

Innovation and global expansion

Univenture continues to develop innovative packaging solutions, including sleeves and wallets for multiple disc applications, which meet the needs of its customers and has established Univenture as a worldwide leader in bind-in disc packaging applications. By Tom O'Reilly

Media packaging solution provider Univenture has continually focused on being an innovator within the disc packaging industry. From the company's inception in 1988 with the development of Safety-sleeve, founder and inventor Ross Youngs has developed an organisation that continually seeks to innovate packaging solutions for the ever-changing needs of its customers.

"Our Unikeep disc wallet has become a predominant package for multiple disc applications," says David Coho, director of sales. "The functionality of a multi-disc package for storage and portability ranges from 5, 10, 20, 30, 40 and 80 disc capacities. Because of its flexibility, the Unikeep disc wallet is accepted throughout the educational, software, and publishing markets, to name a few."

Content producers and publishers continually seek unique and cost effective packaging, often times with increased disc capacities putting pressure on suppliers such as Univenture to continually re-invent packaging solutions. For example,

Univenture introduced a UniKeep retail style case specially designed for multiple Blu-ray and HD DVD disc applications at the Entertainment Media Expo show in August to support the next-generation DVD formats.

"In our ever changing industry, you can never rest," says Coho. "Our customers expect and demand more and we understand that we have a responsibility to provide them with the best packaging solutions to meet their needs."

Internationally speaking

Univenture is a privately held company based in Marysville, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus. The company also has sales and manufacturing facilities in Reno, Nevada; Dublin, Ireland; and partner operations in Shenzhen, China; making Univenture a true worldwide supplier of packaging solutions.

"We are expanding our service and manufacturing in Asia," says Coho. "With partner operations in Shenzhen, we are increasing our capability to manufacture, provide assembly and distribute products to customers throughout Asia and Australia."

"With associates on three continents, we are able to provide global service to our customers in various regions and those with multinational needs," adds Coho. "It is important that we do this while retaining the responsiveness

and coordination that our customers expect from an innovating company."

Youngs worked in the replication industry as an engineer prior to founding Univenture. He applied his degree in Environmental Engineering and knowledge of the disc business and translated it to packaging solutions, inventing the safety-sleeve disc packaging and the UniKeep case binder. Youngs holds a number of patents in the US and around the world. Brand innovations through U-1000 equipment, which provided sleeve production and automated disc insertion and EnvyPak technologies, a platform for numerous sleeve formats, have been developed within Univenture. Both have led to successful practical packaging applications.

"Our entire organisation is dedicated to serving our customers and developing creative packaging solutions for our customers and the industry," says Youngs.

"Innovation of our product line has resulted from countless hours of listening to customer needs and developing solutions that work for them."

Change is a constant in an industry as dynamic as media packaging, but the rate of necessary adjustment has increased significantly the last few years as the marketplace for packaged media has become more competitive.

Univenture has been impacted by pricing pressures just as other media packaging industry suppliers have. "Our ability to respond to these challenges is a part of our culture. We continually seek ways to produce more effectively," says Michele Cole, Univenture president. "Although this sounds easier than it is, our organisation responds not only with operational improvements, but also product design solutions."

A case in point is Univenture's development of a complete line of EnvyPak bind-in sleeves in response to the labour cost challenges of



Univenture's bind-in solution for an 80's classic



adhesive sleeves being manually placed into books and publications. "Since 1988, Univenture has produced adhesive sleeves for multimedia packaging applications," says Cole. "Our variety of adhesive sleeves range from vinyl to polypropylene, many with tamper evident features, and are designed to be compatible with disc insertion equipment.

"When the industry needed more competitive solutions, we focused on the labour cost savings further down stream – the cost of assembly at the bindery," Cole continues. "By designing a line of bind-in sleeve that complies with both disc insertion and bindery automation equipment, Univenture was able to create greater cost savings for its customers."

Environmental responsibility is extremely important in the media packaging industry, and has been a vital aspect of Univenture's product design and manufacturing. Univenture believes its UniKeep case binders are the most environmentally responsible binder to date. It is designed to be long lasting over the life of the product. Most importantly, in the event that the UniKeep case binder reaches the end of its useful life, it is 100% recyclable.

The cutting edge

Media packaging suppliers must also be willing to gamble on cutting edge package solutions. Univenture continually anticipates the needs of the industry risks with new product offerings. Safety-sleeve, U-1000 products and equipment, UniKeep wallets and binders and now EnvyPak have all developed into successful Univenture brands.

"Our EnvyPak bind-in sleeve products are fulfilling an increasing need within the industry," says Coho. "The combination of our understanding the binding process and providing compatible product along with a product line that is easily customisable to fit varying book and magazine applications has established Univenture as a leader in bind-in disc packaging applications."

Univenture is also in the process of developing other applications and markets for products such as its UniKeep disc wallets. For example, it is developing UniKeep disc wallets to accommodate 8cm discs and A5 UniKeep case binders. Because of the portability and varying capacity requirements, the 8cm wallets fulfill an important packaging and storage need for recordable media, specifically multiple disc video and game applications.

Univenture's range of sleeves, binders and disc wallets serve a multitude of markets

As noted earlier, Univenture is introducing a UniKeep Blu-ray/HD DVD case for multiple next-generation disc applications. The case will be formatted for retail and will have capacity for two to six discs.

Coho believes the continued innovation is the key to Univenture's success. "Our business has remained steady and is growing," he says.

Customer needs

Univenture's products are often sold through its replicator customers, requiring teamwork to best accomplish the needs of the end customer. "We understand how important our performance is to our customer's commitments," says Coho. "Our sales and marketing teams work to keep our customers knowledgeable of our products and services. Understanding their project requirements allows us to better serve our customers. There have been numerous opportunities where we have conducted product training sessions and workshops with our customers. We

David Coho



welcome these opportunities to understand our customer's needs and contribute to working with their projects managers and sales and marketing teams."

Univenture also works very closely with many companies directly to serve their project needs. "Innovation of our product line has resulted from countless hours of listening to customer needs and developing solutions that work for them," says Coho. Univenture's product design teams strive to provide products that balance the packages functional and design needs with competitively priced solutions."

The disc packaging industry was, and is, the primary market Univenture was founded to serve. However, Univenture sees opportunities for its products in non-disc related business,

and is pursuing some of those prospects. "The foundation of Univenture is both entrepreneurial and innovation focused," says Youngs. "Many of our product applications and technologies naturally extend to packaging

for developing new products, opens product applications for numerous industries. Univenture has established a line of EnvyPak products specific to the office products and direct mail industries.

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opportunities in other industries. Leveraging our capabilities has become critical to our continued success.

"Our UniKeep disc wallet has become so successful, that a complete line of UniKeep Case binders in both 3-ring and A4 versions were established," continues Youngs. "The UniKeep Case binder with integrated rings has practical applications anywhere there is a ring binder need." Because of its functional design and environmentally friendly construction, the Unikeep Case binder has been chosen by a leading software company to package one of their products.

EnvyPak, another Univenture product technology, has realised success with bind-in sleeve and disc mailer applications. The EnvyPak technology, along with its platform

There's little doubt the media packaging industry has become more challenging than ever, between increasing customer demands, as well as pricing pressures. Univenture's ability to innovate will be pushed to the limits, but the company appears ready to face the task at hand. ●



Univenture's bind-in family for books and magazines