



# GLOSSOP GOES FOR GROWTH



**Jacky Sidebottom**

**I**t's been a busy few months for UK-based Glossop Cartons. Having continued its ongoing investment programme with the installation of a new Bobst Expertfold gluer, the company has also bought the order book and employed many of the staff of Manchester's failed Clowes Printers, almost doubling its turnover overnight.

After nearly thirty years of organic growth, Director, Jacky Sidebottom, says that Glossop Cartons had been looking for an acquisition target for a while, but had not found the right match. "What we were looking for was a business that would complement ours, with the certainty that the dynamics of the two would dovetail together. Clowes Printers had a similar work mix and a similar client base, so when they got into trouble we were able to step in, rescue a number of jobs and salvage a potentially difficult situation for their clients."

The acquisition has allowed Glossop Cartons to consolidate its position in the marketplace, while the staff that made the move the few miles down the road from the old Clowes premises have brought with them a hard earned reputation for quality, something that fits perfectly with the Glossop Cartons approach, says Jacky. "As a family owned business, people have always been important to us. Everyone involved in the changeover has taken up the challenge to ensure we deliver the same quality and service to our customers as before and it has strengthened our position within the industry. That's something we can all be happy with."

Jacky says that the acquisition made an immediate impact on the performance of the company and, more importantly, has also provided it with a stronger foundation for the future. "The greater economies of scale and improved purchasing power that come

## GOING FOR GROWTH



Expertfold



Handypack

through sheer size; new staff, their additional skills and contacts, as well as more contracts and business leads, will make a significant contribution to our ongoing development.”

Minimising the disruption to the customers of Clowes Printers, as well as to existing Glossop Cartons clients, has meant that the company has had to ramp up production, leading to the addition of an extra shift. “The staff that came from Clowes Printers have worked hard to fit in, while they and our existing staff have been superb at coping with the new dynamics and the increased throughput,” explains Jacky.

### More control, higher quality, less waste

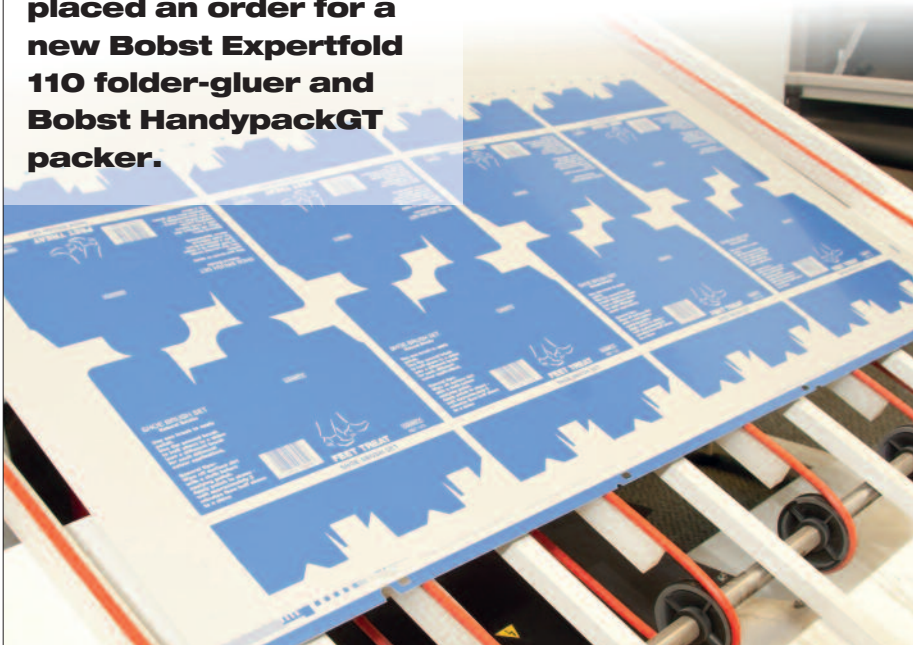
The opportunity to purchase the Clowes Printers business came just a few weeks after Glossop Cartons had placed an order for a new Bobst Expertfold 110 folder-gluer and Bobst HandypackGT packer. “In this industry you can’t rely on older kit,” says Jacky. “You have to keep reinvesting. That’s why we bought a new Mitsubishi litho press

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in 2009, and it’s also why we bought the Expertfold. It has replaced an older folder-gluer on which the technology was becoming out of date. We needed to improve on our performance and that meant doing things faster, with more control, with higher quality and with less waste. That’s why we bought Bobst.”

The high running speeds and fast make-ready times of the Expertfold will boost productivity substantially, at a time when Glossop Cartons needs the extra capacity. The patented blank aligner on the Expertfold reduces feeder setting time by up to 75% which, together with the fact that the vast majority of tooling stays on the machine when not in use, means that make-ready times are cut substantially. The blank aligner is also designed to control the entry of every carton, meaning that the machine can run faster, with fewer stops and with better folding quality, while smooth pre-breaking of the first and third creases means equally smooth final folding, with fewer stops.

Running at a top speed of 450 metres per minute, the Expertfold is able to process cartonboard up to 800gsm, along with N, F and E-flute corrugated. The model chosen by Glossop Cartons is a 1100mm wide Expertfold A2 version, which can process straight-line, crashlock bottom and six corner cartons. To maximise on its performance, the



company opted for the CS model of the machine, which sets many of the parameters for repeat jobs automatically. They have also added a Bobst HandypackGT semi-automatic collecting table, which aids the packing of cartons into corrugated outers and also doubles as an extended delivery when not in use for packing.

