

Conversions

Polymer Film & Bag's Extrusion Capacity Grows

Turbostart Boosts Productivity and Profitability

Polymer Film & Bag continues to grow with the addition of extrusion capacity, including, three 3-Layer VAREX and two 3-layer OPTIMEX assets.

A division of Polymer Packaging, Polymer Film & Bag based in Massillon, OH, was launched in 2019 to manufacture converter grade sheeting and custom bag applications. Since then, four W&H blown film lines, a combination of VAREX and OPTIMEX lines, have been installed and an additional OPTIMEX is expected to be operational around Thanksgiving. With this fleet of equipment, the company will reach 50 million pounds of capacity by the end of 2021.

The most recently installed line is a 2,800 mm, 3-layer VAREX, equipped with two of W&H's newest technologies, the Turbostart automated line start and stop system (see page 4) and RUBY for monitoring and analyzing production data. The line is configured with gusset boards.

According to Eric Howard, President, installation and commissioning were on time, smooth and as expected. What did surprise him, however, was the performance of the Turbostart system, which was customized to accommodate the machine's gussets. "We didn't foresee the full effect of Turbostart. It's cut down on downtime by fivefold. Now, regardless of the size of material, unscheduled downtime events are lasting only around 15 minutes."



From left to right:
Eric Howard – Division President
Larry Lanham – Owner/CEO
Mike Pearce – VP Operation
Chris Thomazin – Group President

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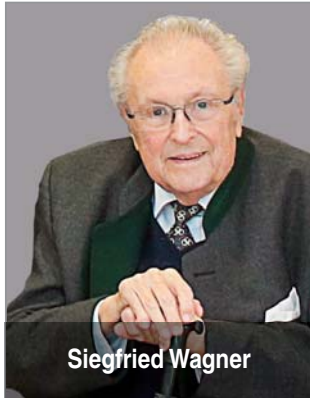


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President's Corner

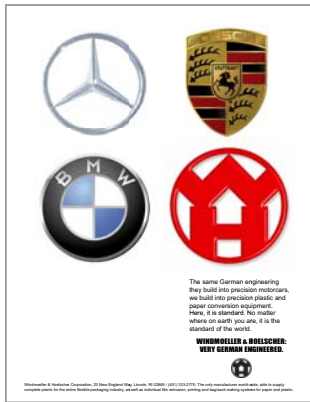
Since the last issue, two larger-than-life figures at W&H, Siggie Wagner and Jim Feeney, who made our North American business come to being, have passed away.



Siggie Wagner was a Managing Director at our headquarters in Lengerich and was with the company from 1958-1997. He believed in a corporate presence in the American market and fought for it. He was a fierce U.S. advocate and responsible for much of the success we had in the early years. In fact, without his advocacy, the Rhode Island HQ might not even have happened.

Jim Feeney, the first president of W&H in Rhode Island, is no new subject for President's Corner and is the main focus of this article. As it happens, he came up with the idea of writing a column from the voice of the company's leader. It's this voice that has anchored itself to our corporate culture to this day.

Windmoeller & Hoelscher had been selling in the U.S. since 1901 through various rep agencies, the most recent in 1976 being Sheldahl Machinery Company. Jim was hired to run the Rhode Island division of the company. Not long after that, W&H approached Jim about running their first direct Sales and Service operation in Lincoln RI. At the



time, W&H had annual sales in the U.S. of only \$5 million, but Jim was convinced that high-end German machinery and the U.S. Flexible packaging customers were a perfect fit. "The same love that Americans have for German cars, will be the reason we'll be successful." (see advertisement).



Jim was the "face of the W&H franchise" for 24 years and led his people with the same values that he demanded W&H portray to the industry. Jim used to say that we are not just selling machines, but trust and reputation, both of which are much harder to earn than they are to lose. One of the first things that Jim told me was "we are the best at what we do and the most expensive ... I will NEVER apologize for that. You get what you pay for."

