

IT'S A WRAP

Marden Edwards has been supplying different industries with its **high-quality overwrapping and shrink wrapping systems** for 60 years. TJI finds out what role the tobacco industry plays for the UK-based company and learns about its growing **coding and tracking division**.



When it comes to packaging needs, Marden Edwards has established itself as a world leader in the design, manufacture and assembly of overwrapping and shrink wrapping solutions. Over the past 60 years, the company that has its headquarters in the UK has built a strong reputation for the production of high quality, robust packaging machinery solutions and is proud that many of its early machines that were produced around 60 years ago are still in use to this day. Marden Edwards supplies 150 countries worldwide with its machines that are all manufactured in the UK, a fact International Sales and Marketing Manager Gary Thick sees as one of the keys to the company's success. "Our UK based in-house manufacturing facility enables us to be flexible and adapt to the changing production needs of the tobacco industry. Underlined by our commitment to a high quality product and exceptionally high customer service, we continually work closely with our customers to ensure their packaging needs are met with and exceed expectation," he says.

While Marden Edwards offers solutions for many different industries providing

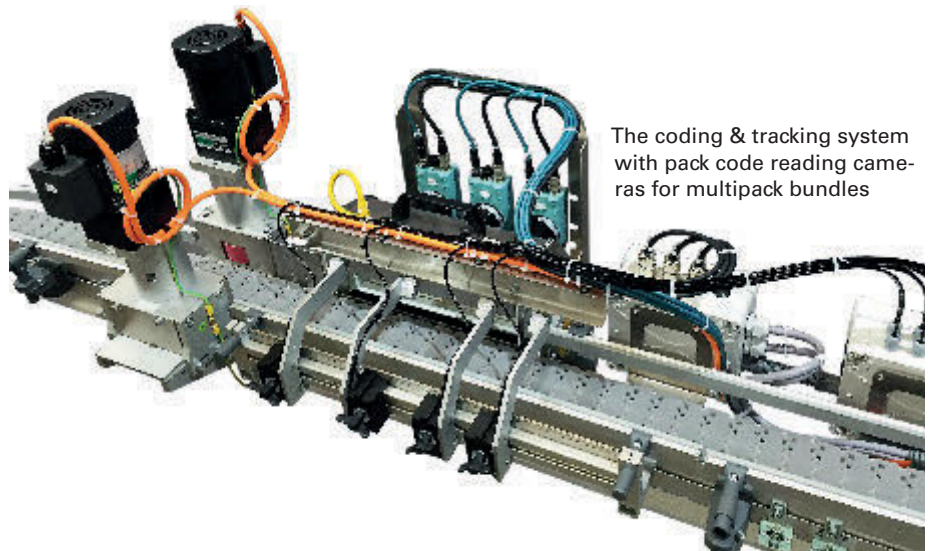
solutions for food, cosmetics or pharmaceutical products, the tobacco industry has always played an integral part for the company and, according to Gary, continues to be a core part of the business. And, while the products that are being wrapped may be very different, the procedure itself is not. "Marden Edwards' key differential is the capability to offer a range of product packaging machinery solutions, overwrapping / shrink wrapping / coding & tracking, covering end of line secondary packaging requirements," he explains.

Marden Edwards' main focus lies on overwrapping machinery. Here, the company

works very closely with the individual customer to design and manufacture bespoke machinery and provide tobacco coding and tracking solutions to meet their specific needs. The company is aware that this is an area that is growing in terms of requirements, be they environmental factors or the constant need to be faster and better. "Overwrapping provides alternative eco-friendly wrapping material options – recyclable BOPP film, biodegradable BOPLA film and biodegradable paper. We provide versatile product overwrapping machinery capable solutions capable of wrapping a wide range of pack sizes up to speeds of 300 wraps per minute. We offer flexible and versatile machinery with fast and simple size changeovers, base or trailing edge seal, collating and multipacking, tear tape or perforation opening in transparent or printed film," says Gary.

NEW ENDEAVOURS

Marden Edwards started out with equipment for the traditional "200s cigarette carton outer wrapper", which is the most typical format for secondary packaging – 5 ▶



The coding & tracking system with pack code reading cameras for multipack bundles

packs high by 2 packs wide. “This steadily evolved into the need to supply machinery for bundle wrapping – collating and overwrapping of HLP packs and other products: tobacco pouches, cigar boxes, cigar tins, molasses, vape and alternatives, and for meeting the many and diverse needs of individual tobacco manufacturers,” says Gary. Speaking of a range of manufacturers, Marden Edwards has a “very diverse and eclectic customer base” and is working with smaller businesses and larger players alike. “We can offer a wide range of solutions, we can cover requirements of a start-up company through to fully integrated automatic high speed production systems for the big brand owners. We have a large customer-focused team who can support customers through the entirety of these projects,” confirms Gary.

As a company heavily involved in the tobacco industry, it is important to stay on top of current rules and regulations and, rather than being a hindrance, changes such as the recent Track and Trace legislation have acted as a driving force for Marden Edwards. In fact, it has resulted in the growth of the company’s Coding and Tracking division. “We are expanding our portfolio of products in line with the legislation demands of EUTPD and the WHO FCTC legislation. To date, we have supplied and installed our Marden Edwards Tracking System (METS), over 350 systems, into 18 countries covering 5 different legislations in 4 continents,” confirms Gary. As Marden Edwards supplies its machines to companies across the globe, it is important to be aware of the individual legal requirements in each country. Each product that is



The TMX overwrapping machine is suitable for individual and bundle pack overwrapping

which is something it is happy to do and sees as a positive thing. “Our long history with working in the tobacco industry has meant steady evolution that we have been pleased to be a part of the journey, listening to the customers’ requirements and developing solutions that best suit,” says Gary.

BREXIT AND COVID

The past twelve months have been a rollercoaster for businesses worldwide but companies in the UK have been hit twice as hard with Brexit and COVID-19 making for

This meant the company needed to develop new solutions, especially when it comes to offering the best possible support for its global customers. “An integral part of our success and longevity over the last 60 years is the continual drive to provide exceptional customer service,” says Gary.

One innovation that Marden Edwards has come up with is its ‘Remote Final Acceptance Tests’, which allow customers to log in to a live video feed in order to review their machines at the Marden Edwards’ premises in a live test environment. At the same time, they are able to conduct a Q&A meeting with the customer support team to discuss any issues or enquiries. It is this kind of flexible, result-oriented thinking that has stood Marden Edwards in good stead over the years. “We are always working on ways to continually improve and develop within our existing customer base but also looking to expand new products,” says Gary.

As for Brexit, Marden Edwards cannot yet pinpoint the effect it will have, if any. “It is difficult to quantify the actual impact Brexit has had in isolation as the pandemic has masked the reality, but in essence we were planning for change relating to Brexit and already trading outside the EU, therefore a lot of our processes were already aligned for post-Brexit business,” Gary concludes.

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International Sales and Marketing Manager Gary Thick

developed has its own unique set of parameters that need to be met along with the variables that each factory and production line brings with it. Therefore, the company is constantly evolving and adapting its existing systems to meet these demands,

a very difficult year that required major flexibility and changes. Like many other companies, Marden Edwards had to deal with staff working remotely and its team of service technicians not being able to travel as usual due to the worldwide pandemic.

Tanya Wolf