To complement the Expertfold, Glossop Cartons has also invested in a high specification WH Leary Array glue system, which delivers precise gluing control regardless of machine speed or the complexity of the application. Array integrates seamlessly with the Expertfold, making full use of the gluer's integrated 'flipper' carton ejector and also automatically produces management data which is fed directly into Glossop Cartons' intranet, enabling improved monitoring and planning of production runs.

"What attracted us to the Expertfold is its versatility," says Jacky. "It allows us to fold and glue everything we could do before, only more productively, and it gives us access to a wider range of cartons, meaning we can

give our current clients an extended range of options, as well as giving us the opportunity to further expand our customer base."

### Local support

Company Director Brian Sidebottom reviewed the whole folder-gluer market before Glossop Cartons opted for the Expertfold. "We looked at all the major manufacturers, including the machines from the Far-East, but the problem with most was a lack of support and poor resale value. With many manufacturers, even some of the major ones, once the equipment is installed you are pretty much on your own. Spare parts might need to come halfway around the world, if you can get them, and there is often next to nothing in the way of local engineering support. We know from our experience with Bobst die-cutters that we can always get technical back up and we can always get spare parts. When you offer the level of service that we do to our customers, you need to know that you have the same from your own suppliers."

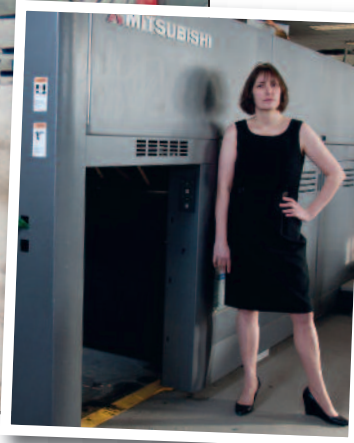
The Expertfold and HandypackGT were installed by technicians from Bobst Group's UK operation, with operator training carried out from a UK based Bobst Product Specialist. However, the installation process was not as smooth as Sidebottom had hoped. "The delivery coincided with the worst weather in the UK for fifty years, with snow covering the whole country. Our plant is at the top of a steep Derbyshire hill, so we had to grit the entire road to get the delivery truck up to us, and we also had to dig out of the snow and move cars that motorists had abandoned and which were obstructing the route. In the end, Bobst got the machine in safely, but it took some doing."

Luckily for Glossop Cartons, the installation of the Mitsubishi Diamond V3000 the previous year had been snow-free. With both conventional and UV capabilities, the size 3b press is now achieving regular print speeds of around 14,500 sheets per hour, nearly double the speed of the press it replaced. Inter-deck drying between print units one, two, and three, as well as at the end of the five colour plus UV line, gives great versatility, while much improved colour control and quality surveillance means the press has cut make-ready times and further improved the plant's already well recognised print quality. A CIP4 link sends ink settings direct from pre-press to press and further ensures quick make-ready, as well as making smaller runs more cost effective. According to Jacky, the press is achieving impressive performances on both long runs and on smaller jobs, down to as small as 800 sheets. "We have the mentality that no job is too small, so the Mitsubishi is ideal for us."

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**Bobst equipment delivery coincided with the worst weather in the UK for 50 years. Right: Jacky Sidebottom alongside the Mitsubishi Diamond V3000 press.**



The Mitsubishi complements the plant's other press, a Size IV Komori, which also features five print units and UV. Glossop Cartons has also recently installed a second CAD sample making cutting station to improve the service they can offer in carton constructional design.



**Building relationships**

The origins of Glossop Cartons go back to the early 1980's, when founder Raymond Every spotted a need for the supply of short-run, high quality cartons, something the larger carton groups of the time were loath to supply. While Glossop Cartons now offers all sizes of run length, to a mix of blue-chip and smaller customers, the ethos of service and excellent quality remain very much at the forefront of the company's thinking. "Our customers get a very close contact with someone at a senior level within Glossop Cartons," explains Jacky. "They know that they are dealing with someone with influence — and a lot of

customers like that. Our emphasis is very much on building relationships and our customers feel they can rely on us."

When it comes to quality, Jacky says that the company's aim is to deliver a good product at the right price. "This approach has ensured our longevity and our financial stability for thirty years, something else that's very attractive to our customers. They are very wary these days of building a relationship with any company that may not be here in a few months."

Currently, the company's product mix encompasses packaging for DIY products, gifts and car accessories, as well as fancy

boxes for promotional work. Producing a mix of cartons, blister packs and skin packs, the company has clients all over the UK, with some work being exported to Germany and France. With the Clowes Printers personnel who joined Glossop Cartons, staff numbers are now hitting 60. "We're now at the right size," says Jacky. "We're big enough to have the production equipment and capacity to give customers value for money, but of a size where we can still deliver a personal service."

Jacky says that the new Bobst Expertfold is a key part of the equation for Glossop Cartons. "It's an investment that has made sound financial sense. The improved productivity it gives us means a smoother, more efficient manufacturing process, so we get great value for money and we can deliver all the products our customers need. The service and support from Bobst means we can produce uninterrupted, while the modular design of the Expertfold means it can evolve as our business grows and can adapt with us to satisfy changes in market demand."

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