

To Infiniti and beyond

Infiniti Media has made the transition from being purely a supplier of media packaging, to now also manufacturing disc packaging. With a commitment to high quality packaging, a strategic partnership with The Dow Chemical Company, and what it sees as a growing demand for media packaging, Infiniti believes it is on the road to long term success.

Seeing an opportunity to bring something unique to the DVD case marketplace, Infiniti Media made the switch from supplier to manufacturer in 2003, and has never looked back. Infiniti Media believes the secret to its success has been the ability to identify and execute against unmet needs in the marketplace, based on insights from its long history as a supplier to North American duplicators and replicators.

Torrance, California-based Infiniti Media is riding the wave of a global DVD market segment that it sees as strong for some time to come. Additionally, the recording media industry is only in the early days of next-generation DVD technology.

Infiniti Media, which also sells recordable media, has become an important manufacturer of optical media packaging, including clear, super clear, coloured and translucent DVD cases that meet industry standard configurations for one, two, three, four and six disc packaging lines. Its DVD cases are available with or without sleeves and feature durable 100% polypropylene construction with a patented center hub.

David Cuyler, vice president of business development for Infiniti Media, believes the company offers the four things that replicators want most from a DVD case manufacturer. "In a nutshell, they want consistent product quality, capacity, supply chain efficiency, and disciplined cost-management – and we're committed to being best in class on all counts," says Cuyler.

When Infiniti Media entered the DVD case business in 2003, the company's approach



DVD box quality became a key industry issue

manufacturing facility in Kentucky. The facility is now open and fully operational, enabling the company to keep pace with customer demand and bring increased efficiency to its supply chain. Second, recognizing the importance of resin selection, the company aligned itself with the Plastics business of The Dow Chemical Company.

virgin resin provides consistently high quality DVD cases, according to Infiniti. In addition, Infiniti benefited from Dow's technical and manufacturing support at the start of the process, which helped increase yield by improving cycle times - no small accomplishment when trying to produce cases for the more than one billion DVDs sold every year.

"From the very beginning, we knew that we wanted more than just pellets from our primary resin supplier," says Saeed Yousefian, Infiniti's President. "We needed a proactive, consultative partner with the ability to help us deliver a high quality DVD case and maximize the investment in the new manufacturing facility. We also needed a supplier with the staying power to consistently deliver product even in tight market conditions. Dow has fit the bill in all respects."

Addressing the industry's reputation for poor product quality was mission number one for Infiniti Media when it first entered the DVD case business. The growth of the DVD market segment had led to a flood of inferior quality DVD cases

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centered on two strategic decisions. First, in order to penetrate the marketplace and be close to its key customers, Infiniti Media made plans to build a new, full-service, state-of-the-art DVD case

Infiniti Media chose Dow as its primary resin supplier in 2004, and immediately began using one of Dow's new high flow/high melt strength polypropylene resins for its DVD cases. The 100%

Infiniti's Saeed Yousefian chose to partner with Dow Chemical



from some manufacturers. Infiniti worked closely with Dow's manufacturing and technical support teams to understanding the elements of what is needed to make a high quality DVD case.

"A critical component of a DVD case is of course the material," notes Cuyler. "Replicators are learning to limit and be careful in selecting the recycled materials they use. Many prefer 100% virgin polypropylene. They know that consumers are put off by cases that smell strong, which is a giveaway that they are made from unsuitable recycled material, and often come from offshore sources. From a manufacturers' point of view, the material must be easy to process in order to maximise yields and throughput."

Materials also contribute to the clarity of the DVD case, a trait that is becoming more important as high definition media producers use tinted cases to differentiate their products. HD-DVD cases use a red hue, while Blu-ray cases have a blue tint. Even the newest video gaming systems are differentiating their game discs with tinted cases. Replicators want a material with superior coloring capabilities so that their product can be identified quickly on the retail shelf.

"Beyond the use of the right material, the design of a case has to be functional and robust," Cuyler adds. "It must provide a protective environment for a DVD, allow for easy storage and packaging, and accommodate an outside wrap (insert) and inside booklet for graphics and marketing information. The locking mechanism or center hub must provide a secure structure for holding a DVD in place, even if the

case is dropped or severely shaken. Last but not least, the hinge must be able to withstand constant opening and closing without breaking down."

One of these emerging markets within the packaged media segment are sets of multiple discs, rather than a single disc. The growing popularity of bundling an entire season of a TV show on DVD, for example, is increasing the demand for four- and even six-disc cases. Some of these are packaged in boxed sets, but when the 'collector's edition' buzz isn't there, replicators would rather use polypropylene cases that can better secure the multiple discs using less material.

Another growing opportunity is the move toward thinner DVD cases. Looking to conserve shipping costs and maximize shelf space, retailers are favoring smaller cases. This is apparent in the new high definition DVD cases where the trend is toward a standard that incorporates smaller case dimensions along with a more transparent look. The quality, durability and toughness of the polypropylene must be at the highest levels.

The insights leveraged from Infiniti Media's days as a jewel-case supplier, combined with Dow's technical and manufacturing support, have positioned Infiniti Media for continued success in the DVD and next-generation case business. With its new manufacturing facility up and running, the

company is emerging as a key provider of high quality DVD cases, ready to expand with high definition technologies and to meet the evolving needs of replicators. ●



Colours play an increasingly important role in plastic media packaging