

# SLITTER-REWINDER EXPERTS TACKLE FLEXIBLE PACKAGING CHALLENGES



Dedicated slitting-rewinding converters are aware of the capital investment required to stay out front, and their employees are steeped in efficient application of everything the processes offer, according to Bob Saari.

**By Bob Saari, Contributing columnist**

Slitting and rewinding are core competencies in converting materials for flexible packaging. This proficiency needs to span both commodity and specialty needs. In fact, in today's competitive manufacturing world, the commodity side is a given – suppliers have to deliver quality to survive. On the other hand, companies that have high levels of multiple skills set themselves apart.

## Flexible Packaging Markets

Focusing on slitting-rewinding for flexible packaging starts with consideration of the several markets served. Specialty labels are everywhere on flexible packages. This includes increasingly sophisticated bottle segments that feature "no look" transparent labels, as well as pressure-sensitive as well as a host of film and laminate labels.

Bags and pouches used for everything from retail packaging, to food service and medial product containment, to personal care wet wipes pouch packs. Transparent materials and multi-laminates are included in these segments, and metalized substrates also play a role.

Industrial needs include automotive specialties from tapes and interior application materials, to wall coverings, ream wraps, moisture-resistant laminates and slick silicone-coated stocks.

Winding for intermediate converting needs amounts to much more than simple slitting of jumbo rolls. Intermediate slitting requirements are a part of the steps in the laminating process, both before and after laminating occurs. Post-printed rolls comprise another segment where multiple steps to product completion occur.

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Films can be demanding substrates, with specifications based on product category. Challenges to rewinding films range from lightweights such as forty-eight gauge to heavy polystyrenes; from temperature resistant polyester to heat sealable polyethylene materials.

## Arsenal of Techniques

Setup techniques form the basis for quality results. The choice of equipment and setup make everything that happens next easier. For example, we choose from a diversified machine base suited to each substrate challenge, from lightweight to heavyweight and all the material specifications that must be reviewed. Choices of proper web braking and controlling, to knife depth and positioning, to proper registration and edge guide adjustments, along with pre-determined speeds, will impact subsequent processing outcomes.

Selection of a particular slitting method is part of the pre-planning based on films, speeds, diameters and widths required.

Thick and narrow polyesters will most likely lead to different machine decisions and techniques. Converters must be conscious of wound-in tension and the unique characteristics each substrate poses. A converter may choose two drum surface or duplex winders, specialized flexible packaging machines, razor or shear slit configurations. There are a number of diversified production avenues.

In many cases, expertise allows the industry to get the most out of each production line. Customers realize that effective outsourcing of critical slitting programs can be successful if aligned with the right partner. Converters should work closely with the customer to achieve slit products that mirror the customer's own in-house slitting operations. What makes us an asset to our client base and generates repeat business is the emphasis on effectiveness. Converters must recognize the need to help solve problems, not add to them. Fortunately, there is a niche for specialized slitting-rewinding converters with top notch expertise.

Dedicated slitting-rewinding converters are aware of the capital investment required to stay out front, and their employees are steeped in efficient application of everything the processes offer.

Converters know this dedication provides mutual benefits to customers and allows for additional services, such as warehousing and logistics support. After all, it's our bread and butter. **FP**

### About the Columnist:

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