"We will do what we say, and we will do the RIGHT thing, always" was one of the many sayings that constantly pop into my head when I think of my mentor. I find myself writing about Jim as I would about my father, a man that you wanted to be, the man that you wanted to be proud of you, not disappoint, who commanded the respect of any room he found himself in. People were drawn to him and his legendary ability to focus on YOU as if there was no one else there, and no place that he would rather be. He could work a room with ease, expertly remembering details of everyone's lives, kids' and spouse's names, dinner, or golf outings that they had attended together. He had social skills that would make the most skilled politician (in a good sense) envious.

President's Corner continued

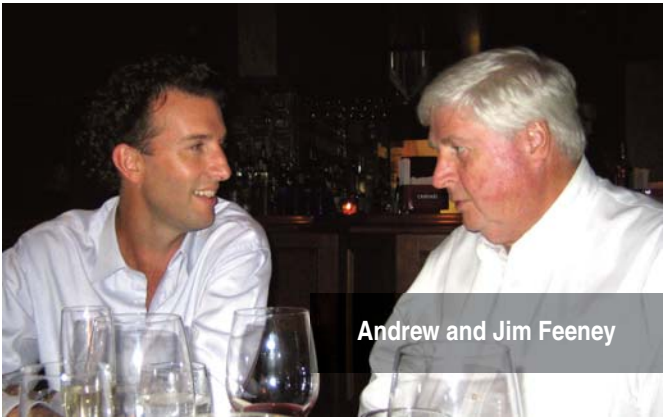
Even on the golf course, Jim was the consummate gentleman. He was not a gifted golfer, but he loved the game and the strong personal interactions which it facilitated. He would tell his playing partners that he was a lousy golfer, yet played fast, never searched for a ball for more than a minute and knew all the rules. He believed that "if technology will give me an edge, I'll buy it!", which became one of his favorite sales arguments for W&H.

Jim was as proud of his people for the extracurricular activities in which they excelled as he was for their standing out in the workplace. He constantly asked me how my youth hockey/soccer/lacrosse teams were doing and if someone's child came into the office, he would be the first there to greet them with a handshake. I remember prepping my son for his first visit to W&H and his meeting with Big Jim. "Firm handshake and look him in the eye". Lucas passed the Jim test with flying colors.

In the summer of 1994, I was approached by a close friend, who recruited me to produce a play in Scotland the following summer. With no such experience, he finally convinced me that it was "just another form of Sales". I entered Jim's office, terrified that he would put the kibosh on such a silly idea that would clearly distract me from my duties at W&H. Quite the contrary, Jim was almost more excited about it than I was. He started reading up on it so that he could ask better questions. Eventually, he and his wife, Sandy invested in the show and came to multiple previews.



Ribbon cutting of W&H in Lincoln back in 1978
Second from the left is Jim Feeney and third from the right is Siggie Wagner.



Enjoying a chat at Christoph and Sasha Stein's wedding.

Jim died on Friday, July 2nd at his beloved home in Westport, MA at the age of 85. He had survived a myriad of health problems, each one of which could have felled a lesser man. There was an outpouring of sentiment to W&H and the Feeney family, not just from colleagues and friends, but from competitors and the press, each of whom respected and genuinely liked the man. Words like "gentleman, honest, straightforward, funny, sincere, focused, driven, tough" were used an awful lot in those sentiments.

Jim was a man that we can only strive to emulate. Hans Deamer continued in his footsteps, as do I. I am proud to say that the spirit, enthusiasm, integrity, and insistence on doing the RIGHT thing and being the best partners that we can be to our customers and best employer to our team, is alive and thriving at W&H!

Thank you Siggie and thank you Jim.

Some of my favorite Jim "isms" over the years

- When you buy from W&H, you only cry once
- If we aren't the most expensive quote you got, we made a mistake
- If I can do without you for 3 weeks, I can do without you
- I don't care if it's the cheapest or most expensive solution, is it the RIGHT solution?
- If Technology will give me an edge, I will buy it (meant golf, but could have been W&H)

Polymer Film & Bag continued from page 1

"We use Turbostart as a tool to compliment Easy Change and were amazed that Easy Change can recover parameters from the previous run and use those as if the machine had been running the whole time. The system is adding 10-15 hours per week into our production schedule, which equates to roughly three-quarters of a million dollars per asset per year. It's savvy."

