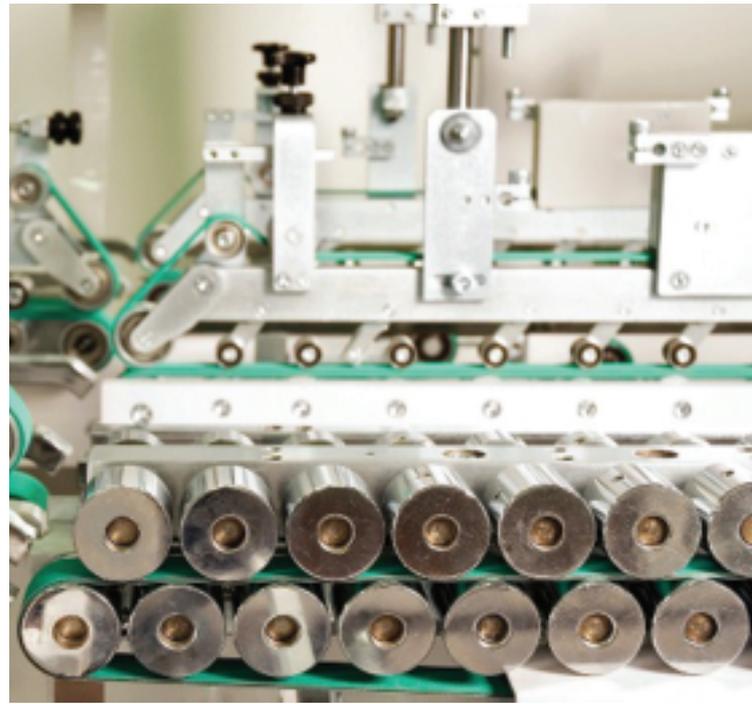


Omega Allpro-S.Feeder



Omega Allpro-S.Side Register

# Economy meets innovation – folder gluer solutions for new market trends



**Pinar Kucukaras, at Duran Machinery, explains how her company is responding to changes in demand for newer carton designs produced on standard machines. High speed runs are a must to be competitive**

**W**e all know that it takes more than productivity, efficiency, and low-cost operation to achieve a competitive edge. The folding carton industry is well equipped with high quality machinery that provides the ability to do this. However, it takes some ‘thinking outside of the box’ to stand out and make a real difference. Having the ability to add more to a business comes with the correct use of design and innovation, both in the end product and the equipment used. And, folding and gluing provides the perfect opportunity for carton makers and trade finishers to differentiate their business from their competitors.

Productivity, versatility, and build-quality should be the main points when evaluating a new folder gluer. The machine has to comply with the production range in carton styles, sizes, and substrate, and has to run consistently at the target speed, with minimal make-ready times. These are the key elements of productivity in the folding and gluing process, and are mostly easily achievable by high quality machinery. Of course, they need to be accompanied by other qualities, such as compatibility with other systems, meeting safety standards, and having good after-sales support. But all of these are the basics to which we have become accustomed. Today’s trends require more than that.

## **The need to produce faster and better**

There is one economy driven trend we have been observing since 2008, and that is how to produce the same product range more economically. This requires higher speeds, consistent running, and minimal make-ready times, as well as some new developments in the folding and gluing process. The correct folder gluer for specific requirements offers a great deal in savings. If the product range includes a wide variety of carton styles, a multi-functional folder gluer is a must. In this case, it is important to ensure the machine makes ready between carton styles quickly and easily. The downtime between changeovers has to be studied carefully for efficient production, and the best way to evaluate this is to run trials with the user’s own blanks. The latest motorized features and memorized set-up have a great impact on the uptime of the machine by reducing make-ready times, which considering the increasing demand for smaller batch runs, makes these options worth considering as part of the investment, even when the product range is not very wide in terms of different carton styles.

High-speed runs are a must to be competitive, and manual feeding and packing does not match the speed of folder gluers, so additional equipment such as pre-feeders and



Omega Allpro-SM 145 feeder end

packers might also be required to speed up the finishing process. Even if these are not considered at the initial investment stage, it is a good idea to ensure they can be retrofitted, preferably by the same manufacturer, as this will preclude any integration problems.

Today's latest developments in the folding process are becoming useful tools in helping to increase productivity. Blank turning units are effective on shorter processes because they allow specific blanks to be run at a single pass instead of two. Combining processes on the gluer, such as equipping the machine with embossing or tape application units, inlet spotters, and window patchers, can be important to adding value as well.

Modularity of the gluer is another point to consider. If you are considering expanding the product range with new carton styles, such as adding a 4- and 6-corner function, it is always advantageous to specify a machine that can be upgraded to produce these additional carton styles. This makes future investment easier.

We have also noticed that the demand for flame sealers has increased in recent years, and we consider this to be part of the economy driven trend. Flame sealers are folder gluers that produce PE coated cartons for aseptic packaging, mostly for beverages and foodstuff. The PE coating takes away the need for primary packaging with certain food products, which are presented to the market with the carton packaging only. This brings an important saving to the packaging cost.

#### The changing face of cartons

The second trend, which is growing stronger, is all about the structural

design of the carton. It might come from adding shelf-appeal to the carton, from new carton designs that allow better presentation of the product inside, or again with economy in mind. The result is the same – less material and shorter processes. This trend is bringing its own challenges along with opportunities.

Cartons have a lot to offer in structural design, but the new cartons bring one critical question into the spotlight: 'Are they achievable'? Naturally, we all think in terms of machine capability when evaluating new carton designs, and decide which ones can and cannot be run on the gluers. This might be one of the biggest obstacles in the innovative aspect of the business, but it can be overcome. Our point of view is quite different from many others. We are actively encouraging our customers to surpass their expectations from standard equipment. Instead of forcing the standard machines to run the new designs, we design and manufacture a folder gluer specifically for the new cartons, but which also runs the standard jobs perfectly.

These special projects sometimes require three design offices: machine manufacturer; carton maker; and end customer to cooperate for the initial design to realize the desired result. Obviously, it takes more than the standard manufacturing procedure to achieve, but it produces a valuable result for the industry. Take note – design offices do not need to limit their imagination by existing machine capabilities!

Given that standard jobs will be run at high speed as usual, and the new cartons can be produced on the same

gluer, the new designs then become more of an opportunity than a problem. They are powerful tools that can differentiate one business from another because they allow a converter to present more and different products to the market.

But, the key is finding the right machine manufacturer to achieve this. It takes a company with expertise and creativity, and well as technical capability to allow carton converters to expand their businesses into more profitable areas, and respond quickly to changes in market demand. Many converters do not know the right questions to ask – it is the job of the machinery manufacturers to keep them up to date with what is already possible, as well as working closely with them to develop new and exciting opportunities.

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