

Temporary contract packaging lends near-instant fulfillment

Manufacturer of shrink sleeve applicators and heat tunnels sets up a shrink bundling line in its own plant to speed Barbasol's club-store packs to market.

Mary Ann Falkman | Contributing Editor



For a little over a year now, **Tripack** (www.tripack.net) has been offering contract packaging services for its new and existing customers and prospects. The service helps the consumer product goods companies to quickly launch new products or packaging formats at retail, often while a new packaging line is being built, configured, and installed at their own plants.

The Florence, KY, equipment manufacturer's core products include high- to low-speed sleeve applicators, heat or steam tunnels, and conveying systems. A recent project allowed Barbasol (www.barbasol.com) to introduce bundled twin-packs of men's Barbasol and ladies' Pure Silk Raspberry Mist shaving cream into club stores.

Barbasol LLC, part of Dublin, OH-based Perio, Inc., was happy with the contract packaging arrangement. "We had heard Tripack's name in the industry and decided to give them a call," says Atef Halaka, president of Barbasol, in explaining their decision. "We chose them after we visited their facility and were able to see first-hand what their company is all about, as well as what their equipment is all about. Having the best combination of price, quality, and service—out of all the others we worked with on this project—affected our decision.

"Their Contract Packaging Service helped us in bringing the product to the market sooner while waiting for our newly purchased equipment to be built, delivered to our plant, set up and run. It was a good solution for us with a good company, so we would do it again given the same arrangement and circumstances."

"We can get their product to market faster," explains Tom Linz, Tripack's president. "They can see how their own product is running. It's new equipment for them." Linz says there is a benefit to the new customers to see their product running successfully: "It helps the customers achieve a comfort level with the equipment, and they can justify what they are going to be spending on a new pack-



SLEEVE LABELER. In the sleeve labeler, cans of Barbasol's Pure Silk Raspberry Mist shaving cream receive a full-body shrink label for club store twin-packs, then the bundled packs move into the steam tunnel.

aging line. When they see their product run on Tripack equipment, it gives them the confidence in making a purchasing decision, especially when they don't have experience with this labeling technology."

The Barbasol twin-pack ran for a 12-week period at Tripack's plant. "We ran their club pack on our line here while we built them an identical line. This was a factor in their decision-making process," says Linz. The shrink-wrap line is now running the same package configuration at Barbasol's plant in Ashland, OH.

Over the past year, Linz says Tripack has completed five projects for five different customers. "We can do multiple product configurations simultaneously, and have done so," he explains. "These tend to be for the companies that want to test market new products, run sales samples or try out new label designs. We generally don't charge for small-run jobs, and for larger runs, we try to make



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it affordable with rebates against future equipment sales.”

Tripack brings in temporary workers on a project-by-project basis to run the contract packaging operation. The manufacturer has had up to 35 people running two separate lines simultaneously.

Sometimes, Linz says, customers can't immediately secure bank financing for the capital purchase of new equipment and are looking for a contract packager to do the sleeving. The only hurdle Tripack encountered in setting up the contract packaging operation was space. "It required a move to a larger facility to handle truckloads of product coming in," he explains.

➔ TWO MACHINES DO THE DUTY

The packaging line for Barbasol's products comprises two Tripack-built machines—a shrink sleeve applicator and a steam tunnel.

The MSA-300 shrink sleeve applicator is engineered for moderate to heavy production schedules. All Tripack applicators feature mandrel-based film delivery systems. The film is opened from the roll form, over a custom fabricated mandrel, and formed to the specific shape of the container prior to film cutting. This system allows for precise film placement and optimized label registration. The machine's knife assembly is engineered for a quick, accurate cutting motion. The MSA Series applicators utilize a patented, multi-blade system, which minimizes time required to complete one cut



cycle. A HMI touch-screen interface and **Allen-Bradley** (www.ab.com) servo motors and controls are standard features.

"This machine is a new design because of its ability to go from 2-in. diameter out to 12-in. diameter, the largest spread of product diameter in the market today," claims Linz. "It fits well with customers needing to run primary shrink labels as well as promotional or club-type packages."

The second machine on the Barbasol line is Tripack's ST 1-75 steam tunnel, which can handle full-body sleeve labels and high shrink requirements. The ST Series is designed for mid- to high-speed applications, with maximum durability and quality output. The tunnel features a streamlined dimension, on-the-fly adjustable baffle system, easy-access control door, water collection trays, and stainless steel washdown construction. Adjustable steam exhaust controls and super-heated steam flow are standard features for low-speed to high-speed applications.

Though the Barbasol twinpacks are no longer in production at the Tripack plant in Kentucky, Tom Linz understands how attractive it was to Barbasol to be able to rely on Tripack's capabilities for those 12 weeks. "Customers really like this concept. They don't know if the product will take off. For one recent customer, we ran two different promotional items for them for Christmas and Easter. Now they know it works." **PW**

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