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Gaining an edge

Flexible edge protection safeguards expensive, custom-paper rolls at WI's Whiting Paper Co.

Edited by Chief Editor Mark Spaulding -- Converting Magazine, 1/1/2008

Located in Menasha in the heart of Wisconsin's Paper Valley, the George A. Whiting Paper Co. is a small operation with a large and long-standing reputation for excellence. Whiting Paper occupies a niche built on a 125-year history of delivering quality specialty papers to its printing and value-added converter customers.

"Everything we make is high-end custom paper," says Ray Tews, finishing supervisor at Whiting Paper—one of the few independently owned paper companies still operating in the US. The company specializes in short runs of made-to-order paper for scrapbooking, printing and photo matte boards. Whether the order is for cover-weight or text-weight, plain or embossed, designer colors or white, Whiting Paper prides itself on delivering pristine product that is 100-percent usable.

"If there's any damage on the rolls when it gets to the customers, they get very concerned," says Tews. "It's very valuable paper, and they don't want to lose one or two rounds off the roll because of tears or nicks."

So how does Whiting Paper protect expensive paper rolls that will be handled and moved as many as four times before they are shipped by truck and then handled multiple times again by customers across the country? It uses Laminations' new FlexRoll® product (www.laminationsonline.com) in conjunction with stretchwrap.

"Roll-edge protection like we get with FlexRoll means we seldom have a claim of damage on our rolls," Tews says.

FlexRoll was developed by Laminations as a cost-effective, lightweight product for keeping the edges of rolled products clean and free from abrasion, rips, wrinkles and smudges. With evenly spaced notches that enable its triangular fingers to bend quickly and easily around the edges of rolled and contoured products, FlexRoll acts as barrier against damage during shipping, storage and handling. Said to be ideal for converters of paper and other rollstock where lighter-weight protection is appropriate, FlexRoll—available in calipers of 0.04 and 0.05 in.—acts as a buffer that separates product from the walls and floors of trucks and warehouses. It also creates a barrier between the edges of stacked rolls.

Tews has been using other Laminations edge-protection products such as VBoard® for years. He recently switched to FlexRoll from another competitive product. It's a switch he's glad he made for several reasons.

Lightweight protection

While product pricing was comparable, Laminations has an edge over the other roll-protection vendor because of freight, Tews

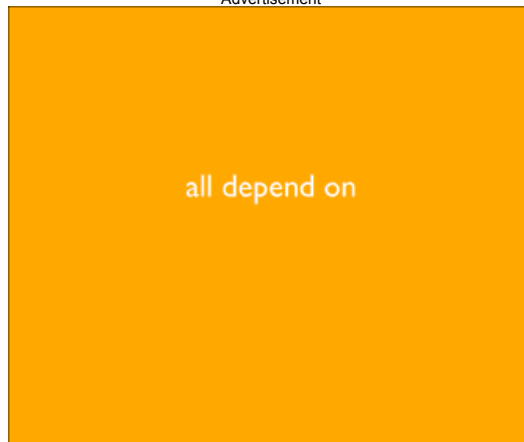
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explains. The Laminations plant is located minutes away in Appleton, WI, while the competitor is located on the East Coast.

Freight costs aside, Laminations' FlexRoll has an even bigger advantage over the competition when it comes to material-handling logistics. The competitive product comes in large boxes of five rolls each, while FlexRoll boxes contain only two rolls. "That makes the boxes light enough for one man to handle them. The other boxes took two men to move around," Tews says.

Storage and maneuvering space are at a premium at Whiting Paper. "We have to store things in the proper area to make space, save time and minimize product and supplies transport within the plant," explains Tews. "FlexRoll is delivered on pallets that have 12 boxes, which makes it easy for us to store those boxes right where we need them for application when we put the stretchwrap on our rolls."

A final point that tipped the scale in favor of FlexRoll is customer service. "We've formed a really good relationship with Laminations over the years," says Tews, a longtime user of Laminations' VBoard on pallets of sheeted stock.

The combination of quality product, fair pricing and superior service has earned Laminations a loyal customer in Whiting Paper. "They're just good people to work with," Tews adds.

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