

THE **REDLINE** HAS ARRIVED

Early in 2009, when the rest of the UK was in the grip of a recession and machinery suppliers were battenning down the hatches, Steve Waterhouse was making plans to launch a new company to market a brand new machine.

With the first one already installed in the UK, and with more orders in the pipeline, it seems that the gamble has paid off, and the Redline flat-bed die-cutter has arrived.

A report by Don Haines

Steve Waterhouse has teamed up with Emerson Koo — both gentlemen having a wealth of experience in the industry thanks to previous roles with Crosland VK and Young Shin. Together they decided to take a fresh look at die-cutting technology, as Mr Waterhouse explains, “Most people are aware that South Korea has banned the use of hand-fed platens, and far more stringent conditions are about to be placed on their use in the UK. What Emerson and I decided to do was to come up with a semi-automatic flat-bed machine that would not only by definition be faster and safer, but would at the same time be on the market as a replacement

for hand-feds at an affordable price. It was a tough time to be doing what we did, trying to break into a mature market, but we felt that we had something to offer by way of new developments in die-cutting, something which hadn't happened for a long time.”

Reduced make-ready time

The Redline has found appeal with a variety of converters who between them are converting a wide range of materials, and Mr Waterhouse continues, “The Redline will handle any commonly used substrate material up to 15 mm thick — that's 3 mm thicker than most machines on the market, but at the same time, it is perfectly capable of kiss-cutting 300 micron pvc film. One feature that helps us to achieve this is a dual pressure setting facility with two separate dials for front and back, which we believe is unique to the Redline. With single dial pressure systems, over time, the operator always



Steve Waterhouse and Liz Lea of Diecut UK

Redline Installation

ends up having to spend more time on make-ready of the front edge, so the ability to independently adjust the front and back pressures is a huge advantage in reducing make-ready time. One of our prospective customers is ready to sign the order based on this feature alone, and is confident that it will save a huge amount of time over a year. Between us over the years, my partner and I have spent a good deal of time on the factory floor, talking to a lot of machine operators and plant owners. The result is a range of user-friendly die-cutters that are robust, capable of handling large sheet sizes and thick materials, and with CCTV, making it easier for one person to operate instead of two. Our first machine in the UK was installed at Kbins in Leeds, who specialise in the manufacture of small storage bins using both corrugated polypropylene and all grades of corrugated fibreboard."

US facility

Assuming that the early success of the company can be sustained, Diecut UK has ambitions to extend the scope of its operations elsewhere in the world. Mr Waterhouse continues, "We have just sold a Redline to Hinkel Manufacturing, based in Perrysburg, Ohio (USA), who specialise in the manufacture of both

returnable and one trip corrugated packaging products for the automotive industry. I'm delighted with this sale, because they are based just over the state line from Detroit, Michigan, which has one of the busiest airports in the United States; this means we now have at our disposal an easily accessible US demonstration facility.

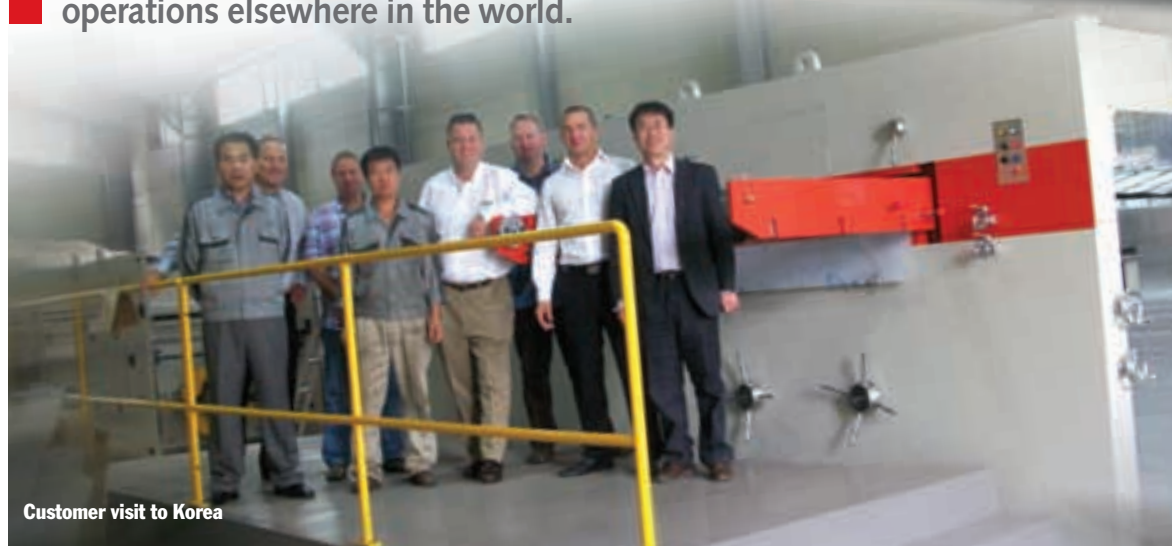
"Another UK customer is SMP Group, a prominent London based screen printer and finisher specialising in retail and advertising, and we will soon be in a position to reveal details of two or three more UK orders that are in the pipeline. One of our UK signings already operates an automatic platen, and in looking around for additional capacity they have chosen the Redline because of its technical capabilities. All of these clients have one thing in common — each of them has told us that our prices are competitive — but in the end the Redline was chosen for its technical attributes. To handle our installations and after-sales servicing in the UK, we are working with DB Engineering, based in Ashton-under-Lyne, whose excellent senior engineer worked for me for many years in my previous

job. DB has 20 years experience of machinery moves, installations and maintenance, and they installed our first machine in the UK at Kbins. This installation, in a typical North of England multi-storey mill, was a particularly difficult exercise, but DB came through it with flying colours."

Built for speed

The Redline range is built for speed, with heavier than average main frames manufactured from milled steel rather than cast. The largest machine, with a maximum blank size of 1700 x 2520mm, is said to be around 10 tonnes heavier than comparable machines, with a throughput capability of 2,100 sheets per hour. The smallest in the range has a maximum blank size of 1100 x 1520mm,

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a minimum of 400 x 500mm, and can handle up to 3,700 blanks per hour. All are available with an optional pre-feeding station that allows for the pre-positioning of the next stack of board, reducing down-time. The triple action stripping section makes for the efficient removal of debris, with a quick-lock feature to minimise setting times. The delivery section offers maximum flexibility, with options for grip edge removal, for conveyorised batch or palletised delivery, and an option to install the machine raised by 300mm to give increased pallet height. Lubrication is automatic, requiring minimum daily attention and so reducing scheduled maintenance. Electrical controls are duplicated on each section, minimising operator movements around the machine. Mr Waterhouse comments, "We've taken tried and tested technology and fine-tuned it to give the ability to convert a wide variety of materials, from rigid pvc through to triple wall corrugated board. I think that hand-fed platens are archaic, with two huge chunks of metal



Emerson Koo and
Steve Waterhouse

coming together at extreme pressure, and the potential for operator harm is very real, so Emerson and I decided to come up with a viable alternative."

The Diecut UK plan is to help establish a global agency network for the Redline and to back this up with strategic alliances in each country with dependable engineering companies, such as DB

Engineering, who will handle after-sales servicing. Mr Waterhouse concludes, "Diecut UK, with its sister company Diecut Global based in Korea, is just a beginning, and hopefully in time we will establish a global brand and a force to be reckoned with. Between us, Emerson and I hope to authorise at least 22 sales agencies with engineering back-up."