

The beer market resisted the flexo ink concept from the start. It was concerned about the possibility of flexo ink rubbing off on consumers' clothing, and beer executives were adamant and unwilling to make any major changes.

Undaunted by their resistance, Hurrell and his team pushed forward. In 1965, the press was moved to the

for the first flexo folder-gluer machine built in North America being placed with Langston, who was then a dominant supplier of equipment to the corrugated packaging industry. Pyke remembers tremendous secrecy around the production and installation of the equipment, including Hurrell quietly visiting Langston during the development stage. No doubt Langston hoped to keep the new technology from the prying eyes of competitors, making a Canadian installation ideal.

Hinde & Dauch had merged into Domtar around this time and the machine was finally delivered and installed in 1962 at 450 Evans Avenue in Etobicoke, Ontario. This new plant was



MODERN DAY FLEXO FOLDER-GLUER.

## The First Flexo



ALAIN LEMAIRE HAS BEEN AN AVID COLLECTOR OF ANTIQUITIES. NOW IN RETIREMENT, HE HAS ONE MORE FAVORITE TREASURE TO LOOK AFTER – THE FIRST FLEXO FOLDER-GLUER BUILT IN NORTH AMERICA.

company's Peterborough plant. They were determined to reap the productivity benefits of a one-pass production technique and the ideal volume mix would be provided by Quaker Oats, a local customer there.

While there were certainly early challenges to overcome, the project was hugely successful and led the way for the industry. The Peterborough equipment remained operational until 2007. Dave White, a long-time employee of the

plant and production manager when it closed in 2012, helped load the press onto a trailer for delivery to Alain Lemaire, former president of Norampac and Cascades Canada Inc., in Kingsley Falls, Quebec, where it remains in storage to this day.

Lemaire has been an avid collector of antiquities for years. Now in retirement, he has one more favorite treasure to look after – the first flexo folder-gluer built in North America.

The Canadian Corrugated & Containerboard Association appreciates the background details provided by Sun Automation Group, which acquired the Langston company in 2001. Records were provided for the purchase of a Greenwood printer-slotter, identified as serial number 9189 CS3F804 plus an "experimental folder" referenced as 1096. The separate machine numbers provide proof that the press was not yet a flexo folder-gluer. ■



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