The company has also seen that Turbostart broadens both the labor force and opportunity. "The time to train and bring an operator up to an effective level has been reduced by 10 times. That means that we're saving a lot of money on training resources and also on scrap that would normally accumulate while an operator is learning the ropes. That's a lot of savings per operator per year. This is time we can now use to focus on sales." The company ordered Turbostart retrofits for their two existing VAREX lines.

As for their experience with the RUBY system, Howard says there isn't enough legacy data for a good statistical swatch yet. He plans to collect data over the next couple of months, review it internally, then present findings to W&H engineers in January 2022.

Polymer Film & Bag is about to start a new expansion phase, which will include adding another two or three extrusion lines in the existing 100,000 sq ft facility. The second phase will allow for another 105,000 sq ft expansion that will accommodate up to an additional 10 blown film lines, totaling 18 at this site.

www.polymerpkg.com

Turbostart



Automated line stop and start-up system

Introduced at K 2019, the Turbostart module performs automated line stops and start-ups, making the process easier, quicker, and safer for the machine operator and overall production more profitable for companies.

Due to the popularity and success of Turbostart since its launch, W&H has developed the technology as a retrofit that can be installed on existing VAREX blown film lines.

For more information, you can watch this video (see below) and have a look at the Q&A on the topic with Mike Andrews, PhD from the last issue of Conversions. (right)



VIDEO: Have a look at this up close drone video of Turbostart stopping and restarting a blown film line.



Retrofits Breathe New Life into VAREX at Mondi

What to do with a 23-year-old VAREX when you need more output ... send it into retirement or revitalize it with retrofits?

For Mondi in Jackson, MO, the choice was clear ... retrofit the line with the newest technologies. "We were working within our budget and decided to optimize the line with a retrofit and it was a great decision," said PJ Cormier, Vice President of Operations.

The project included a new die and air ring, two 70 mm extruders, a ProControl user interface and new drives. "The line is running great, we have seen an improvement in film quality and we are filling more orders," added Cormier. These films are being used for roll stock as well as printing and converting into bags onsite.

"The installation took one month and went very smoothly, and we're talking about during COVID," said Don Farrow, Extrusion Department Manager. "The new die and extruders made a huge difference, as did the ARCTIS air ring and the single supply, which saves space."

When a challenge with equipment does come up, Mondi has an experienced and adept in-house team. "Here at Mondi, we tweak and try things a lot before we pull others in, but when we do have an issue that needs outside help to resolve, we know we can count on W&H," said Farrow.

In North America, Mondi and W&H have been partners in extrusion, printing and converting for more than 30 years.

Mondi is a global leader in packaging and paper, integrated across the value chain – from managing forests and producing pulp, paper and plastic films, to developing and manufacturing effective industrial and consumer packaging solutions. The company has twelve locations in the United States. In 2020, Mondi had global revenues of €6.66 billion and underlying EBITDA of €1.35 billion.

www.mondigroup.com



The ARCTIS and MULTICOOL air ring retrofits can increase output and film quality for W&H and other dies.



Colormasters Expands Capacity with Two VISTAFLEX Presses

Partnered with W&H Since 2008

Two new 67" VISTAFLEX CL 10-color presses installed earlier in 2021 at Colormasters are operational, giving a substantial boost in printing capacity to the Alabama-based company.

Both VISTAFLEX presses have a 67" working width and are equipped with the award winning TURBOCLEAN Advanced E inking system with electronic pumps, the complete VISION system for monitoring print accuracy during production and RUBY GO for process monitoring, analysis and optimization. Speeds of 2,000 ft/min can be reached.

Colormasters and W&H have been partners since 2008, when the first 10-color MIRAFLEX CM, then the first of its kind in North America, was installed. Since then, the company has added another 9 printing presses and 18 co-extrusion lines, becoming one of W&H's biggest partners in North America.

Colormasters, a family-owned business, was founded in 1986 with one bag machine in a 10,000 sq ft facility.



