

NEW ERA CONVERTING MACHINERY INC.

www.neweraconverting.com / Headquarters: Paterson, N.J. / Employees: 70 / Specialty: Custom web converting equipment



WEB MASTERS

NEW ERA CONVERTING MACHINERY INC. RELIES ON ITS VENDORS TO SUPPLY THE QUALITY COMPONENTS IT NEEDS FOR ITS CUSTOM WEB CONVERTING MACHINES. **BY JIM HARRIS**



NEW ERA CONVERTING MACHINERY SAYS IT LOOKS FOR SUPPLIERS WITH SUPERIOR QUALITY, DELIVERY AND PRICING.

As a world-leading provider of processing equipment to the web converting industry, New Era Converting Machinery Inc. regularly hears from potential suppliers eager to do business with the company.

When it comes to choosing prospective vendors, the company takes a highly considered approach. “We’re looking at three things: quality, on-time delivery and price,” President Bob Pasquale says. “Quality for us is first and foremost, and the ability to get components on time is extremely important because of the just-in-time

manner in which we do assembly, so those are the most critical elements.”

The company meets with prospective vendors to review their capabilities, then solicits bids to determine pricing and delivery times. New vendors initially supply New Era with a small quantity of non-critical path parts. If the vendor proves to be worthwhile, New Era then engages it in a deeper relationship including having the vendor develop and supply more critical parts.

“We have many successful long-term relationships with a large net-

work of qualified or pre-qualified vendors,” Pasquale says. The company’s vendors are typically grouped based on their areas of expertise, such as suppliers of high-precision components or providers of large fabrications and frames.

One long-time supplier, Simco-Ion Industrial Group, provides pre-engineered static control devices for machinery. These devices are used in a wide variety of systems, including winding machines that prevent static electricity build-up, Pasquale notes.

More than 95 percent of the custom

fabricated components in New Era's machines are produced in the United States or Canada. All parts received by the company are put through a rigorous inspection process and are tracked for quality purposes. "We buy a significant amount of the parts we use from outside suppliers, so we use a software package that allows us to track every part as well as every vendor who makes parts for us," Pasquale says. "We constantly review that list to make sure our vendors are meeting our quality requirements."

CUSTOM-BUILT SOLUTIONS

Component suppliers have played a central role in New Era's operations throughout its history. The company was founded in 1992 as a joint effort between Pasquale's family, which had produced web converting machinery since 1946, and the Lembo family, a former "friendly competitor" that had owned a company that manufactured similar machines since 1947.

Both families agreed that the new company would be better served working as a customer-facing and research and development-oriented company with testing and assembly capabilities instead of as a manufacturer of custom parts, Pasquale notes.

The company today designs and details components that are fabricated by vendors before being brought back to New Era's 50,000-square-foot facility in Paterson, N.J., where they are tested, inspected and assembled into machines.

Equipment assembled by New Era includes unwinding and winding machines, coating machines, laminators, embossers, calenders, dryers, drive and control systems, roll-handling equipment and web-handling systems. Machines produced by the company are used in the production of packaging, electronic media and reflecting sheeting products, among other products.

"Our customers are converters who process materials in 'roll to roll' »



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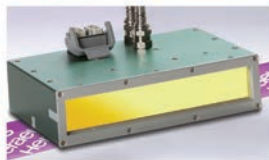
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» or 'roll to sheet' format," Vice President Paul Lembo explains. "The most common substrates our machines handle are papers, films, foils, fabrics and foams; however, we also work with other materials like flexible glass, rubber and metals."

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New Era builds all of its machines to customer specifications. "We think our specialty is custom-built converting machinery," Pasquale says. "We don't have a standard product line or machine offering – our business is engineering solutions to meet customer-specific needs."

This takes one of two forms. Customers either approach the company with a particular product they want to make and rely on New Era's expertise and experience to develop a machine or concept to meet the requirements of manufacturing that product, or provide the company with a concept or specification.

"I think our proudest achievement is our ability to produce highly customized large-scale machinery," according to Pasquale.

Pre-inspected parts are assembled and optically aligned to high tolerances. Once parts are assembled, the machine is wired, piped and tested before shipment. "Despite the fact that our equipment is usually one-off, purpose-built machinery, our customers expect minimal machine-related downtime and high-precision components/manufacturing practices," Lembo says.

New Era's turnkey services also include installation, freight and start-up services. Customers are also provided technical information including mechanical, electrical and utility drawings.

"WE DON'T HAVE A STANDARD PRODUCT LINE - OUR BUSINESS IS ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS TO MEET CUSTOMER-SPECIFIC NEEDS." - Bob Pasquale

STEADY GROWTH

The company in recent years has improved upon its capabilities by moving from a traditional two-dimensional engineering and design software platform to a 3-D platform. This upgrade prompted the company to purchase new computer hardware, Pasquale says.

New Era also has hired more engineering, assembly and electrical wiring technicians to meet an increased demand for its services. "What we find is that our customers are continuously trying to either improve upon the process they use to make their products or develop new products and enter new markets," he adds. "Our growth has been steady and progressive, with most of it coming as our customer base continues to expand." **mt**