

Abu Dhabi-based aseptic manufacturer iPack leaps from seed to success in record time

Romeo Bandini, general manager at iPack Abu Dhabi, explains to Packaging MEA editor Ben Daniel how an expert team and cutting edge technology helped iPack accomplish record production numbers.



Closer to you: iPack's impressive facility in Abu Dhabi, UAE

Following a very thorough due diligence that took a few years to complete, construction of the iPack factory started in February 2016, after only 16 months, in August 2017, the first commercial product was released in the market and in November of the same year we were able to present our superior printing quality and innovation at Gulfood Manufacturing.

"The main contribution to the rapid startup and success were: the team of experts, all with proven industry experience, that iPack was able to put together, and the owner support, that was willing to follow expert advice and invest in cutting edge technology."

Third biggest regional player in the sector

"Our printing quality sets us apart. We offer our customers a better product and at the same time a better service, in terms of flexibility.

"We try hard to engage our customers and convert their ideas

and images into reality, while respecting their needs in terms of minimum order size.

"Obviously we have to do this while remaining cost competitive versus Chinese and other major producers. In our view, this has been possible thanks to the choices we have made in equipment, technology and automation.

"At iPack, we go the extra mile to ensure customer satisfaction, and this is exactly how in a very short time we have become the third biggest regional player."

Achievements

"In its first year of full operation (2018), iPack managed to deliver more than a billion packs. This is an astounding number if we consider that similar investments in countries like China and India with 100 times the population of the UAE have struggled to get such results in such a short time.

"A second achievement of which we are extremely proud and which gives iPack a competitive edge is the successful imple-

mentation of extended colour gamut (equinox) in our printing process where, on top of the classic CMYK, we have added OVG (orange, violet and green). This new technology allows the images printed by iPack on packaging material to look more natural and detailed, and colours to be more vibrant. This was far from easy as we were among the first and still are among a few worldwide to have successfully implemented this technology with food-grade, water-based flexo inks.

"Another achievement worth mentioning is that in April 2018, iPack obtained the ISO certification - 9001 for Quality, 14001 for environment and 20001 for safety, then in May of the same year we were awarded BRC certification. Finally, in 2019, iPack received the FSC certificate.

"This is all proof that the company is serious about its commitment to its customers, the environment and social responsibility."



The investment in a highly automated facility allows us to focus on our core business and hire only the staff dedicated to adding value to our products and ultimately to our customers and consumers.

Romeo Bandini
General Manager,
iPack Abu Dhabi, UAE

Internal processes and strategies equipped for success

"In designing the Abu Dhabi logistics production platform, we were guided by the desire to bring aseptic packaging to a higher quality level with cutting edge technologies", said Romeo Bandini, General Manager of iPack.

"Thanks to the production and logistic solutions adopted, to the constant commitment to research and development, and to a multicultural team with over 100 years



of experience in the aseptic packaging industry, we were able to develop a range of packaging products for foods and drinks that are innovative, convenient, environmentally friendly and safe.”

A catalyst project for cutting-edge technology

“In the construction of the new Abu Dhabi plant, we chose to follow the implementation of value-added technology as a development driver.

“It was a choice that was anything but obvious, in a context such as that of the UAE, where investors tend to favour labour-intensive processes over automation. At iPack, on the contrary, we decided to follow the road of innovation with the certainty that this choice would generate value both internally and for all our customers.

“At the IT level, there are four software ecosystems that interact within the iPack logistics production platform.

“The WMS integrated by Technolog communicates with the company’s Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP), from which it imports the data relating to the resources to be managed, with the Manufacturing Execution System (MES) to synchronise with the progress of production, and with the Automated Guiding Vehicles (AGV) traffic control software to manage the work-in-progress items and final inven-



tory.

“There are currently four AGV vehicles operating within the iPack logistics-production platform; two have a capacity of up to 2,500kg for handling large rolls of raw materials and semi-finished products, while the other two, with a load capacity of up to 1,500kg, are equipped with forks for handling pallets of raw materials, consumables and finished products.

“To cope with the strong growth that the company is experiencing, we are evaluating the possibility of increasing the fleet of AGV vehicles.

“By acquiring two new vehicles, we could achieve a 50% increase in flow management capacity, thus responding to future volume increases and in anticipation of a possible expansion of the production department with the installation of a second production line.”

Enduring through the business’ challenges during the pandemic

“As we all know, the Covid-19 pandemic has placed even more emphasis on the packaging industry to ensure packaged items like food and drinks are delivered safely to the final consumers, maintaining the utmost quality and hygiene standards.

“We can proudly say that iPack’s investment in technology and automation, together with the extra measures immediately implemented by the manage-



The use of AGVs vs traditional handling equipment in this area makes the work environment safer and more efficient and helps maintaining high levels of hygiene, that is appropriate to the type of aseptic product that is made by iPack. In addition, the solution adopted by iPack is flexible and easily expandable for future requirements.

Alberto Benedetti

Proxaut’s Sales Manager,
iPack Abu Dhabi, UAE



We want to engage all brand owners in conversation on how they foresee their packaging appearance reflecting the image they want to convey to consumers. We want to be closer to the brand owner and the consumer.

Ruben Rizk

Sales and Marketing Manager,
iPack Abu Dhabi, UAE

ment, have been fundamental in preventing any contamination inside or outside the workplace and in maintaining a constant material supply while not leaving any customer behind in spite of the obstacles and restrictions posed by the pandemic.

“A special thanks goes to iPack employees and shareholders for the exceptional and continuous commitment, support and flexibility demonstrated during this difficult time.”

A message to potential customers

“Our motto is ‘Closer to You’. Closer to you not only in distance but in our approach as well”, says Ruben Rizk, iPack Sales and Marketing Manager).

He adds: “We want to engage all brand owners in conversation on how they foresee their packaging appearance reflecting the image they want to convey to consumers.

“In addition, we want to be closer to the customers in reacting to market dynamics while freeing their capital for their marketing activities to generate more sales. We can do this through our production flexibility that allows our customers to order based on their market needs.

“So, we want to be: ‘Closer to you, the brand owner, and closer to you, the consumer.’”



iPack produces material compatible with the most common roll fed aseptic carton filling machines in the market.