W&H and Colormasters team in front of one of the two new VISTAFLEX presses installed at Colormasters in 2021.

In the past 10 years, the company has added 3 new locations for a total of 4, added 750,000 sq ft of manufacturing and warehousing space and created 400 new jobs.

www.colormastersllc.com

FILMATIC II C New Press Winder

Fast, precise and for all substrates

- Excellent roll quality
- Tapeless splice using electrostatic start
- Excellent for thin and sensitive substrates
- High-speed in-line slitting of demanding substrates – up to 10 lanes
- Ultra-fast turret movement eliminates waste during reel change
- Works with any W&H press

For more information about the FILMATIC II C winder, email Vladimir_Utovac@wuh-group.com.

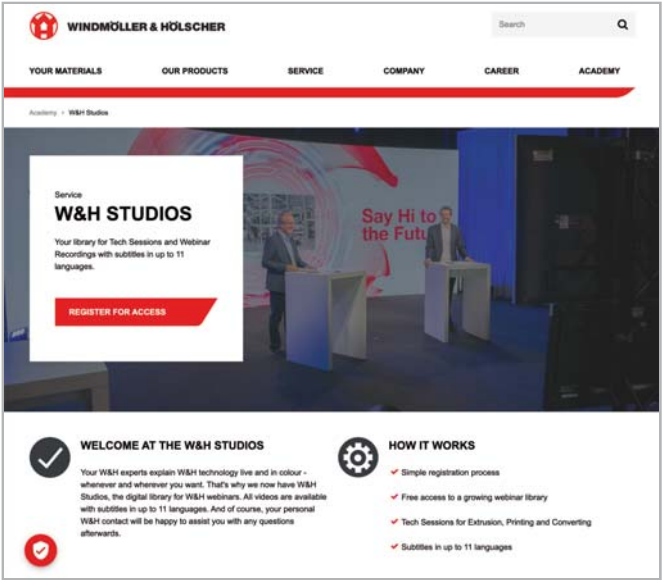


W&H Studios – Access a Growing Library of Webinars from W&H Experts

The new W&H Studios offers you access to watch experts from W&H explain our technologies – whenever and wherever it's convenient for you.

This webinar library contains videos covering extrusion, printing and converting presentations at the W&H 2021 Virtual Expo and will grow as new content comes out.

All videos are available in English and subtitled versions are offered in up to 11 languages, including Spanish and French. All you need to do is scan the QR code to land on the W&H Studios page, then register for access.



New Videos from W&H and Garant



AQUAREX
Blown Film Line



OPTIMEX II
Blown Film Line



Woven Sacks



AD ProFilm MP

Do you know Garant?

Watch this fun video to learn more about our subsidiary that specializes in paper bag machines.



Welcome to Garant

W&H Employee News




Deb Hvizdos joined the accounting department, responsible for accounts payable, in March.

Prior to joining W&H as a permanent employee, Deb had spent three months temping in 2019 and the office staff is delighted to have her back. Deb's previous jobs include working at Estes, the largest privately-owned shipping company in North America and The Procacciant Group, a property management company. Deb holds a certificate in Business Administration from the Nason Institute Secretary School.

Vibert Chinnappadu joins us as a Field Service Engineer with over 30 years of experience in the electrical, instrumentation and pneumatics field.



He worked for Century Tech Inc. and Allied Extrusion managing the install and maintenance of various W&H equipment. For almost two decades his dream has been to work for W&H and we are delighted to have him on our team. Born in Guyana, South America Vibert now resides with his wife and two children in the Bronx.



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Did you know?
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85%
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2021/22 SCHEDULED SHOWS (subject to change)

- Nov 29-Dec 1** **AMI Stretch & Shrink** | New Orleans, LA
- Nov 1-3** **AMI Polyethylene Films** | St. Augustine, FL
- Mar 13-16** **FTA Forum & Info*Flex** | Fort Worth, TX
- Oct 19-26** **K Show** | Düsseldorf, Germany
- Oct 23-26** **PackExpo International** | Chicago, IL

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