

# CONSISTENCY AND RELIABILITY AT TRIPLE A CONTAINERS

THE INVESTMENT IN JB MACHINERY'S  
KLEENPLATE PRINTING DEFECT AND PLATE  
WASH ELIMINATOR SYSTEMS SUPPORTS THE  
COMPANY'S REPUTATION FOR HIGH QUALITY.

BY NICK GRIFFIN

Ordinarily, cutting time inevitably leads to a loss in precision — the faster equipment runs, the greater the likelihood that quality will suffer. However, Triple A Containers in Cerritos (Calif.) has found a way to decrease both production time and error using the largest JB Machinery KleenPlate system yet on its jumbo McKinley diecutter. Nearly half of Triple A's business is in electronics with another large portion in medical — both businesses requiring perfect graphics on packaging including small font sizes. By consistently achieving this, the company has carved itself a niche in one of the country's most saturated markets.





## Triple A Containers



TRIPLE A'S JUMBO MCKINLEY DIECUTTER.,

According to President Brad McCroskey, "What makes us competitive is our consistency. We are very successful staying essentially off the radar, yet we're known for outstanding delivery and quality — and for us, this ability to deliver on time with consistent quality has become routine. That's what gets and keeps us business."

As Chief Operating Officer Bruce Robertson puts it, "We have a very broad range, broad marketplace here. In addition to corrugated we also work with wood and foam as needed. We do everything — electronics (which is predominately television boxes), some agriculture, furniture and car parts. You name it, we do it. But if we're known for anything in this industry, it's consistent high quality. That's why we work for a lot of people who are always very concerned about quality factors including color, registration and consistency."

CHIEF  
OPERATING  
OFFICER BRUCE  
ROBERTSON

Triple A's corporate culture is structured around helpfulness. According to Robertson, "We describe ourselves as a very collaborative company, as opposed to being managed from the top down. And as much as everybody has a specific job, they're always aware of what's around them, what the person before them is doing for them and what they are doing for the person next to them. The way they pass on work or receive work is important. KleanPlate fits well into this model, helping everyone from the operators on the line and the quality inspectors to management and customers, by preventing print 'hickies' and giving us substantially less downtime."

Robertson says that the addition of KleanPlate was all about better serving customers. "It was added primarily to satisfy customers and reduce our reject rate. In the electronics business, if there is a blemish in the print, if there are too many hickies, or the hickey is too close to the logo, the customer will reject that box. So KleanPlate has been critical by removing dust from the (printing) plates and going through and minimizing and even eliminating hickies across the entire print surface."

Even with three stages of inspections, the reject rate before

installing KleanPlate was 3%. But now, says Robertson, "We've driven it down to probably less than half a percent." He elaborates, "We get scored by our customers, especially in electronics. They keep score on all of their suppliers in terms of performance. So we've worked tremendously hard to improve those scores and KleanPlate technology has played a substantial role in that."

## Operator Approved

The addition of KleanPlate doesn't just satisfy the customers, it also reduces stress and workload for operators. "The operators noticed an immediate difference, because previous to adding KleanPlate they were having to stop and wash plates all the time, often after as few as 250 sheets through the machine," says Robertson.

Triple A's two KleanPlates keep dust and debris off the plates without interrupting operations, increasing both efficiency and quality. "When you took in the constant stopping and starting to clean dust off the plates, fixing each blemish was a five to eight minute process," he says. "With KleanPlate it just runs backwards and forwards across the plate and solves a multitude of problems without having to stop and open the machine."

According to McCroskey, "Any way you cut it, you want to be productive. You want to know that you're running. And every time operators have to stop and open the machine to clean the plates, it cuts into the time they could get on the press. With KleanPlate, they feel better about what they're doing and how they're doing it and all I know is that when I walk out onto the floor they're all smiles and thumbs up. It's really proven to be quite a resource."

Some sophisticated equipment

## Triple A Containers

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KLEENPLATE CONTINUOUSLY WIPES THE IMAGE AREAS OF THE PLATES.

requires extensive training to run, but Triple A operators have quickly learned to work the KleenPlate controls. Says Robertson, "Apart from the initial training when JB Machinery put it in, we have had probably three other sessions with the engineer and the operators. Everyone picked it up quite well, though we needed to go

back once or twice and have a refresher course, but now they seem quite adept on operating it."

Triple A's two systems are on both colors of the McKinley jumbo, meaning that they run 210 inches across, making them the largest units that JB has built. According to Robertson, "We're now talking solids maybe 40, 50 inches long by 30 or 40 inches wide. KleenPlate becomes critical for the electronic boxes we are printing — large solids in combination with very small font sizes, and very small illustrations. The

combination of fine print as well as high solids is hard to control while maintaining a reasonable price point, but KleenPlate helps us to do just that. Before, on an order of 5000, we typically would have stopped between 13 and 20 times to wash up. Now we might stop just three or four times."

## Recent Merger

Of significance is Triple A's recent merger with rightPAQ. Says McCroskey, "In revenue it helps effectively double our size and we pick up even more consistency in our manufacturing. Although rightPAQ does quite a bit of corrugated they do even more wood and foam so it's an absolute perfect blend of two manufacturing groups."

Robertson adds, "We serve the same market, so by essentially doubling our size, we've doubled our number of customers and doubled our access into the marketplace. The only way companies are going to survive in this market is to become bigger, consolidate and pool resources. And that's exactly what we've done."

As for the future, McCroskey and Robertson agree that the trend toward consolidation will continue, but they also see it as a potential for growth. "There's quite a bit of it (consolidation) going on," Robertson says, "And we're doing our part in that, but now it's about refining synergies. I could easily see adding another KleenPlate system in our future. We're looking for a new piece of equipment right now and having had the experience with KleenPlate on our McKinley, we'd definitely want it on our next machine." ■

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